

## JOURNAL

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### Club Sportiva

*Getting behind the wheel of exotic automobiles*

For Torbin Fuller, the thrill of finally being able to buy a Ferrari a few years ago was quickly tempered by the realities of ownership.

Besides having to garage the vehicle during the winter months in Michigan, where he worked in Ford Motor Company's corporate finance offices in Dearborn, maintenance alone was costing him about \$1,000 a month, Fuller estimates.

"It was just ridiculous for an individual to have to carry that burden," he says. "There were just a lot of hassles, so I thought, 'There has to be a better way.'"

After giving it some thought, Fuller, a 30-something whiz kid with an MBA from the University of Notre Dame and a passion for entrepreneurial ventures that matches his love for automobiles, came up with just that: a better way. In March 2003, he and business partner Dan Fleming opened Club Sportiva in San Francisco.

By applying the principles of timeshare ownership to luxury vehicles, the company offers an opportunity for its members to drive around in such cars as a 2004 Ferrari 360 Spider, a 1990 Bentley Turbo R and a 1994 Lotus Esprit S4 without the so-called hassles of owning



one—let alone an entire fleet—of these dream machines.

Membership packages—which range in price from \$3,200 to \$8,500 a year—come with an allocation of points that members redeem for use of the vehicles throughout the year. The number of points for each trip is determined by factors such as the type of vehicle and duration of use, along with the day of the week and the time of year that the member drives the car. Taking the 2002 Maserati Spyder or the 1983 Ferrari 308 GTSi Quattrovalvole out for a weekend in July eats up more points than a spin in the 2004 BMW Z4 on a Monday in November. Depending on the package and how members use their points, they can drive the cars from between less than 10 days a year to more than 50. The

most popular package costs \$5,000 a year and offers, on average, about 20 days of drive time annually.

Three years after opening, Club Sportiva boasts 175 members and has expanded its fleet from 12 cars to 20, with some cars from the original fleet replaced by more compelling models. In November 2004, the company also opened a second location in San Jose, which includes a car paddock, offices and a clubhouse. At about the same time, the company introduced Euro Sportiva. Through partnership with a company based near Munich, the latter venture rents recent-model Ferraris, Lamborghinis and Bentleys to members traveling in Europe.

Club Sportiva's business plan calls for the addition of three new locations this year and seven more in 2007, though Fuller declines to disclose where these might be, because the details have not yet been finalized. Ultimately, hundreds of luxury auto fans will be driving the cars of their dreams, thanks to Fuller's entrepreneurial vision.

Contact: 866-719-1600; [www.clubsportiva.com](http://www.clubsportiva.com). —Rob Bhatt