

# My Car Scored 18 Points Higher on its IQ Test Than Me!

## Tales From the Darkside in Austin, Texas

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*Article by: Frank Bellucci*

If I had my druthers, I'd buy an island with no plains, trains or automobiles. I'd probably donate my blackberry to somebody at Dell, give my cell phone to somebody in a prison cell, and fire that computer lady on the phone that always says, "hmmm, I didn't quite get that, did you say muster service?" You know where I'm going with this article. This is the part where I say things have gotten far too complicated. I'm either getting slower and stupider or the rest of the world is getting faster and sharper. I always used to be the guy on the cutting edge. Now I'm the guy who always hits the wrong button at the ATM and has to cancel the transaction and start over.

Cars are even worse. There can be hundreds of diagnostics codes, 14 million miles of wire (ok, maybe not quite that much), thousands of parts, and an endless list of things that can break and set off that little devil I call the Check Engine Light. I think these guys who build cars need to stop making cars smarter and just make cars again. I'm not interested in a car that can toast my toast, play DVDs while I'm trying to drive, or have voice activation so I can be misunderstood more than I already am.

The short of it is I have an inferiority complex. My car should not have an IQ higher than mine. But it does. Fortunately, the guys who work in my repair shop are smarter than me and generally smarter than our cars. They talk a lot to the cars. I think our guys think the cars are alive. Maybe they're right.

It's my opinion that it's been a long time since most of your run-of-the-mill mechanics could fix most cars. Today, gosh darn it, the guy has to be a black belt computer technician, an MIT physicist for analyzing real time temperature traces, and a master troubleshooter with skills once reserved for engineers working on the first moon shot. If you wonder why you sometimes have trouble finding a mechanic that knows how to fix your car, it's because it's hard to find rocket scientists. And you pretty much "do" need a rocket scientist to fix complex problems on today's cars. One rocket scientist badge in the automotive repair world is called "Master ASE certified". To get this badge of car repair honor, the technician must pass a tough set of tests covering many aspects of repair. Think of these guys as gurus. There are not many of them around. You're on the right track if you see the "master" word in front of the "ASE". If your mechanic has just an ASE rating, that's a good start. But think of these guys like students of Karate with their first belt. The Master ASE guy has all the belts.

Car complexity has been growing over many years. Even my dad complained about it. He used to tell us that power windows were a waste of money since they had more parts and more parts meant more things to fix. He was right. More things to break do mean more things break. In my early days, he would fix his own cars. Eventually cars got so complicated that he didn't even try to fix them anymore. To me, that underscores how complicated our lives have become.

The short of it is, I just want to go to Italy, buy a small house, and pick olives all day while my beautiful wife, Sandy, works in her herb garden. I want a car with no power windows (specifically a horse), a radio with only 3 stations, and a body that Fabio would envy. I want less designer lighting and a whole lot more candles. I want less machines and more good times. I want a lot of things. But the thing I want less of is all the complicated things.

© 2006 Performance Motors Frank Bellucci is the President of Performance Motors in Austin, Texas. In addition, he likes to think of himself as a rather funny person. His wife doesn't agree. But that's OK. Frank seems to have limitless funny experiences with cars, one of his great passions in life. You can catch Frank driving down 183 in Austin in his Land Rover. He loves his Rover more than wine. And he really likes wine (just not at the same time). Anyhow, look for articles that have good information with a bit of humor in the coming months! Visit Frank at <http://www.perfmotors.com>