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Sunday Drive



Site offers divine intervention for auto issues

School started and the days are noticeably shorter. Summer isn't over yet, but its days definitely are numbered.

The changing of the seasons always brings with it certain chores that you should attend to if you want to keep the stuff in

your life in good working order. Car owners should address certain things in anticipation of cooler weather: Tires, electrical systems, cooling systems and various other

systems and parts of your car need to be in good working order so you can start and operate it under adverse (bone-chilling cold) weather conditions.

Most people trust their mechanic to take care of their cars, but for do-it-your-selves there are many publications and websites that offer advice and instruction. **CarBibles.com** is a site that gives lots of good information on cars along with a little attitude from the author, Christopher Longhurst.

Mr. Longhurst, a computer graphics artist who works mostly on flight simulators, likes to tinker with cars and motorcycles on the side. Unable to find a website that contained all of the information on cars that he wanted, he decided to make it himself.

British roots

He's originally from England, but now lives in the United States. His English roots surface throughout his writing with references to motorbikes, tyres and petrol, not to mention his frequent use of metric units. However, the information he shares works on both sides of the Atlantic for the most part, and it is well researched and helpful. His English humor also surfaces throughout his writing which is full of wit, with a dash of disdain for those who don't care for — or drive — their cars properly.

The homepage features a list of links to the various car bibles on the site. Each link also has a little icon next to it that represents the subject. There are bibles for engine oil, brakes, transmissions, "tyres" and more. In addition to the bibles, there are other less holy sections on maintenance, insurance, product reviews, fuel econ-

omy, speeding and the 10 most dangerous roads in the U.K.

The interior pages associated with the links mostly are laid out in a similar fashion. A banner at the top displays the site's name, CarBibles.com, over a background of gold-colored gears. Below that is a navigation bar repeating the links to all the other sections in the site. On the right hand side are the author's latest blog entries, where he muses and rants about the deficiencies of other drivers. The bulk of the pages are devoted to the subject of the link.

General to specific

Typically, the sections start with a general description of what the particular system does, and how it does it. These are well written and easily understood by any layperson. As you get deeper into a section, it becomes more technical. The history and physics behind the mechanics are explained, often accompanied by visuals, including Mr. Longhurst's own excellent 3D computer illustrations.

Backyard mechanics will find this site to be helpful and informative. The information is generic, as opposed to focusing on specific car models, but much

of it is relative to most cars. Things like oil, tires and routine maintenance are handled the same way in different vehicles. There are often instructions or links to direct you to sources for specific model information when necessary.

There's a section on the site called Fun where the author shares his thoughts on intrusive technology and bad drivers. He shares some funny and valid insights on how auto makers are creating dumber drivers by trying to idiot-proof vehicles with technology. His mantra could be "pay attention and learn to drive."

There's a noticeable difference in visual style between the homepage and the inside pages, and there's no link back to the homepage from inside. The illustrations should be used bigger to break up all of the type and make it more visually appealing. Despite some minor design flaws, CarBibles is an engaging and useful site where vehicle owners can easily spend time researching automotive issues or just reading for fun.

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KEVIN O'NEILL

InSites