

Vans are as popular as ever and will be on display in abundance at the Detroit Auto Show. Top photo is the 1988 Safari Van from GMC Truck. Below is the 1988 Rally Van from GMC Truck.

Trucks' new image

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"WHAT'S REMARKABLE is that trucks are popular among people with very different backgrounds, occupations and income levels," said Ken Meade, 1988 Detroit Auto Show chairman and owner of Pointe Dodge in Detroit and Pointe Chrysler Plymouth, Pointe Jeep/Eagle and Pointe Isuzu all in Mount Clemens.

Women account for 18 percent of registered truck buyers and drive about one of every eight full-size pickups. Women drive 50 percent of Ford Aerostars, 32 percent of Chevy S-10 Blazers.

"Single and married women constitute a significant element in the truck market," said Michael Rinke, vice president of Rinke Toyota in Center Line. "Many women who buy trucks for their practicality say they like the truck's height which allows them to see up and over traffic."

Rose Rudd, 23, of Lansing is a working college student who bought a 1987 4x2 Toyota pickup with power steering and brakes, AM/FM cassette radio and five speed overdrive.

"As a single woman, I don't need a lot of passenger space," said Rudd. "I need an affordable, high-quality vehicle with the space to pack belongings as I change residences. I didn't want a cushy car, I wanted the flexibility of a truck."

Jill Remick of Lake Orion, a wife and mother of two, bought a 1987 four-wheel drive Dodge Raider, which came standard with air conditioning and AM M cassette radio.

"I didn't buy a truck to go four-wheeling. It's my primary vehicle and I drive it everywhere I go, to work, stores, social events and on vacation," said Remick.

Statistics from the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association show that 19 million (56.7 percent) of the 34 million trucks on the road today are used for such personal transportation. And 99.6 percent of these are classified as light trucks such as Remick's Raider.

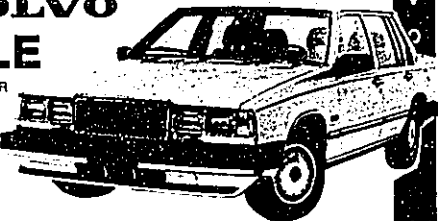
"THIS TIME I wanted a vehicle with heavy-duty everything, so that's what I got! When winter comes you can bet I'll be moving when others are stuck," added Remick.

Public opinion seems to support industry analysts who, although predicting a 4 percent decline in truck sales for the 1987 calendar year (and a 10 percent decline for cars), do not feel that trucks will fall from their best-selling positions anytime in the near future.

There will be many domestic and import trucks displayed at this year's Detroit Auto Show, including exhibits by Ford, Chevrolet, GMC, Dodge, Jeep-Eagle, Toyota, Nissan and Isuzu.

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