

# Suburban Observer & Eccentric Automotive Showcase

Published Every Monday

CAReport

## Disney World Quest test: This minivan measures up

By Anne Fracassa  
Avanti NewsFeatures

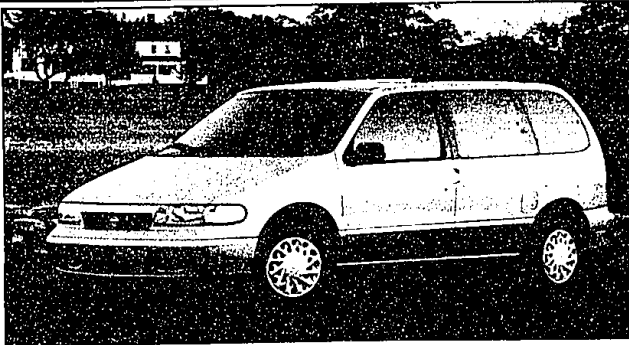
ORLANDO, Fla. — This is the perfect place to have a minivan. They're everywhere. At Disney World. At Disney-MGM Studios. At Sea World. Heck, even at the largest McDonald's hamburger and pizza store in the world, which is right down the street.

No matter where you look, every parking lot is 90 percent filled with minivans in this tourist town. Incredible.

That's what makes this the right site to test the 1997 Nissan Quest.

We decided the kids were big enough to enjoy the wonders of Disney, so off we went a few weeks ago. All the travel guides and the weather people told us the first week in October would be perfect: No rain, lower temperatures, less humidity, small crowds. It was supposed to be perfect, or close to it, but no one told us about the week being the 25th anniversary celebration or the fact that Hurricane Josephine was on her way or that it would rain every day we were there.

Despite the rain and despite the crowds, my 3-year-old and



ROAD TEST  
By  
Anne  
Fracassa

5-year-old still had loads of fun. We can credit the Nissan Quest for getting us to the storied theme parks in comfort and without incident.

The sister truck to the Mercury Villager proved to be a great choice for our Disney trip. The Quest offered enough space to bring whatever we needed with us, and there was enough seating (and elbow room) to satisfy everybody. And since it rained so much, we had a chance to see the Quest react to

the bad weather by showing off the road manners of a high-end luxury sedan.

Built in Avon Lake, Ohio, next to the Villager, the Quest has a 3.0-liter V6 engine. Both vehicles were designed by the same classy lady (Ford's Bobbie Gaunt) who brainstormed the creation of the Taurus and Sable more than a decade ago.

Gaunt is the one who demanded the Quest drive like a fine sedan. Hop into it without the assist of running boards or assist grips. Everything on the inside is smartly laid out, with big buttons and easy-to-use controls.

Never mind the Quest has been the best-selling import-brand minivan since 1993.

This year, it's even better. Everything has been revised — exterior, interior, convenience and safety — it's all there. The best part about it, though, is the car-like handling

and the ride comfort. We drove from Orlando to Tampa to St. Pete and other places and never once was I fatigued. My girls enjoyed the comfort as well, snuggling in the backseats without a care in the world on some of our longer trips around Florida.

The Quest has a unique feature that's worth a mention. It's called the Quest Trac flexible seating system. The seats can be arranged in 20 different configurations. That means lots and lots of passenger/cargo arrangements.

And if you outfit the Quest in captain's chairs, you can arrange the interior in four more ways. Seating capacity is for seven with everything in it. Leave just the front seats in and you can get almost 15 cubic feet of cargo room. That's versatile.

As always, safety is all there: Standard dual air bags, three-point front seat belts that are

height-adjustable, steel side-door guard beams and a child safety lock on the sliding side door.

And if you want, you can order integrated child safety seats on both the XE and GXE models.

Don't you ever worry about locking your keys in this van. The Quest has a micro computer chip that senses if the key is still in the ignition and doesn't allow you to lock the door. Neat. If anything else but the key is put in the ignition, the Quest won't start. Plain and simple, the security system shuts the whole thing down. Even neater.

Earlier we mentioned the engine, that 3.0-liter single overhead cam V6. It has more oomph than any other import-brand minivan — a whopping 151 horsepower. The powertrain is mated to an electronically controlled 4-speed automatic trans that has an overdrive fourth gear. What that means in plain English is that you've got greater pulling power and constant — even if you're pulling a substantial load.

This sweetheart is loaded with standard equipment, including power windows, power mirrors, power locks, illuminated driver-side vanity mirror, a 12-volt power outlet in the second row seating area (on GXE models), remote keyless entry, power assisted steering and power front disc brakes. ABS is an option — and again, well worth the price.

By the way, the Quest we tested had ABS. Unfortunately, I had to use it. It was raining (again) on a main thoroughfare in Kissimmee, Fla., and some little bitty Cutlass in front of us

hammered its brakes without warning to stop at a light. I pumped mine to stay out of trouble, and we managed to stop in time. Thankfully, we avoided having to meet the Cutlass' owner over bent fenders that drizzly night.

Even competitors know that when it comes to quality, the Quest is no Mickey Mouse minivan. All this mini needs is a fourth door to make it as perfect as Minnie's smile.

Anne Fracassa is senior editor of Avanti NewsFeatures. Tell her your favorite car on the road in our online reader poll by writing AVANTI11054@aol.com.

1997 Nissan Quest  
Vehicle class: Minivan.  
Power: 3.0-liter SOHC V6.  
Mileage: 17 city / 23 highway.  
Where built: Avon Lake, Ohio.  
Price: About \$25,000.

