

Hi everyone,

I bought a car on Friday and that's a big cross in my huge checking-list of settling in LA. It's a Ford Escort LX, 2 doors, automatic and fully equipped: air-condition, electronic safety belts and a quadraphonic set with "Julio Iglesias singing up the ass" as the *Gashash* has put it (more or less). Condition "damn good", as the mechanic who checked it for me said, and the minor problems which he did find were fixed by the seller. The seller is an Israeli who owns a rent-a-car company. This was a rented car (a well treated one) and he sold it to me for \$3500 instead of \$4500 or \$5500 according to 2 different used-car-price-guides. That Israeli dealer was very warmly recommended to me by our neighbor, Prof. Meir Roston (an English Prof. from Bar-Ilan; an old wise and intellectual person that one trusts loves and respects after only 3 minutes of conversation). He had only good things to tell me about that car-dealer (sounds like contradiction in terms, doesn't it?), with whom he and his friends had and still have very good experience, whenever they return to LA. The mechanic who checked the car and two car-insurance agents were very impressed by this low price. So, as it looks right now, this bargain is much better than my last one in April 1987 (the sheet Peugeot 104 I bought...).

Now, I need to find a car insurance company that won't rip my skin off. I talked with so many thus far. In order to get a phone quote (that means, in simple English, the policy price), you need to answer first a long series of non-relevant questions (name, first name, zip code) as well as relevant ones (age, number of drivers, and how long do you have a Californian driving license). This last question is the hardest of them all! See - I don't have yet a local license. In order to get one, I need a car to drive with. This car, however, must be insured. I guess you can see the catchy loop (or, as Tadmor or Zwas put it: "Tse-vat be-tse-vat a-su-ya"; got it?). Some agents admitted that it sounds like a problem; others told me that they can do something "especially for me". Anyway - prices for third-party only (liability; I learned the terminology quite quick) is around \$1000, while for a full coverage it's around \$1600 annually!!! I found one who shouted to me on the phone that if I come right now, he'll deduct \$70. When I didn't cried out in response "O YES!!!", he shouted to me, amazed, "WHAT!!!?? I'm giving you money, actually putting in your pocket \$70, and you don't come?". He also asked me if I'm French, although Israel was mentioned, by me, at least twice.

On Friday I also began teaching. It was OK, although I came to class with a ruined throat (an infection like the one I got in Bolivia). The class was very boring (linear equations) but I began to exercise my own methods in making it alive. I even managed to make some of them smile once! Although I requested to be called Tamir, they still call me Prof. Tassa. I am not going to fight that, that's for sure.

That Friday was a very busy day for me. I was also in the impressive medical center to see a doctor about my throat and afterwards, at night, we saw a crazy film which you all must go and see - "Daze and confused": A movie about the last day in school in 1976. Funny and crazy. The theatre was full with students who just started to learn that day, and it felt like a cult movie. Other "must" films are Woody Allen's "Manhattan murder mystery" and Clint Eastwood's "In the line of fire" which I saw in Deauville, France and adored. Another film which I recommend strongly (not for delicate people) is "Kalifornia".

That concludes this report,
Bye, Tamir.