

Treat yourself to a tombstone tour

TRAVEL

Beth J. Harpaz

Even if you don't believe in ghosts, walking through a graveyard can be a little spooky – especially in autumn as the trees lose their leaves, flowers wither away and light fades in the late afternoon.

But cemeteries can make fascinating destinations. Sometimes a few words on a tombstone can suggest a whole life story; sometimes you can find a famous name, a beautiful work of art, or landscaping worthy of a botanical garden.

"Many people find great peace and solace in visiting cemeteries even if their own relatives are not buried there," says Janet Heywood, trustee for the Association for Gravestone Studies. "Others come to cemeteries to enjoy the history and beauty of the monuments and gravestones or to experience the outdoors, the plantings, the landscapes of the garden cemeteries of the nation."

There are many interesting cemeteries in major cities, including Boston, New York, New Orleans, Los



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Angeles and Paris. Some host tours about their history or landscapes, and some offer themed events around Halloween.

In Boston, the Old Granary Burying Ground was established in 1660, but it's most famous for its connections to the war of independence over a century later. Here you'll find the graves of Paul Revere, who famously rode a horse in 1775 to deliver warnings about the British Army; victims of the 1770 Boston Massacre, including Crispus Attucks, a runaway slave believed to be the first African-American killed in the war; and Declaration of Independence signers John Hancock and Samuel Adams.

Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery dates to 1838 and was named a National Historic Landmark for its art, architecture, landscaping and history. Its scenic winding paths are lined with trees and ponds, and its stone gates house a colony of green monk parakeets. The more than 560,000 permanent residents include composer Leonard Bernstein, Boss Tweed, artist Louis Comfort Tiffany, and Jean-Michel Basquiat, along with many ordinary Americans, from civil war soldiers to victims of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks. From Green-Wood's highest point, you can see the skyscrapers of lower Manhattan across New York Harbour and the

Statue of Liberty. The cemetery offers tours and also has Halloween events with tales of murder and mayhem on October 31 and November 1 at 1pm.

If you're visiting New Orleans' famed St Louis Cemetery No 1, you may want to bring an offering for the famous voodoo queen Marie Laveau. Visitors often leave cigarettes, Mardi Gras beads, flowers, candles and even money on her white Greek Revival tomb. The cemetery is one of New Orleans' unique "Cities of the Dead", which boast remarkable architecture, history and traditions, including above-ground tombs to ensure the graves are not disturbed by floods. Other notable graveyards in the city include the spectacular Lake Lawn Cemetery and Lafayette Cemetery.

Star power is the ticket to immortality in Los Angeles. At Pierce Brothers Westwood Village Memorial Park Cemetery, on Glendon Avenue, you can pay your respects to Marilyn Monroe, Burt Lancaster, Natalie Wood, Jack Lemmon, Dean Martin, Billy Wilder, Frank Zappa, and Truman Capote. Those spending eternity at the Forest Lawn Hollywood Hills cemetery include Bette Davis, Lucille Ball, Buster Keaton, Liberace, Stan Laurel, Gene Autry and David Carradine.

Of course the most recent celebrity burial to grab headlines took place just outside the city when Michael Jackson was buried in the Great Mausoleum at the Forest Lawn cemetery in Glendale. You can enter the mausoleum, but you can't see Jackson's tomb. Instead, you watch a 10-minute show about the mausoleum's stained glass replica of Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*, and get 10 minutes to look at other monuments, crypts and niches, including reproductions of Michelangelo's works. But you can't stray from the two hallways leading to the stained glass, and when your time is up, you're escorted out.

Another Los Angeles graveyard, Hollywood Forever on Santa Monica Boulevard, next to Paramount Studios, is more tourist-friendly. They sell maps to the stars' graves and sometimes even show movies. Hollywood Forever's denizens include Rudolph Valentino, Douglas Fairbanks, Cecil B. DeMille and Johnny Ramone.

Phantoms of famed souls, some doomed to early death, fill Pere Lachaise cemetery, in a quiet, shady neighbourhood on the eastern edge of Paris. Frederic Chopin, Oscar Wilde, Gertrude Stein and Edith Piaf – and, of course, Jim Morrison – are buried here. Mystery still shrouds the death of the lead singer of the Doors, who was 27 when he died in Paris in 1971. Some speculate he overdosed in a nightclub, others say he was found dead in his apartment bathtub. Although teenage girls no longer sing and dance while downing bottles of wine by his gravesite, it still attracts many tourists. They have to visit by day, though; overnight surveillance officers have replaced unruly nighttime visitors.

Tourists Katie Baur, 34, a teacher from the US, and her brother Mike Baur, 47, appreciate the sense of mystique among the cemetery's winding, tree-lined paths and elaborate gravestones, many blackened with age.

"It's far different from any type of cemetery we have in the States, with the Gothic look. It's creepy. It's mysterious," Katie says.

