

Wheelin' around



Motor Oil Myths

by Charlie Moore

Probably the most important thing you can do to prolong the life of your car engine is to change the oil regularly.

Car manufacturers usually have a predetermined interval which they recommend between oil changes, usually two to four thousand miles. I change the oil in my car every three thousand miles or even a little more often for short trips and cold weather driving conditions. Short trips, where the engine does not have time to warm up are hard on both cars and motor oil. If you never, or almost never, drive outside the city it wouldn't hurt to change your oil at one thousand mile intervals.

There are many myths about motor oil and its use. Most of these are the result of extraordinary isolated cases and incidents which involve some misinformed people.

Myth One: If you mix dif-

ferent brands of motor oil, your car will go on an oil burning rampage. This rumour probably started when one of the aforementioned people coincidentally changed the oil in his clunker just about the same time the engine decided to give up. Isolated cases aside, this just isn't true.

One example is the major oil companies who sell oil to the US Army. The Army demands that all two hundred and fifty brands of oil they buy be compatible. They mix different brands indiscriminantly and have no complaints about oil burning. However, it is probably not a good idea to mix multi-grade and single-grade oils together.

Myth Two: It is not necessary to add oil until the oil light on the dash comes along.

This one is a result of misinformation more than anything else. The oil light on the dash of your car is not,

repeat not an oil level indicator but an oil pressure warning light. If it comes on, your car is suffering from a drop in oil pressure to the bearing surfaces and if it is driven in this condition it will result in a ruined engine. The reason it comes on when the oil level is low is very simple: no oil, no oil pressure.

Myth Three: If you just replace the oil filter once in a while, you never need change the oil.

The reasoning behind this one is the supposition that the filter takes all the dirt out of the oil. This is only partly true. The oil filter does strain all the solid particles of dirt and metal out of the oil but it does nothing to remove the unburned gas, water, sludge, and acids which are also contaminants. The oil filter should be replaced about every second oil change.

The type of oil you use is also very important. For engines which are in reasonably good mechanical condition, I would recommend a good quality

multi-grade oil like Esso Uniflo or Quaker State Deluxe in 5W40 or 10W40 grades. Multi-grades are more desirable than single grades in that they give both easier starting and high temperature engine protection. Additives like STP and Bardahl are not necessary as they contain nothing not found in good quality motor oil. They can be used to upgrade the quality of a cheaper oil but it usually works out that they cost about the same in the long run. It's your money so it's your choice.

Just in closing, here are a few news notes:

Volvo has introduced a station wagon version of their sporty 1800s. They call it the 1800ES, and it features an all glass tailgate. This is another example of the growing trend toward utilitarian transportation... Mercury should soon start importing Capris with the 2.6 litre V-6 engine. The 2 and 1/6 litre four will also be continued. The Capris is beginning to be an em-

barrassment to Lincoln-Mercury Division. It was originally planned as a half-hearted competitor of the Veg and Pinto. It has since become the best selling single model in the Lincoln-Mercury range. Forty percent of LM sales in California are Capris. It just goes to show that people are buying smaller (but better) these days. Datsun is sweeping the under 2.5 litre class in Trans-Am sedan racing... Alfa Romeo has finally got production underway in their new plant in Naples, Italy. They are using the new plant to build their new economy which is called the Alfasud. They should be in Canada sometime next year. That's all for this week. Until next time, Keep wheelin' your blues away.





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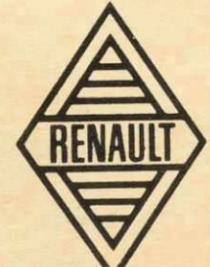
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