



Exotic Car Share can put you behind the wheel of your dreams

Rare wares

By Jim Mueller
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So you're not Ferris Bueller and you can't hijack Cameron's dad's 1958 Ferrari for a spin on Lake Shore Drive.

But would a 1967 Jaguar XK-E do? Or a 1964 Corvette? A Dodge Viper or a 1994 Ferrari 348 Spider?

No, the kids won't fit in a Spider. Better take the four-seat 1990 Ferrari Mondial I.

George and Kathy Kiebalas keep such top-shelf automotive iron in their showroom at Exotic Car Share in Palatine—spit-shined and prepped for weekend jaunts to Lake Geneva and Galena or maybe to Blockbuster and the cleaners.

The Kiebalas will provide you the Ferraris and Jag, a '69 Ford Mustang Mach I and a '68 Pontiac GTO or a Rolls-Royce Silver Spur—after you join Exotic Car Share.

"Exotic Car Share isn't a car rental business," said George Kiebalas. "Exotic Car Share is a membership organization. We have an application process. We conduct thorough background checks for DUIs and criminal records. We also require up-to-date credit reports. The Ferrari is a \$130,000 automobile. If I let it go out on only Visa card and a driver's license, the next thing I know it'd be over the border in Mexico. You understand why we need to be so careful."

Exotic Car Share offers three membership levels. The Classic Car Membership at \$125 for five years permits usage of restored 1960s and 1970s muscle cars, as well as the Silver Spur, Plymouth Prowler and Alfa Romeo Spider. A \$250 Standard Membership, also for five years, qualifies one to sign out the Kiebalas' entire rolling stock, and the \$750 Premier Membership is a lifetime package that permits advance bookings of up to six months. Daily rates apply in addition to membership fees.

There's a sliding range, with the Alfa Romeo at a \$120 per day and the '67 Jaguar at \$330. (Those prices rise to \$165 and \$500, respectively, on weekends.) No special insurance is needed if the member has full coverage on his car.

Kiebalas said Exotic Car Share welcomed its 370th member in July and is on target to crack 500 by the end of 2003. Most members are guys. But wives and



Photos for the Tribune by Chris Ocken

George Kiebalas leans against a Ferrari 348 Spider that members of his Exotic Car Share service in Palatine can drive.

girlfriends buy memberships as gifts.

The most popular cars? The Ferraris and Viper, with the '64 Corvette and a '69 427 big block Sting Ray in the class picture. Kiebalas's pick? The Mustang Mach I. "A beautiful car," he said. "It belonged to the former CEO of Winnebago."

Why isn't the Jaguar more popular?

"I'm not sure if the XK-E intimidates people or what," he wondered. "It's a car you need to learn to drive. How to start it and set the choke right, when to back off on the choke. I teach all of that in the orientation session, which we require for every car taken out. One member kept admiring the Jaguar but wouldn't use it for a weekend. It turned out he didn't know how to drive a stick. I taught him on the Alfa Romeo, and he's had what he calls a 'true James Bond experience' in the Jaguar."

Kiebalas hit on the idea for Exotic Car Share, which opened Aug. 17, 2000, while chatting up a client of his other business, D&V's Auto Nook, a heated storage facility for collectible automobiles.

The Ferrari owner drove his car 10 days each year. The rest of the time it sat locked away, costing an arm and a leg to insure and maintain.

"The price of a Ferrari is a lot of money to tie up," said Kiebalas. "I thought to myself, 'This man has a \$100,000 car he never sees. He can't even sit inside and go vroom-vroom when the mood hits.' I figured there must be an opportunity here. A way to make the experience of driving a Ferrari or Jaguar or Rolls available to people who can't afford them or choose not to spend their money that way."

A logical offshoot of Kiebalas' Exotic Car Share's main business is fractional ownership of super cars. The Kiebalas are using a similar business model to the one originated by corporate jet builders.

"Fractional ownership is shared ownership," he said. "We're selling one-fifth shares in a Ferrari 360 Spider, Bentley Arnage T, Lamborghini Murcielago, Porsche GT-2 and Hummer H1 at the present time. Exotic Car Share stores and maintains the cars and coordinates scheduling among the five owners. If you're in love with a Ferrari, for example, but can't see investing \$250,000 in an automobile you may drive only once or twice a month, fractional ownership may be your best option. The response has been great. We sold out five shares of the Ferrari 360 Spider in three months, and the Bentley is going quickly!"

For information call 847-358-7522 or visit www.exoticarshare.com.



His operation also includes vintage cars such as a 1971 Chevrolet Camaro Z-28.