

DOES IT WORK? Or is it Snake Oil?



Skinned Knuckles begins a series on a variety of products to determine whether they are worthwhile in making your restoration project better and easier, or whether they will merely help you empty your wallet while making someone else rich and happy. These products have been tested in the field, not in the laboratory, in order to come to a real-life conclusion as to whether or not you should shell out your hard-earned cash....

edited by Neil Maken



I am a skeptic. I believe that if it sounds too good to be true, more than likely it is. For eons, man has been promising great things - turning lead into gold, or water into wine. Sometimes it works; most of the time it's a pie-in-the-sky dream or a scam to separate man from his money.

So naturally I was dubious when a reader of *Skinned Knuckles*, and a personal friend as

well, telephoned me to tell me about a product that he discovered. It is White Shepherd Oil Stop Leak and Conditioner. Never, I told him, would I put a product into my oil that particulates out and can block the tiny oil galleries, get into the bearings or otherwise do internal damage to my engine. Nor, I continued, should you - a professional mechanic by trade! He agreed, but assured me that White Shepherd did not stop leaks by plugging holes with a glue, gum or solids held in solution. He, very frankly, did not know how or why it worked. But he did pour a bottle into the crankcase of his 1953 Studebaker truck. The truck had a number of oil leaks, most small and just annoying, but two considerably more conspicuous. One of them was the rear main seal. It was dripping badly, and he promised himself to one day rip it out and replace it. The other leak was the drain plug. Tightening it did no good. But after putting the White Shepherd Oil Stop

Leak into the engine, the small leaks stopped and even the rear main seal leak slowed considerably and within a couple of days stopped completely.

One of my very own cars suffered from a similar leak - the rear main seal. But in order to replace my rear main, the drive shaft, transmission, clutch and flywheel have to be removed. It was easier (although environmentally less friendly) just to refill the crankcase every few days. I figured that during the winter I'd get around to doing the rear main seal. But I tried the White Shepherd. What did I have to lose? I didn't figure that it would make the problem worse, although I never expected it to stop the leak either. And it didn't. But it sure slowed it down! The drip pan under my car was wet every morning until I put in the eight ounce bottle of White Shepherd. Now there is a lot less oil dripping out. I still have to go through the process of dropping my drive train and lowering the crankshaft to change my rear main seal, but it is no longer a front-burner project.

The third test was in a 1955 Chevy six-cylinder engine. It was suffering from a serious rear main seal leak. It was bad enough that we doubted that anything other than a new seal would do the job. Since the instructions on the container suggest that the product be added before the engine is going to be run for a couple of hours (or until the leak has stopped) the owner of the third vehicle waited until he had to drive about two hours round-trip before adding the fluid to his crankcase.

If it is possible, he is even more of a skeptic than I am, but nevertheless he gave it a shot. And, to his surprise the White Shepherd radically slowed the

leak. He is not certain that it didn't stop it completely - the remaining leak (much, much less than before though) may be due to another source or residual oil from the earlier leaking. But the rear main seal leak has slowed significantly.

White Shepherd is one of three products marketed by Universal Products out of Baltimore, MD. They also market a coolant stop leak and an air conditioner stop leak. For the White Shepherd product their website promises:

- Has the remarkable ability to repair and seal leaks in power steering, differentials, rack & pinion steering, and even hydraulic systems.
- Contains no solid or particulate matter. It is non-clogging and will not harm your engine.
- Bonds to metal, aluminum, cast, alloy or plastic.
- Is safe and easy to use.
- Works on gasoline or diesel engines.
- Is a permanent sealer.

When questioned how the product worked, we were told by the company's representative that the White Shepherd revitalizes rubber by softening the seals and restoring them to their flexible, original condition within a couple of days. When asked whether the White Shepherd Stop Leak had to be added to the crankcase each time that the oil was changed, we were told, "No. It is a permanent product." Once the seals and gaskets are again working, the sealer needn't be replenished in the crankcase.

How long is 'permanent'? I can't tell you - weeks? Months? Years? We all know that if we have an oil leak, there is a reason, and that realistically the only 'fix' is to locate and repair it. The White Shepherd will not fill cracks in an oil pan, and a very serious leak is not going to be stopped by this product. It is designed to do one thing: restore the flexibility to rubber and help keep the oil inside the engine where it belongs. Leaks caused by serious wear, bad rings, or, in the case of the leaking drain plug, no. Those things will have to be repaired through mechanical methods.

But the in-the-car tests that we did proved more successful than not.

The other two products marketed by Universal Products were not tested. Red Angel is an air-conditioner stop leak, promising to "repair and seal leaks in the evaporators, condensers, gaskets & O-rings, and connection hoses." The company

claims that it "contains no solid or particulate matter, is non-clogging and will not harm your A/C system or recovery system." Further claims include, "Bonds forming a chemical weld and sealing the leak." Blue Devil, an engine and coolant sealer, makes claims that I would have to see before I could believe. "Has the remarkable ability to repair and seal leaks in freeze plugs, leaking radiators and heater cores, *cracked or warped heads, even a blown head gasket.*" (The italics are mine.) Again, they claim that the product "Contains no solid or particulate matter. It is non-clogging and will not harm your engine." It can be used in metal, aluminum, cast, alloy or plastic systems, but you are admonished not to use it in Northstar engines.

Maybe these other products work too. Not having tested them, we cannot say. If any readers are interested in trying these products, at their own risk, contact us and we will see about trying them and reporting on the results in a future issue.

These products are available in a number of auto parts stores across the country. To find a retailer near you, go to the Universal Product's website, www.gouniversalproducts.com, click on 'store locator' and find a retailer near you.

Does the White Shepherd Oil Stop Leak and Conditioner really work? Well, in three tests out of three the oil leaks either stopped completely or were significantly and noticeably reduced. We cannot judge what the permanency of the product is, but at the reasonable price of about \$20.00 for an 8 oz. bottle (an adequate amount for a normal size engine) it can save a lot of hard work. Or at least delay that job until you are more in the mood to do it.

S.K.

<p>Universal Products Inc. 5626 Southwestern Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21227 www.gouniversalproducts.com Tech Support: 1-888-863-0426</p> <p>WHITE SHEPHERD OIL STOP LEAK & CONDITIONER</p>	<p>WE RATE THIS PRODUCT...</p> 
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This conclusion was based on casual field tests, and although objective, is not a guarantee that the product will work for you. We would be interested in hearing the results of your experience.

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