

**Wheels:** An e-mail from Lee says, "I have a 2000 Ford Focus ZX3 with the Zetec engine. I have been good about oil changes between 3000 and 5000 miles. I drive to Cincinnati to work so the majority of the 112,000 miles is highway variety. I had the oil changed a couple of weeks ago and almost immediately began smelling a burnt oil smell while driving in town. I filed it away to the shop allowing some oil to drip on the tailpipe under the filter while it was being taken off, although I had never had this problem before. I was back at the shop again yesterday and mentioned the smell to them and they put it up on the lift and we all took a look at it. We did not see any oil or residue on the pipe or evidence of oil having dripped in that area. I am not showing any evidence of burning oil, no blue smoke, and still showing full on the dipstick. I am not losing any power and the coolant temperature has not changed since it was a new car. I would not be overly concerned about the smell, but I had a 1989 Taurus that basically cooked and crystallized the oil in the engine and I am starting to think the same thing is happening. What should I be looking for?"

**Halderman:** I too have had the burned oil odor after changing the oil due to oil dripping from the filter and/or drain plug onto a cross member. When driving, air, acceleration, and braking forces can cause the oil to get onto the exhaust and that is when the smell occurs. The smell may last for several weeks. Maybe a small amount of oil dripped from the container when the oil was added and is not visible. I doubt that the smell is being caused by oil sludge or other reasons inside the engine.