Associated Press



Johnny Ramone's grave at Hollywood Forever cemetery in Los Angeles



MOTORS

Growth curves

Adapted for the mainland market, Ford's new Fiesta has the style and swagger of a larger car, writes **Mark Andrews** in Shanghai

Thirteen years ago Ford introduced the Ka, proving it could create fun vehicles as well as the utilitarian workhorses for which it was better known. Since then Ford has introduced its kinetic design philosophy and created a range of attractive cars such as the Mondeo and Focus. The latest to get the treatment is the Fiesta, and for the Chinese market there's a saloon to go along with the hatchback.

The fifth-generation Fiesta was sold in China as a saloon. Like many small cars in the mainland, the saloon was rather an afterthought conversion of a European hatchback. Sales were never particularly good and the vehicle was quietly dropped.

But with the new sixth-generation Fiesta, Ford has taken no such chances. The saloon version was specially localised by Hong Kong-born Chelsia Lau Ka-po. Changes have also been made to the hatchback version to make sure it appeals to local tastes.

It's most obvious as a product of kinetic design in the aggressive front grille and stretched headlamps. These lead onto strong shoulders and a line riding up the body. From the rear, the saloon has the look of a mini Mondeo. The end result is as if the Fiesta skipped a generation, and in doing so, it has created class-leading looks.

Inside, the surprises continue. From the driver's seat, the interior has the feel of a much larger car. In the mainland there are three interior trims: the basic Trend and the higher spec Sport and Ghia. The most noticeable feature of what Ford terms an "engaging interior" is the mobile-phone style keypad and selector buttons for the monochrome LCD display. These may well not appeal to more technophobic

older drivers but prove to be intuitive and provide easy control of the stereo. However, unlike European versions, none of the trims have steering wheel mounted controls.

As can be expected, the dash is split colour. On the Ghia this means a charcoal upper and a cream lower; on the Sport it's shades of blue. The metal effect around the central console varies on the Sport according to body colour. Both blue and yellow cars get central consoles to match but others get silver. On the Ghia it is a standard champagne colour. This, along with the good quality pebbled effect plastics, gives a premium feel to the package.

Both the saloon and hatchback have split folding rear seats. The saloon has a big boot for the size of the car, large enough to swallow a couple of reasonably sized cases. In the back there is enough room for average sized adults, but taller people will have problems with headroom. Legroom is good and passengers are treated to two extendable headrests.

Differences for the Chinese market include an electric sunroof as standard on the Sport and Ghia models, a tray to hold shoes under the passenger seat and more travel in the seats to accommodate a greater range of heights along with seat height adjustment. One of the most surprising differences is that the Chinese version has more airbags. European models get four airbags as standard with curtain airbags an extras. The Ghia and Sport models in China have these included as standard.

Negotiating out of the parking space in a 1.5-litre automatic Ghia, I'm pleased to have rear sensors, which are



The latest Fiesta seems to have skipped a generation, with some welcome new directions in overall design

also standard on Sport models, but unfortunately Chinese models don't have the park assist system, which includes front sensors. Powering up Shanghai's Century Avenue the car seems at ease in central traffic, with the automatic transmission seamlessly shifting up and down the four gears. The electronic power assisted steering has been made lighter than in the European version and proves to be light at slow speeds but tighter going faster. Even on potholed roads the ride is good, as I discover when I plunge into a hole at speed.

Zooming along the roads in the Waigaoqiao Free Trade

Zone, I try the manual function of the gearbox. It proves easy to use and gave a good sense of control.

The 1.5-litre engine is responsive and perfect for city driving. At faster highway speeds it gave a spirited performance and at no point is it overstretched. The interior is cosseted and quiet. Upgraded air conditioning for the Chinese market keeps me cool in the heat.

On the way back I try a Sport hatchback – also a 1.5-litre automatic. It's fitted with sports-style seats that give much greater lateral support than the Ghia's leather chairs. There are also 16-inch alloys instead of the standard 15-inch wheels and the car has been lowered by 10mm. The hatch does have a sportier feel to it, although few will notice much difference when driving.

There is no doubt the Fiesta's funky interior and exterior will appeal to Ford's target late-20s to early-30s buyers. Ford says it introduced the saloon version to appeal to Chinese tastes, which dictate that only a saloon is a "real car", and that they're more practical. But sales so far are split 70:30 in favour of the hatchback (although that may be partly

because the hatch is also offered with a 1.3-litre engine). Later, the saloon will be introduced into other markets, including North America, but for now it's unique to China.

AT A GLANCE: Ford Fiesta

What drives it? A 1.5-litre engine generating 101 horsepower.
How fast is it? The manual peaks at 183km/h and the automatic manages 169km/h. Surprisingly, no acceleration figures are quoted.
How safe is it? The Trend models have four airbags and there are six in the Sport and Ghia models. A European version with five airbags achieved a five-star Euro NCAP rating.
How thirsty is it? The manual drinks 6.5 litres of fuel per 100 kilometres and the automatic 6.9 litres using the New European Driving Cycle system.
How clean is it? No emissions figures are quoted. The car reaches Euro IV for the Beijing and Shanghai markets and Euro III in other markets.
How much is it? Prices for the saloon range from 90,900 yuan to 111,900 yuan (HK\$1,033,300-HK\$1,272,000). The hatchback is cheaper.

