

That New Car Smell - Tales from the Darkside in Austin, Texas

Article by: Frank Bellucci

If you're anything like me, you love that New Car Smell. There's no smell quite like it in the whole world. I think the carmaker guys spend a lot of time enhancing it since they know it makes us buy cars faster than Margaritas on Cinco De Mayo. It's the same strategy the fast food guys use. You know what I mean. You drive by and there's some short and skinny guy up in the fast food chimney fanning out the burger and fries smell so you can't help it but stop and buy the Biggie Burger and the Figgy Fries. The problem is it's only about 1 hour after you're done wolfing your food before you wish you hadn't gone to Biggie Burgers and about 1 month before you wish you hadn't gone to Super Daddy's Western Car Dealership.

That's the thing about it. New cars seem like a savvy move when you buy them since for only \$349 a month + tax + title + down you can have a great car. I can never quite get the final price of the lease, however, since I can't add up all those plus signs. They make my calculator's head hurt. I have to go to the dealer where they have the SuperCalc 5000 leasing computer, which always informs me that my true price will be \$100 or \$200 higher per month! That's especially true after I order the Soft Serve ice cream maker option and the Daffodil Lilac scented lambskin covers.

I haven't bought a new car in almost ten years and my cars still run like new. Ok, I do have a shop full of car experts who take care of them, but the reality is I still have to fix them when they break. But even if you're paying normal shop rates, I can't figure out how a new car wins the battle of the financial planning.

Let's do some simple math. You could go out and buy a 4-year old car and spend say, \$15,000. Or you could buy the same car for \$30,000+higher taxes+higher insurance. In this example, you'd save at least a delta of about \$15,000 or \$3,000 for each of the next five years. \$3,000 is quite a safety cushion for yearly repair bills. When was the last time you spent that much on your car in a given year? Add on the fact that you can buy an extended warranty and your risk drops even further.

I know, though, the little devil in your ear is still begging you to buy the Cayman – S. Hey, I have my eyes on it to. It looks like a sharp performer and sexy as well. And maybe ladies will finally admire me even as I push my gray hairs out of my eyes as I ask them to repeat their compliments since my hearing isn't what it used to be. Ok, back to reality.

A good shop can be your best friend if you decide to do the financially prudent thing in buying a pre-owned car. A local shop, owned by families or individuals, will get to know you and your car as it's serviced (if they're any good at what they do). That's a big deal and a huge benefit over places with big shiny buildings that can't remember your first or last name when you come in. You know the kinds of places I'm talking about where you pay the repair bill and some nice young lady pulls up a microphone and says, "Please bring 10-10-1948-23-3029 to the front, customer waiting".

In a smaller shop, it's a lot different. Your car will probably be there parked and ready for you to drive off and the shop manager will simply hand you your keys and thank you for your business –and will probably know both your first and last name. Small shops will also get to know your car's history so that you can head off problems down the road and service things early before they turn into big problems. And if it's a truly great shop, the same mechanic will work on your car each time so that there is a working knowledge base in his head about your car – that can be far more effective than just what's put in the computer database.

Well that's it for today; I have to go do some other stuff now. But I hope you enjoyed my story and thanks for reading! 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>.