



EUROPEAN CARS VS THE OTHERS: A SERVICE COST COMPARISON

We know what you are thinking: “Parolin’s has such beautiful cars at such affordable prices that there has to be a catch”. Most people assume the catch of European cars is costly service and expensive parts. Is this the case? If you could guess *how much more*, what would you guess? Double? Triple? You’ll be relieved to find that owning and servicing these cars with us is not only a very realistic proposition, it could actually be cheaper than many more conventional cars available through local franchised dealers.

The following table studies the parts and labour costs of several service items that any car, no matter the make, will require at some point. Are the European cars always the cheapest? No, they aren’t, but they aren’t double or triple either. Most importantly, once you drive one, you’ll realize that they’re worth it.

NOTES & ANALYSIS

Parolin’s shop rate is the lowest in North Bay when compared to other franchised car dealers. When compared to the rates of European car dealers in Southern Ontario, our rate is much cheaper. Our low labour rate helps narrow the gap (when there is one) to the servicing costs of our competition.

In this study, our oil change prices are higher because the three European cars studied all require synthetic oil. We use Castrol Edge full synthetic which affords a normal interval of 12,000 km or one year between changes. Bar the Toyota, all other cars in the study use a normal non-synthetic oil which generally should be changed every 5,000 to 6,000 km.

Given the less frequent oil change schedule of European cars, the difference in the yearly cost for oil changes becomes negligible.

The purpose of this study is to compare each car’s average cost to show that if European cars are more expensive to service, it’s not nearly as much as you think. Also, in some cases, servicing the non-European cars can be nearly as costly as a BMW or Audi!

EUROPEAN VS THE MODERATELY PRICED

If we are to average the costs of the three European cars and compare that figure to the average of the three least expensive cars in this study (Ford, Mazda, Honda) we find that the European cars are 66% more expensive. Just like you thought, right? But, don’t forget, we are comparing the three *cheapest* cars. One test drive of a 2009 Audi A4 Quattro, with its industry leading all-wheel drive system, back-to-back against a Ford Fusion or a Mazda 6 and 66% will seem like a bargain. Or how about the dynamic excellence of a BMW 3 series? Or the class leading

comfort and safety of a Volvo? Point being, anyone of these European cars offers so many more tangible qualities that many a customer will be able to justify a 100% increase in service costs, but they won't have to.

EUROPEAN VS THE COSTLY

The next group we will review includes the Camry Hybrid, the Forester, and Korea's answer to German entry-level luxury, the Genesis. Now, a price comparison here leaves us with a paltry 3% differential. Yes, that's right, in this study, a European car is only 3% more expensive to maintain than a Hyundai (What has this automotive world come to?). The reader will note the model selection—we have leveled the playing field. No one will argue that the engineering behind this group of

cars is not complex, but we can also conclude it has driven the servicing costs up and placed them in line with the Europeans. Much like the Europeans, most of the parts for these cars are specialized and many must be imported, driving costs up. At 3%, we can almost call it a tie as they cost nearly as much as the more advanced European offerings.

EUROPEAN VS THE COSTLIEST

Perhaps not the most expensive, but definitely the most surprising, are the costs involved with servicing a Kia or a GM product like a Chevy Malibu. Without a doubt, the two worst cars of the study (many consumer publications would agree) and quite in the ballpark of servicing costs associated with vastly superior pieces of automotive

	EUROPEAN			THE MODERATELY PRICED		
	BMW 328i	VOLVO S60 2.5T	AUDI A4 2.0T	FORD FUSION SEL	MAZDA 6 GS	HONDA ACCORD LX
DEALER LABOUR RATE	\$90.00	\$90.00	\$90.00	\$99.99	\$105.00	\$98.00
OIL CHANGE W/ LABOUR	\$111.00 SYN.	\$90.86 SYN.	\$78.00 SYN.	\$59.99	\$47.98	\$43.88
BATTERY	\$311.00	\$201.65	\$227.00	\$207.49	\$182.67	\$183.59
ENGINE AIR FILTER	\$75.00	\$59.55	\$68.56	\$41.98	\$40.71	\$48.06
CABIN AIR FILTER	\$100.50	\$87.31	\$76.66	N/A	\$46.47	\$86.15
FRONT BRAKES (PADS & ROTORS)	\$536.40	\$513.59	\$578.00	\$396.46	\$355.46	\$352.88
REAR BRAKES (PADS & ROTORS)	\$475.20	\$463.27	\$446.00	\$377.50	\$338.95	\$352.88
WATER PUMP	\$672.00	\$501.66	\$710.00	\$387.76	\$378.49	\$357.80
FRONT STRUTS	\$846.00	\$785.98	\$712.00	\$366.88	\$398.49	\$585.08
REAR SHOCKS	\$488.00	\$514.86	\$608.00	\$324.22	\$312.40	\$304.04
AVERAGE	\$401.68	\$357.64	\$389.35	\$270.28	\$233.53	\$257.15

All prices include parts and labour.