## Study Shows Asphalt Roads Safer, Quieter

(NAPS) — A study in Europe five years ago showed that when a road is constructed with a special-purpose mixture called open-graded friction course, or porous asphalt, it contains a relatively large percentage of air voids. The open structure of this mix drains rainwater effectively, thus reducing the splash and spray and eliminating aquaplaning. It also reduces noise.

All of this means increased safety. According to the National Asphalt Pavement Association, in many locations, pavement surfaces are wet between 12 and 15 percent of the average year. During this time, the number and severity of accidents decrease if roadways are constructed with this open-graded friction course mixture.

North American  
Precis Syndicate

63107065.DOC

# TAMAROFF

QUALITY/USED  
CARS & TRUCKS

**SPECIAL OF THE WEEK**

**New 1997 DODGE DAKOTA CLUB CAB**  
3.9 liter V6, automatic transmission, air conditioning, power windows, power locks, cruise, sliding rear window, SLT Plus package, tilt, AM/FM cassette, aluminum wheels, airbags. Stock #145017.

CHRYSLER EMPLOYEE PURCHASE	GENERAL PUBLIC PURCHASE	CHRYSLER EMPLOYEE LEASE
\$16,305*	\$17,695*	\$249* mo.

**BUICK** GM EMPLOYEES SALES HEADQUARTERS

**NEW 1996 BUICK REGAL SEDAN**

FREE 300 DINNER CERTIFICATE FOR THE FABULOUS LOCAL BUS RESTAURANT WITH EVERY NEW BUICK PURCHASE OR LEASE THIS MONTH.

SALE PRICE **\$18,498\*** LEASE FOR 36 MONTHS **\$298\* MO.** (With Day \$18,000. NO MONEY DOWN)

GM EMPLOYEES SAVE AN ADDITIONAL \$100.00

**HONDA**

**1997 ACCORD SEDAN**

Automatic transmission, air conditioning, power windows, power locks, cruise, tilt, AM/FM stereo, cassette, 15" alloy wheels. Stock #145017.

SALE PRICE **\$19,999** LEASE FOR 36 MONTHS **\$279\* MO.** (With Day \$19,000. NO MONEY DOWN)

**DODGE**

**NEW 1997 DODGE STRATUS**

Automatic transmission, air conditioning, dual airbags, power windows, power locks, tilt, cruise, rear window defroster, AM/FM stereo and much more. Stock #560208.

CHRYSLER EMPLOYEE PURCHASE	GENERAL PUBLIC PURCHASE	CHRYSLER EMPLOYEE LEASE
\$13,987*	\$15,197*	\$226* mo.

**NEW 1997 BUICK LESABRE CUSTOM**

FREE 300 DINNER CERTIFICATE FOR THE FABULOUS LOCAL BUS RESTAURANT WITH EVERY NEW BUICK PURCHASE OR LEASE THIS MONTH.

SALE PRICE **\$22,688\*** LEASE FOR 36 MONTHS **\$358\* MO.** (With Day \$22,000. NO MONEY DOWN)

GM EMPLOYEES SAVE AN ADDITIONAL \$100.00

**1997 CIVIC EXO SEDAN**

Automatic transmission, air conditioning, power windows, power locks, cruise, tilt, AM/FM stereo, cassette, 15" alloy wheels. Stock #145017.

SALE PRICE **\$14,988** LEASE FOR 36 MONTHS **\$279\* MO.** (With Day \$14,000. NO MONEY DOWN)

**1997 DODGE INTREPID**

Automatic transmission, V6, air conditioning, dual airbags, power windows, power locks, tilt, cruise, rear window defroster, AM/FM stereo and much more. Stock #500604.

CHRYSLER EMPLOYEE PURCHASE	GENERAL PUBLIC PURCHASE	GENERAL PUBLIC LEASE
\$16,477*	\$17,694*	\$319* mo.

**1996 BUICK RIVIERA**

FREE 300 DINNER CERTIFICATE FOR THE FABULOUS LOCAL BUS RESTAURANT WITH EVERY NEW BUICK PURCHASE OR LEASE THIS MONTH.

SALE PRICE **\$28,298\*** LEASE FOR 36 MONTHS **\$438\* MO.** (With Day \$28,000. NO MONEY DOWN)

**NISSAN**

**THE TAMAROFF ADVANTAGE**

"We will beat any COMPETITOR'S AD"

SALE PRICE **\$22,530** LEASE FOR 36 MONTHS **\$279\* MO.** (With Day \$22,000. NO MONEY DOWN)

**NEW 1997 DODGE GRAND CARAVAN**

Automatic transmission, V6, air conditioning, anti-lock brakes, dual airbags, seven passenger seating, AM/FM stereo, rear window defroster, and much more. Stock #115625.

CHRYSLER EMPLOYEE PURCHASE	GENERAL PUBLIC PURCHASE	GENERAL PUBLIC LEASE
\$17,360*	\$18,789*	\$287* mo.

**28585 TELEGRAPH ROAD, Southfield**  
**CALL: 810-353-1300 TOLL FREE: 1-800-TAMAROFF**

MON. & THURS. 9:00-5:15PM  
TUES./WED./FRI. 8:30-6:15PM  
SAT. 9:30-4PM

On 12 Mile Road, just West of Telegraph Road  
**810-353-6600 TOLL FREE: 1-800-TAMAROFF**

Visit our virtual showroom at <http://www.tamaroff.com> on the Internet.