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Memoirs of a Hack Mechanic

(a memoir with actual useful stuff)

How Fixing Broken BMWs Helped Make Me Whole

by Rob Siegel

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Rob removing the engine from Maire Anne's '72 VW Bus in preparation for rebuild and transplant into a '68 VW Camper.
(Photo by Maire Anne Diamond)



Putting the coupe to bed for the winter. This photo, shot by Yale Rachlin, so beautifully captures the care and intimacy that men are capable of feeling for their car.
(Photo by Yale Rachlin)



The '73 Malaga 2002 with camping gear at a Colorado trail head. Tucked into the backpack is the engagement ring Rob would give Maire Anne at the summit.
(Photo by Rob Siegel)

For over 25 years Rob Siegel has written a monthly column called "The Hack Mechanic" for the BMW Car Club of America's magazine *Roundel*. In **Memoirs of a Hack Mechanic**, Siegel shares his secrets to buying, fixing, and driving cool cars without risking the kids' tuition money or destroying his marriage. And that's something to brag about considering the dozens of cars, including twenty-five BMW 2002s, that have passed through his garage over the past three decades.

A geophysicist by day and self-professed car junkie in his free time, Siegel explores his passion for cars with unflinching honesty and offers a unique window into the Car Guy mind. Along the way he reflects on the genesis of his fascination with boxy little German sedans, the miserable Triumph GT6+ he owned in college, rebuilding the engine of his wife's VW bus in the kitchen of their first apartment, how cars affect family dynamics, and why men really love cars. And in showing how cars have repeatedly been the conduit for deep human connections in his life, Siegel reveals his controversial theory that beyond their greasy fingernails, gearheads are actually intimate, caring creatures. Siegel also explains why, in a world over which we have so little control, the act of diagnosing and painstakingly fixing broken cars can be immensely therapeutic. Just don't ask him to fix other people's cars!

With a steady dose of irreverent humor, **Memoirs of a Hack Mechanic** blends car stories, DIY advice, and cautionary tales in a way that will resonate with the car-obsessed (and the people who love them).

"It is heartfelt; it is quirky; and it is mine - a memoir with actual useful stuff. Who else is going to tell you car stories, give you parenting tips, and tell you how to burn out a snapped-off stud with an oxyacetylene torch?"
- Rob Siegel, *Roundel* - October 2012