

Carbon Fiber- Performance, Fashion, or Both?

Article by: Justin Grubb

Whats the deal with Carbon Fiber (C/F) these days? It seems as though its everywhere in the automotive industry. The question is, why? Is it because of its performance benefits? Or maybe because its the latest trend in styling made popular by many Japanese race cars. Can it be both? I dont know that it can, and here is why.

I just dont buy into the whole, "I put a Carbon Fiber Hood on my car to save weight as i drive to school and work everyday a little bit faster" way of thinking. Don't get me wrong, i like C/F (more on this later), but as a performance enhancement on a daily driven car, come on, seriously. Carbon Fiber is used in F1 cars, Time Attack Cars, and now in airplanes. Why?, because its lightweight, strong, and stiff. Entire car bodys are formed in C/F for the Time Attack cars, the cockpits in F1 cars are entirely C/F. In both cases, its for the huge gains that can be had by simply reducing the vehicle weight. Carbon Fiber weighs 1/5 of what steel does and is still considerably lighter than aluminum. Of course, C/F also costs almost 5x as much to produce as aluminum, which is why you dont see it in mass production coming out of Nissan, Mazda, or any of the other car manufacturers.

Carbon Fiber for looks? I can buy that. Like i said earlier, i like C/F, i have a C/F Hood on my car and love the way it looks. Its obvious that young tuners across the world like C/F for its aesthetic qualitys. The weave, the offset of color, the clear coat on top, all lead to a visually appealing modification to any car. Carbon Fiber for looks is fine by me, but please dont tell me you want a C/F hood on your car to make it faster. Especially after you just showed me the crazy fiberglass stereo install you did.

Carbon Fiber right now is currently becoming hard to come by. Several airplane manufacturers have been buying all the raw C/F material they can to build a new era of airplanes out of them. This has caused C/F prices to soar and while they have leveled out, it doesnt appear that prices will be coming down on it anytime soon. In my opinion, this is going to increase the popularity of C/F among tuners. It was just about played out, everyone had it, but now its not going to be so easy to get. Like any market, low availability drives what's hot and what's not. The C/F market is no different and if you are going to stay on top of the game, put together your C/F wish list now and start saving. Justin Grubb <http://www.InjectedPerformance.com/>