

Jaguar mystique hooks car buff

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Carson was preparing the car for a show and he knew the paint, with its minor imperfections, would cost him points in the competition. At the Henry Ford Estate in Dearborn last September, Carson entered his car in the 22nd Concours d'Elegance, an annual Jaguar car show. The show brought the biggest assembly of Jaguars ever, 110 automobiles.

Though Carson prefers to drive his car only on dry days, that day, he had no choice. It was raining and though Carson drove the car at a crawl down the dirt road he lives on, its wire wheels were spattered with mud, costing him a few show points.

OF THE six cars in his category, Carson's came in last. But he still earned 91.9 points of a possible 100, a rating that would raise the value of his car.

One part of the car that cost him points were the tires — the original and pretty worn. But everything on a show car must be restored to the car's original look. And the original tires are very difficult, if not impossible, to replace.

"They have to be of the English manufacturer, of the same mold and style," he said.

Though Carson enjoys showing his car, on the lighter side, he just likes to drive it and enjoy it. "I take it out as much as I can, but it depends on where I'm going," he said.

The car has no side-body modeling and he has to be careful where he parks. When he's out and about, the car really draws attention.

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— Gary Carson

The car tops out at 110 mph. But Carson has never gone that fast. "Are you kidding? With those tires?"

CARSON AND his wife, Diane, plan to buy another Jaguar, "one that's more drivable, one that we can drive every day," she said.

But they plan to keep the one they have now. "From what I've seen and heard, most people who buy a Jaguar don't give it up."

Carson said he hopes Ford Motor Co.'s recent acquisition of Jaguar doesn't cheapen the product. "In an attempt to get more Jaguars on the road."

The couple belongs to the Jaguar Affiliates Group of Michigan, which meets monthly at the Botsford Inn, Farmington Hills. "It's a fun thing to belong to," Diane said. "You don't have to own a car to belong."

When Carson isn't working on or driving his car, he enjoys decoy carving. "I enjoy spending time on the details that no one else would do," he said. Each duck takes him between 100-150 hours.

He also enjoys his job. Through Med/Dent Brokerage Corp., he helps dentists sell their practices when they retire.

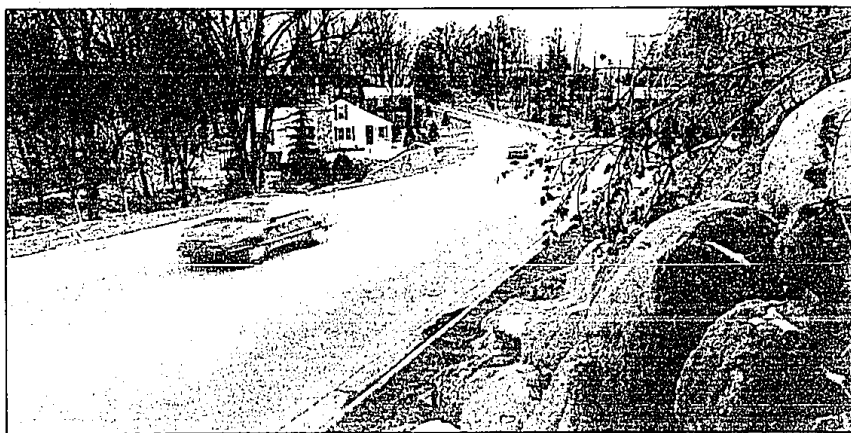


photo by SHARON LEWIS/Staff photographer

The curving stretch of Drake Road through historic Sleepy Hollow is Farmington Hills' newest natural beauty road.

Drake dubbed natural beauty road

By Joanno Maliszewski
staff writer

Maurice Kitchen believes that protecting Drake Road, from 1-696 to East Lyman, as a natural beauty road is a great idea. But he's concerned about traffic and high speed on the meandering, picturesque thoroughfare.

Karl Foss agreed. "I would like to get a commitment from this council not to increase that 25 mph limit," she said.

City manager William Costick promised, "It will never be posted (at a higher speed) as long as any of us are sitting up here."

But he couldn't make that kind of promise on sidewalks. "I don't think you can foreclose a sidewalk meandering through the trees."

A sidewalk became an issue when the then-gravel road, between 11 and 12 Mile, was realigned and paved in

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summer 1988. At the time, city officials agreed to delay building a sidewalk but said eventually one would follow the roadway.

BY REQUEST of city staff, the Farmington Hills City Council last Monday introduced an ordinance designating the road as a natural beauty road.

The designation ensures protection of trees, vegetation and terrain in the road's right-of-way. The designa-

tion also prevents utility companies from cutting in the right-of-way. "From now on, no one will be able to go in at their whim and cut anything down," Costick said.

The city follows its own natural beauty road ordinance rather than the state's. The 1985 city ordinance allows the city council to designate certain roads, including major roads, as natural beauty roads to protect them in their natural and undisturbed condition.

The designation may be requested either by city request or residents' petitioning effort. Halsted, 13 Mile and Howard are other thoroughfares with the protective designation.

The designation also carries traffic guidelines. A natural beauty designation on major roads requires a maximum 35 mph limit and 25 mph on local roads.

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