	EUROPEAN			THE COSTLY		
	BMW 328i	VOLVO S60 2.5T	AUDI A4 2.0T	TOYOTA CAMRY HYBRID	SUBARU FORESTER	HYUNDAI GENESIS V8
DEALER LABOUR RATE	\$90.00	\$90.00	\$90.00	\$108.00	\$99.00	\$100.00
OIL CHANGE W/ LABOUR	\$111.00 SYN.	\$90.86 SYN.	\$78.00 SYN.	\$54.95 OW20 SYN.	\$60.62	\$79.95
BATTERY	\$311.00	\$201.65	\$227.00	\$555.50	\$105.00	\$310.60
ENGINE AIR FILTER	\$75.00	\$59.55	\$68.56	\$58.35	\$70.58	\$63.91
CABIN AIR FILTER	\$100.50	\$87.31	\$76.66	\$76.15	\$86.95	\$88.75
FRONT BRAKES (PADS & ROTORS)	\$536.40	\$513.59	\$578.00	\$393.79	\$500.00	\$520.49
REAR BRAKES (PADS & ROTORS)	\$475.20	\$463.27	\$446.00	\$393.79	\$500.00	\$443.31
WATER PUMP	\$672.00	\$501.66	\$710.00	\$396.30	\$621.24	\$491.74
FRONT STRUTS	\$846.00	\$785.98	\$712.00	\$625.00	\$635.74	\$951.06
REAR SHOCKS	\$488.00	\$514.86	\$608.00	\$701.20	\$707.40	\$532.02
AVERAGE	\$401.68	\$357.64	\$389.35	\$361.67	\$365.25	\$386.87

	EUROPEAN			THE COSTLIEST	
	BMW 328i	VOLVO S60 2.5T	AUDI A4 2.0T	KIA RONDO LX	CHEVROLET MALIBU LTZ
DEALER LABOUR RATE	\$90.00	\$90.00	\$90.00	\$99.95	\$115.00
OIL CHANGE W/ LABOUR	\$111.00 SYN.	\$90.86 SYN.	\$78.00 SYN.	\$31.95	\$42.95
BATTERY	\$311.00	\$201.65	\$227.00	\$195.48	\$240.79
ENGINE AIR FILTER	\$75.00	\$59.55	\$68.56	\$50.15	\$77.70
CABIN AIR FILTER	\$100.50	\$87.31	\$76.66	\$70.31	N/A
FRONT BRAKES (PADS & ROTORS)	\$536.40	\$513.59	\$578.00	\$521.72	\$377.52
REAR BRAKES (PADS & ROTORS)	\$475.20	\$463.27	\$446.00	\$548.25	\$346.07
WATER PUMP	\$672.00	\$501.66	\$710.00	\$478.00	\$848.55
FRONT STRUTS	\$846.00	\$785.98	\$712.00	\$765.35	\$682.50
REAR SHOCKS	\$488.00	\$514.86	\$608.00	\$584.43	\$373.50
AVERAGE	\$401.68	\$357.64	\$389.35	\$360.62	\$373.69

All prices include parts and labour.

engineering (BMW, Audi, Volvo). We know, it's crazy, but the rear brakes on a questionably styled Korean econohatch are more expensive than a BMW! The braking performance of a Kia Rondo isn't even in the same galaxy as a BMW 3 series, yet they are similar money. What gives? The Chev Malibu, however, might take the cake with average servicing costs higher than the Volvo and only 4% less than the Audi. We are talking about a car that does not even possess a cabin air filter (Ford Fusion, too). The "N/A" in the chart insinuates that GM engineers believe their customers are not interested in having pollen and other particulates screened out for fresh interior breathing. If the unfiltered air doesn't make a Malibu owner sick, paying nearly a thousand dollars for a water pump at the Goodwrench service shop certainly will. Two thumbs down to both Kia and GM for basic servicing costs, quite frankly some of these

prices are appalling. Those servicing costs for the European cars don't look so bad now, do they?

This study was compiled with parts prices acquired directly from various parts departments at dealerships in Ontario. Parts were looked up by vehicle identification number (VIN) and were 2009 models to keep things even. All prices are for original equipment manufacturer (OEM) parts, commonly known as "genuine parts". The labour figures used are all from the Mitchell Labour Times Guide to keep everything as fair as possible. The exception is the BMW parts, which are based on special BMW service pricing available at BMW dealerships in Canada. This study was difficult to compile and every effort was made to maintain accuracy. Dealers may sell for less or more for various reasons but we feel, with the formula used, we were able to deliver an accurate study. 🍷