ORIGINAL ENGINE MANAGEMENT

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ON THE MOVE

The demise of the PCV Valve!

I've spoken about this often overlooked preventative maintenance item before. Unmetered air leaking past a PCV valve that has not been replaced can lead to all kinds of hard to diagnose symptoms. With the advent of Variable Valve Timing, manufacturers are beginning to do away with this part altogether and control crankcase emissions via valve timing. Who are you buying your PCV valves from? If not OEM, why not? I ask because we have recently changed a few folks over to our PCV's for several reasons. Cost is always a factor, but the ability to order 1 each when needed and the ability to let them "ride free" on their prepaid engine management orders also came into play. As PCV's begin to be phased out, they will inevitably become a more price sensitive item as the fleet of vehicles they fit ages. Certainly not an expensive part to begin with, but we all know how price sensitive our customer base can be. Being a relatively small and inexpensive category, I'm sure it's not on the top of your list of products to review. I would invite you to look at OEM and the ranking included with this month's newsletter. Perhaps a brief review will simplify your ordering and inventory needs on this product group – and allow you to increase your margins as well. Let's face it, none of us will retire off PCV valve sales, but every little bit helps!

Do you know me?

This rare and vintage part was patented in 1929 by the Rocher company and actually has three separate functions. Two of the three are typically not found on modern vehicles!

Quick Tip of the Month!

Spark plugs are a hot topic of Internet Master Technicians! But what about spark plug selection and coil life? Here's some data gleaned from several of the spark plug manufacturers. All spark plugs have copper cores, the tips are typically copper/nickel, platinum or Iridium. Replacement intervals (tip wear) are typically 18K-27K miles for copper/nickel, 42K-48K for platinum and around 72K for iridium. So how does this impact coil life? All these plugs take about the same spark energy to fire when new. There is some variance due to materials and design, but they are not very significant.
The need for increased spark energy to fire the plug largely comes from increased gap and the "sharpness" of the electrode edges. As plugs "wear" the gap increases and the edges of the electrode round off requiring more spark energy to fire efficiently. Too much energy (and heat) and the coil may fail. Many customers want a less expensive spark plug when it comes time to replace them. Using a less expensive copper/nickel plug in place of an iridium can be done – but they will need to be replaced 3-4 times before the iridium plug. Platinum plugs will need replacement almost twice before the iridium. Besides the plug cost, labor must also be factored in. If a copper/nickel plug is installed and the customer tries for the same maintenance interval as the iridium, they may very well also need to purchase a new coil (or several). Understanding the "false economy" of "cheaper" plugs will save your customer big money in the long run!

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Do You Know Me?

Rocher Primer/Inflator Spark plug! Yes a spark plug that has an opening to add fuel to prime the engine (or open to release compression if hand cranking) and was also designed to be used as a tire inflator while still providing spark for the engine to run. It came with a small t-handle tool to operate the valve.