

Your own Bondmobile for less

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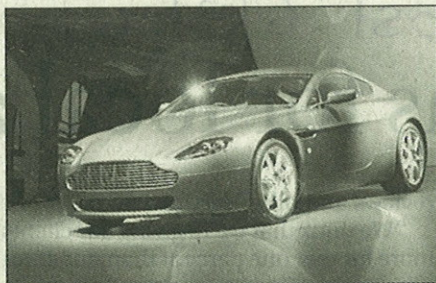
London — Tim Hendriks drives a sturdy SUV when he is home on Zanzibar, where he owns a hotel. But when he is in London on business or visiting friends and family, he leaves practicality behind and slides behind the wheel of one of the luxurious fast cars of his dreams — a Ferrari, say, or an Aston Martin or a Porsche.

Sometimes he tries a Bentley when he arrives at the airport. "That's rather a nice experience," he said, "quite different from jumping into a London cab."

Mr Hendriks can drive any of these exotic high-performance cars in London because he has a two-year membership in an unusual club, P1 International. It offers members the keys to an array of streamlined vehicles worthy of James Bond, among them Lamborghinis, the Aston Martin Vanquish S and three F430 Ferraris — two convertibles and a hardtop.

The club, begun in 2000 by Damon Hill, winner of the 1996 Formula One World Championship, is in Surrey, just outside of London. Mr Hendriks paid \$4,400 to join and an additional fee of \$24,100 that entitles him to 6,000 miles of driving within two years. He has been consuming his miles at a steady clip.

"I've used about half my allocation,"



Aston Martin is no longer a distant dream

he said. "It's a great thing to drive a supercar instead of a normal one."

Mr Hendriks spends about four months a year in London. He likes the convenience of the club. "I call and they bring the car to me, and pick it up when I'm finished, so it's painless."

His favourite so far has been the F430 Ferrari. Its classic colour is red, but he found that ostentatious. "The last one I had was a really nice gun-metal grey."

Mr Hendriks is one of about 250 members of P1, said marketing manager Nick Gartrell. "The main reason people join is to drive exotic or expensive cars," he said. Some members want to try cars out before deciding to buy them. "This makes sense if you're thinking of spending a hundred thousand pounds on a car."

Membership includes not only miles, but points that members redeem when they reserve cars. The more valuable the car, the more points it costs. The day of the week matters, too: Weekend reservations require more points.

Before hitting the road, a member and a partner must take a one-day driving class. "It's a stipulation of the insurance company," Mr Gartrell said. "This is a refresher, not a test, to remind them how these high-performance cars handle."

Most members of the club are men from 35 to 60 and most are UK residents, but there are five members from the US, as well as people from Singapore, Australia, Germany, France, and other countries.

The club offers a number of rare high-performance cars, including the Ford GT. "This is an updated version of a Ford racing car that looks very much like the original," Mr Gartrell said, "but is more comfortable inside." This year, a number of cars will be added, including a Lamborghini Gallardo Spyder. "It looks fast even when it's standing still."

The cars are insured for use only on public roads, not on racing circuits. "But we can organise opportunities to drive properly prepared race cars," Mr Gartrell said, "actual Formula One cars from previous seasons." NEW YORK TIMES