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Practical and Inspirational, 'Fuel' Faces the Facts of the Energy Crisis

By SEAN AXMAKER

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"Change your fuel, change the world."

The rallying cry of director/activist Joshua Tickell's "Fuel" is not as catchy as "Save the cheerleader, save the world," but it is significantly more relevant to actually saving the planet.

"Fuel" is upfront about the politics of energy and the power of big oil in government and business; understanding that is the preamble to how to effect change in practical terms. Tickell challenges Americans to take a cue from Europeans, who have pushed their governments to make energy independence a priority.

Tickell spent years promoting biofuels and energy conservation by driving around the country in his "Green Machine," a biodiesel van powered by reclaimed grease from fast-food restaurants. He turned to film to reach a wider audience.

It turns out he's an adept filmmaker. "Fuel" is a rousing documentary on the real costs of petrochemical dependence and the practical alternatives within reach. It confronts the debate over the efficiency of biofuels with the honesty and candor of a research scientist faced with contradictory data. It leads Tickell to extraordinary new possibilities.

Most of all, "Fuel" is about making a difference. Tickell's enthusiasm and encouragement left me inspired rather than discouraged, empowered with practical knowledge in how I can make a difference as a consumer, as a voter and as an inhabitant of the planet.

Sean Axmaker can be reached via e-mail at seanax@hotmail.com.

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