

WHEELS: *James W. writes by e-mail: “My fiancée has a 2003 Cadillac Deville with 54,907 miles that uses a quart of oil every 300 to 400 miles. It has the 32 valve 8 cylinder Northstar engine. There are no leaks, as the garage floor is clean and we see no signs of it being burned and no blue smoke. We use SAE 5W-30 engine oil as per manufacturer’s directions. Any suggestions? Thanks for your reply”.*

Halderman: This is a common situation (pattern failure) yet relatively easy to fix. The cause is usually stuck piston rings and most commonly occurs when the vehicle is not driven much. Ask a shop to perform a de-carbonization process to free the stuck piston rings. What is happening is that the rings need to twist to seal properly and this is what happens during normal usage. However, it appears that the vehicle is not being driven very far as it has less than 55,000 miles on it and it is about 8 years old. Carbon is a by-product of the combustion process inside the engine. If this carbon is allowed to buildup, then the rings are not able to seal properly. The oil usage is occurring when oil gets past the piston rings and flows into the combustion chamber where it is burned. The amount is very small and most of it is consumed in the catalytic converter so it is not visible out the tail pipe.

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