

Business

Marilyn Fitchett editor/591-2300



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Paint his world with auto colors

By Janice Brunson
staff writer

Americans have renewed their love affair with the automobile, and the new relationship is finding expression through passionate colors that aim to stimulate, excite and intrigue.

Radiant red, Park Avenue green and olympic gold are among those colors predicted to coat the fleets of tomorrow with a new water-based paint that enhances tone.

"Americans do love the automobile. We're tied to it. And the excitement of the '50s and '60s is back," said Robert Dally, a color specialist with Du Pont Automotive Products in Troy.

Dally targets color trends and designs matching hues for automobile use. His skill, he said, is natural, based on an "innate interest in the subject" and honed through 22 years of experience.

Presently, Dally is pitching Du Pont's new line of 275 colors to auto executives in the U.S., Europe and Japan who are busy selecting colors for 1993 models.

Colors are always determined four to five years in advance of use, according to Dally, who holds a bachelor's degree in business.

Based on choices since 1984, auto colors through 1992 are certain.

"EXPRESSIVE" IS THE buzzword of color — lighter and brighter shades that can appear deeper and darker, depending upon the angle from which they are viewed.

"People treat their automobiles as a form of self-expression. (Auto) color is a way of expressing themselves that they might not use in other

ways, like in the colors they wear," Dally said.

After an era in which ecology and economics dictated "compact, boxy auto designs" in "somber, grayed-off colors," excitement and newness in color "has emerged."

"Reds are redder. Blues are bluer. Colors are truer and more saturated, cleaner and brighter than ever," Dally said.

Red is expected to slip into the top four on the preferred list of colors, next to white, which led in customer choice during 1987-88, and the perennial blue and gray that almost always top the list.

Green may even take on new life in the form of a neutral, gemstone shade called Park Avenue that contains a touch of yellow. "A whole generation has not seen much green. If we hit on the right shade, there could be a market for it," Dally said.

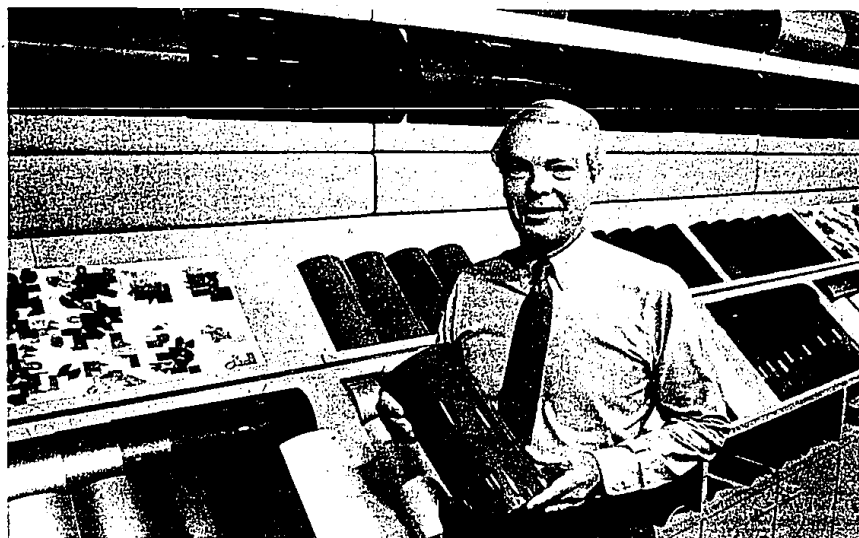
Yellow is expected to remain in last place. Less than 4 percent of new models will be painted yellow, and most of those will be sports cars. The color is thought to be unsuitable on larger cars.

Beyond 1992, Dally is looking at rich red-browns, a deep, ralsing color that is distinctive from the earth tones of yesterday.

THE SHADE is the latest to be won by men of fashion on the streets of Paris, Milan, London and New York City.

"This new area of brown is emerging. I saw it last year in Europe, and it is showing up in European fashion this year," Dally said.

It is from color trends set by the world's leading designers of high fashion that Dally picks ideas for tomorrow's colors for automobiles.



Robert Dally is pitching Du Pont's new line of 275 colors to auto executives in the U.S., Europe and Japan for 1992 models.

He consults with leading designers and colorists in the fashion industry. He attends haute couture fashion shows. He scans monthly issues of Vogue and Elle.

While "the color of a coat on a runway in Paris" may be stunning, "it doesn't mean it will look good on a car," Dally "interprets the color and sophisticates it" for automotive use.

Presently, fashion designers are showing collections for next year's wear. Once the new look and color catches on in Europe, it takes a year to reach New York City and another to reach mainstream America, according to Dally. He carefully watches the progress, adopting shades he considers to be successful.

Once adopted, shades of new colors are developed into a "family," each family containing five color boards ranging from light to dark. A color may have as many as seven families.

In 1987, for example, red families included bitersweet, nightfire, dynasty and cranberry. The names are meant to invoke image. Bittersweet contains yellow tones, cranberry contains bright blue. Nightfire, considered the "trend" color, and dynasty, a jewel-tone red, are suitable for both flashy sports cars and sleek Cadillacs.

