

3- Gas prices

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Q: I'm not sure how many people are subscribed to this list, but I have a VERY keen interest, given the skyrocketing price of gas (\$1.85/gal right now), in making and running my vehicles on an alternative fuel.
John,

A: You think that's bad. I am in London right now, where gasoline (they call it petrol) is over \$5.00/gallon. It sells for £0.809 per litre, and since 4 litres = approx one gallon, and the exchange rate from pounds to dollars is \$1.60, **this works out to 4 x .80p x 1.6 = \$5.17/gallon.**

There are similar prices in other parts of Europe and even in Asian countries. Let's hear from others what it is around the world! The worst part of this is that over 50% of this is taxes going to send Tony Blair's bombers and troops into Iraq to support Bush's war for oil. I have a '93 Toyota Previa, and a '93 Nissan pickup. My biggest concern about making the change is what types of conversions do I need to affect in these vehicles in order to feel confident about running ethanol through them? Look at my website page entitled "Going on the Road". In addition to the text on this page, there are a couple of very good links to help you out with more recent innovations since the '67 VW Beetle.

A few other questions: There was mention of a downloadable format for the plans instead of a hard copy mailed. This option was mentioned at \$20.00. Has that been implemented?

Yes, you can order the Adobe.pdf files only, but really, there is a much clearer layout with additional drawings on the hardcopy of the blueprints, so it is worth the extra \$10.00, I think. But if you can only afford \$20.00, just change the amount on the Paypal form when you click the link on my website, and you will still get the 40 pages of photos, instructions, and separate drawing of the still cut-away. And has a less expensive valve been found, instead of the \$395.00 valve? I know there was mention of a search for that also.

I sell it now for \$290.00, not \$395.00. You may be remembering a much older version of my web site. If I can find a cheaper one, I will sell it cheaper. I recently heard from one of my customers who is trying to work out an electric solenoid version of this. Anyone who comes up with such a device is free to post this info on this newsletter, to share with all. I will always be checking it out myself to see that it is done safely, and to make this technology more affordable for more people.

I have friends who are interested in all of this information, and even sharing a still if we can feel confident about any conversions that would need to be done on our vehicles. It is a big step to convert your car to ethanol, and even through many years of making my own alcohol, I never did a full on conversion on my own car, only on "project cars" which my friends and I put together as part of our group. We had the use of a member's automotive shop, as well as other times when we got together in groups of 6 or 8 people to do a group effort of a major conversion in a weekend, such as on Les Wescamp's 56 Chevy pickup. We got 18 mpg on a 6-banger that formerly got 16 mpg. I think all we did to change the compression, if I remember right, was to increase the stroke with longer rods, and hemispherical heads to match the higher top dead center or the stroke. But I wasn't the car guy, that was Jody. I focused on the still: making and running it. We were teaching classes as the main activity of our group,
Californian Alcohol Fuel Producers Association, back in 1979-1982.

I used to just pull out the manual choke to make for a slightly richer fuel supply, and my Volkswagens and Ford trucks ran just fine. But this was also Calif. in the summer, too. In Boulder, I drove a 1985 VW Rabbit that a friend had converted for the huge cost of \$20.00 (the price of a spare oversized carburetor jet and gasket kit). He didn't add any kind of fuel pre heater, so it stuttered a bit when starting out from a stoplight. otherwise, it ran fine. No change in compression, but it still worked OK. It would have gotten a lot better mileage with increased compression. But hey, gasoline is only about 18 to 20% efficient in internal combustion engines, so if we are using a lower heat value fuel, and getting about 20% lower mileage without doing a major overhaul, we are still much more efficient than going to war over some black gooey stuff that we buy to drive to the store. Thanks! John