

With all the frills

Limo service kept the fans cheering in class

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

The only time most people get to ride in a limousine is when they're married or buried. But then we're not high-rollers or people who'd like to be high-rollers, like the crowd that attended Super Bowl XVI yesterday.

Limo business was so brisk last week for Bob Golob, 34, of Farmington Hills,

owner of Detroit Limousine Service, that he rented 40 luxury automobiles to supplement his everyday fleet of 10 vehicles.

When the first 10 cars were rented at the normal rate of \$85 for the first hour, \$22 for each additional hour, Golob leased out the remainder, which cost customers \$40 an hour with a 10-hour (\$400) minimum. He expects to gross at least \$80,000 for the week.

He's not out to gouge visitors, Golob

said; he had to pay high prices to rent the additional limos. Despite the high price, Golob said he could have rented another 50 limos at rates approaching \$800 a day.

A newcomer in the limousine business is another Farmington Hills resident, Ronald Ulmer, owner of Rodeo (pronounced Ro-day-oh, if you please) Drive Limousines, Ltd. Ulmer started in business a week ago with two cars, (one white, one black), each lavishly

equipped with a mobile telephone, color TV, wet bar complete with gold ice trays, champagne, Godiva chocolates and red or white roses.

THE LEGALITY of letting limousine riders imbibe alcohol is questionable, both men admit. But members of area police departments say cracking down on champagne sippers isn't a high priority in law enforcement. The practice is hardly as widespread as chartered bus passengers who drink alcohol all the way to a game, said one.

"How could you tell someone spending \$300 for a limousine he can't drink a glass of wine on the way to the stadium or a restaurant?" asks Golob.

Ulmer says he tries to skirt the issue by leaving the bottles in the trunk and running plastic tubing into the back seat.

Golob has been in the limousine business for 12 years and has built up a clientele that includes San Francisco 49er owner Edward DeBartolo whenever he's in town for football or business. But Ulmer is just getting into the business at a time when most capitalists are crying hard times.

"Everyone's tired of hearing about the poor economy — at least I know I am," says Ulmer. "Quality sells itself, like anything else."

Ulmer said he's taken limousine rides in Detroit and was disappointed that the ride wasn't as stylish as he'd hoped.

"No moon roofs, no telephone, no tinted glass," he said.

Ulmer charges customers \$35 an hour with a three-hour minimum any day of the year and a charge of \$25 for each additional hour. He transported 15 clients over the weekend to restaurants, the Diana Ross concert and, of course, the Super Bowl.

"IT LIFTS your spirits, it really does," Ulmer says. "You go to work every day, pay your bills and there's nothing special to look forward to. But renting a limo is something (people) are all excited about."

Some of the notables Golob transported last weekend included California Gov. Jerry Brown and San Francisco 49er owner Edward DeBartolo. He was supposed to escort Frank Sinatra to his concert, which was cancelled when Old Blue Eyes got the flu.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Getting set for last weekend's Super Bowl festivities, Keith Loomis (left) and Bob Golob spilled out their limo for limo and made sure customers had a ball.

Champagne and telephone are part of the luxury which went along with the limo service during Super Bowl weekend as is demonstrated by Ron Ulmer.

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