Tom Hundt's Infomonger Pages Mercedes-Benz Tinkering - 380 V8 Timing Chain Inspection

The first thing anybody asks you when you say you have a 380SL for sale is: "Does it have the double-row timing chain?"

The timing chain issue is a well-known problem with the early eighties' US-version 380 V8 engines. These came with a single-row timing chain, which tend to break, with cata\$trophic results (typically bent valves, basically requiring a rebuild). The solution is to not wait that long, and retrofit a double-row chain.

The double-row chains still can break, but it's much, much less likely.

If it's about to "go", you'll hear a slapping noise when you start the car (until the oil pressure builds up). If you hear that, you might want to consider towing the car to the mechanic.

So how do you tell?

I wondered this myself, and found references on the Internet to "just get a mirror and stick it in the oil filler and look at the chain". Well, it took me a little while to figure it out. Let me try to save you some time.

Get yourself one of those "dentist's mirror" things (the automotive version; Sears sells them) and a flashlight.

Open your oil filler cap and have a look around:



Mercedes-Benz - Timing Chain Inspection 380 V8 Engines

Stick the mirror above the camshaft, bent so you can look to the right (i.e., to the front of the engine, where the timing chain runs). (c) 2003 Thomas Hundt



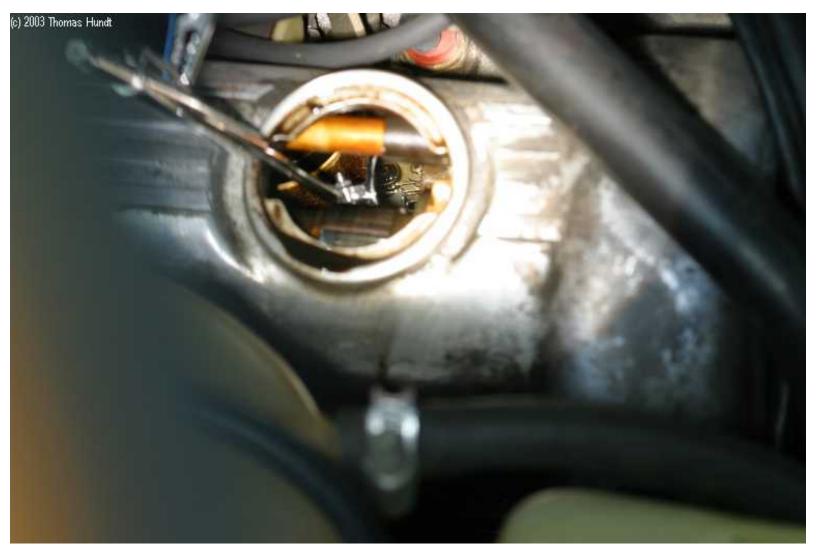
Angle it to where you can see the chain (it's all the way on the front of the engine):

Mercedes-Benz - Timing Chain Inspection 380 V8 Engines

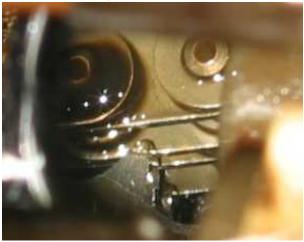


Here is what you want to see:

Mercedes-Benz - Timing Chain Inspection 380 V8 Engines



Two chains side-by-side:



Happy hunting!

[Home] [Feedback] © T. Hundt - All rights reserved. <u>thundt@slack.net</u>