



Class(ic) way to get to church on time

By Linda Loo Sparkman
special writer

Remember the old gangster movies, where shotgun toting, impeccably dressed men escort the happy couple in an early day's limousine?

Phil Nicholas and Jake Jacobs, co-owners of Forget Me Not Limousines in Westland, saw that scenario re-enacted in one of their antique cars last summer, giving the bride and groom some unique wedding photo opportunities. To say the least.

The pair of former skilled tradesmen merged their limousine-rental companies about three years ago, and because of customer requests, began restoring and renting antique and classic cars last spring.

"We're the only people in Michigan who rent antique cars," said Nicholas, speaking of an assortment of old-time favorites like their turquoise and white '57

Chevy which rents for \$125 per day or \$35 per hour if chauffeur driven.)

The car most requested for weddings is a 1938 Rolls Royce. It has been modified to include air-conditioning and other modern conveniences inside, while maintaining the authentic look on the vehicle's exterior.

Another popular choice is their "one-of-a-kind" creme-colored stretch limousine, dubbed "The Gangster."

"It's made to look like a Duesenbury from the '20s or '30s," said Jacobs. "Its got stainless-steel pipes coming out of the hood going into the fender, a wide running board and a spare tire on the front fender," he said.

Since offering antique and classic cars, business has been great. "There's a certain romance to these cars," Jacobs said. The men have lots of stories to tell of weddings they've helped make special by providing couples a taste of days gone by.

ONE OF THE REASONS limousines are popular for weddings, says Jacobs, is that many of today's bridal gowns can not fit into a normal car without crushing. However, some of the older rental cars have as much room as today's limousines in their back seats, he said.

In addition to providing out-of-the-ordinary transportation, the partners offer many ideas to help the couple have a wonderful wedding experience.

"They only get married once," said Nicholas. "But we do about 500 weddings a year." Because of this, they know things like where to go for memorable pictures, and how long the couple should plan on renting the vehicle.

Jacobs suggests an itinerary that includes limousine rides for the groomsmen and bridesmaids before the ceremony. "It's a nice way to say 'Thank you,'" he suggests.

There is a sense of lightness and fun as they recounted experiences they've

had with couples because of their unique transportation arrangements.

"SOMETIMES WE HAVE a little fun with people," said Jacobs. For instance, once we had chauffeurs sitting on the wrong side of the road. (The steering wheel is on the right side of this European-made car)

People also have a hard time finding the gas tanks in some models. The 1933 Buick, for example, is a puzzle to most of their customers. "You turn the key to the 'on' position, push the gas pedal, and it automatically starts," said Nicholas.

"We've even seen wedding parties coordinate their bridesmaids' dresses with the cars," said Jacobs.

A word of caution: Couples planning to use an antique or classic vehicle should make reservations as soon as possible. Jacobs recommends reserving at least three months in advance.

For more information, call 422-6171.

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