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## Boyz Toys

Wed, April 02 2008



The power, the stunning acceleration, its unrivaled elegance. The Bentley GT Speed has finally found its way to B.C. thanks to Harvey Sanghera. And he wants to public to drive it. His proposition: Drive his luxury cars, like the Bentley, for a fee while he takes care of the purchase, insurance, maintenance, cleaning, roadside assistance and security.

At last weekend's Vancouver International Auto Show at BC Place, Sanghera introduced Empire One, the first luxury car company in Western Canada, where he unveiled his pride and joy— the Bentley.

While the Bentley is his wife's favourite car, Sanghera's hot for the 2008 Lamborghini Gallardo Supleggera. There are only three in B.C.

"It's like a lover, a part of your body," he said. "You touch the throttle and it leaps forwards. It makes a growl, sucks in air and spits out the fuel . . . and it's just lovely."

Empire One will officially open its doors for business at the end of May but Sanghera is already taking applications for memberships. To join, members must pay \$7,500 and then a monthly fee of \$2,995 or an annual membership \$32,998.

Operations are run on a point system where points are deducted depending on where and when a customer drives. Weekends and higher-end vehicles consume more points.

Sanghera says members will enjoy the benefits of driving a hard core sports car without the hassle of upkeep. He describes it like having a membership at a golf club where patrons don't want to buy the golf course, they just want to have access to the facility.

He is also giving special privledges to the first 40 members, such as additional days of access, points, kilometres and exclusive access to the most elite category of cars.

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The globe trotter, who is originally from Birmingham, Britain but has also lived in Los Angeles, settled down in Vancouver a few years ago in a move he calls "fate." He and his wife, Tara, knew they wanted to come to Canada and selected the West Coast for its pleasant weather.

It wasn't long before Sanghera realized that there were no options for speed junkies like himself who wanted to drive an exotic car without having to buy one. He looked all over the Lower Mainland but couldn't find a luxury car club. That's when the light bulb went off.

Sanghera believes that today, Vancouver is the perfect market because of the amount of new wealth flying around. He's noticed more luxury cars whizzing about the city even in the last several years, despite high fuel prices and ample public transportation.

While it's always nerve-racking starting a new business, Sanghera has high hopes for the future.

"If you don't risk anything there's no reward," he said. "I'm the type to jump first and think later."

Only time will tell whether the public jumps with him.

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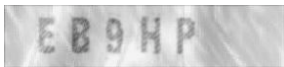
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