THE COLOR BOARDS are dispatched at day-long shows for executives of the Big 3 auto manufacturers in the U.S., a dozen manufac-

turers in Europe and 10 in Japan. Most adopt new colors, changing existing stock by some 40 percent annually. U.S. reps favor trend colors. Europeans favor somber colors like those normally seen on the German-made Mercedes Benz. Japanese reps favor white. Some 70 percent of all autos sold in Japan are white.

"When I go there, it's like plain vanilla. I ask why. I'm told it's because white cars have better resale value in Japan," Dally said.

New colors are normally used by manufacturers for four to five years. Mid-life, the color is often given new life by adding newly colored interiors in contrasting shades.

The color shows are a service provided by Du Pont. Major competitors are Pennsylvania-based PPG

Industries and German-based BASF/Immont. Most manufacturers buy products each season from a variety of suppliers.

The auto-paint industry is in the midst of a "major step forward" with the recent introduction of water-based paint that can be cured at temperatures 25 to 50 degrees lower than former solvent-based paints, according to Dally.

The resulting look enhances esthetics, producing a two-toned appearance that is light and bright when viewed straight on, yet is deep and dark when viewed at an angle. The look accentuates auto design and "anything the finish can do to accentuate the design is good," Dally said.

Campbell taps Vlasic

By Philip A. Sherman
staff writer

The Campbell Soup Co.'s first priority, under new chairman Robert Vlasic of West Bloomfield, will be to stop a competitor from encroaching further into the company's soup business.

Vlasic, 62, is president of Vlasic Pickles, a Michigan company based in West Bloomfield that was acquired by Campbell. Until recently a member of Campbell's board, Vlasic has been selected to become the soup company's chairman. He formally will be installed in the position after a Nov. 18 election by board members.

"A substantial share of market is being invaded by the Ramen Noodle concept," Vlasic said.

TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT of Campbell's business is based in its soup products, according to Vlasic. The Ramen products he referred to are noodle-and-stock soups prepared by adding hot water.

Campbell already is combatting the "invasion" with a noodle-and-stock-flavored product of its own, which is being test-marketed in three areas nationwide, he said. Campbell's product is expected to do well because it has fewer calories

'Campbell is a very large, very well run company.'

— Robert Vlasic

than its competitor, Vlasic said. He said it should be introduced in all markets early next year.

BEYOND THAT, Vlasic, who built his own company from one original plant in Imlay City to six plants across the country, expects "nothing dramatic" to happen and no major changes to occur when he takes over as chairman.

"Campbell is a very large, very well run company," he said.

Vlasic will provide board leadership and communications with the company's major shareholders.

"The (Dorrance) family owns 60 percent of the shares. They want and will get a considerable amount of time and attention," Vlasic said.

CAMPBELL ENDED its fiscal year Aug. 31 with a \$275 million profit, Vlasic said. The company, which Vlasic said will continue plans to acquire more food companies, already owns Pepperidge Farms, V-8,

Mrs. Paul's, Swanson, Juice Bowl, Prego, Le Menu and Vlasic. Campbell's latest acquisition is a frozen-food business in the United Kingdom, Vlasic said.

The soup company originally known for its jams and jellies, was founded in 1869 by Joseph Campbell and Abram Anderson. Its headquarters was and remains in New Jersey. Vlasic expects to make some 30 trips annually to his new job.

The Dorrance family came into the Campbell profile via John T. Dorrance, who held a doctorate from MIT. In 1899, at the age of 24, Dorrance perfected a process for canning soup in condensed form and also originated the idea of attaching placards to streetcars to promote the company's products.

CAMPBELL SOUP Co. went public in 1954. Of the top 15 companies in the food processing industry, Campbell ranked seventh as of 1985. RJR Nabisco led the list; Hershey Foods placed 15th.

Vlasic's own company ended its year with a \$20 million pre-tax, pre-investment profit, he said.

"We have about a 35 share. Our business has grown dramatically over the years . . . by doing the basics and doing them just a little better than others."



Robert Logan
president and CEO

Logan succeeds Headlee as CEO

Robert Logan, who has nearly 40 years of business experience, was named president and chief executive officer of Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co. of America. He replaces Richard Headlee, now chairman of the Farmington Hills-based company.

The appointments were announced by Headlee and Edwin Hoffman, president and chief operating officer of the parent company, Household International, and chief executive officer of Household Financial Services.

Logan, 55, has managed Citibank Corp.'s international base in Europe, Canada, the South Pacific and the Eastern Bloc nations.

He formerly served as chairman

of Samuel Montagu & Co. Ltd and was chief executive officer of Grindlay's Bank, PLC, a London-based firm with holdings in excess of \$10 billion.

Logan and his wife, Susan Elizabeth Vokes, have three daughters.

Headlee, 58, who underwent heart transplant surgery last October, became president of Alexander Hamilton Life in 1972. Appointed at a time the company was unprofitable, Headlee positioned Hamilton within the industry by offering a range of innovative and competitive life insurance and annuity products.

Since then Hamilton assets have climbed from \$142 million to an estu-

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