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Baby, You Can Drive/Rent my Car

Cathy Dausman



Anne McCarten-Gibbs offers her 2005 Honda for rent through Getaround Photo Cathy Dausman

from Mini Coopers to Volkswagons, Priuses, Hondas, BMWs, and Subarus. There even is a Tesla for rent, although fees and requirements are a bit more restrictive for luxury rides. As for payment, Getaround charges a 40 percent transaction fee and rental income is delivered to the car owner online via PayPal.

McCarten-Gibbs first learned about car sharing in a recent magazine article and looked into one other company before settling on Getaround, a San Francisco based company co-founded by Sam Zaid and Jessica Scorpio. She is one of two Getaround client/owners in the Lamorinda area.

Several weeks ago she took car photos, wrote a brief description, set rental requirements (must be 18 or over; no smoking in the car) and posted it on Facebook, where Getaround owners and renters connect.

McCarten-Gibbs' vehicle is insured through the car rental company by Berkshire Hathaway; other car sharing companies have clients maintain their existing policies and add on a \$1 million policy to cover the renters, the owners, and the car rental company. Many other insurance companies, however, are not eager to cover P2P vehicles.

The American Automobile Association (AAA), for example, does not offer P2P rental coverage and anyone considering this type of program should check with their insurance company or with the rental car company about insurance before moving forward.

McCarten-Gibbs says she is comfortable renting to strangers because she feels a certain "community bond" through the social network. Now she simply waits for a renter.

Besides, she jokes, "this isn't a Tesla!"

Anne McCarten-Gibbs is a person who likes to share. When her family lived in Berkeley, they shared yard tools and work skills with their neighbors. She was a Casual Carpool participant (a rider) then as well.

Now with her children away at college and an extra family car sitting idle in the driveway, she's decided to share again. This time, she's sharing her car.

"It's the right thing," she says. McCarten-Gibbs is a new Lamorinda client of Getaround, a personalized, one-to-one, online car rental company.

Her car, a neat and clean 2005 Honda Accord, can be rented for as little as \$7 per hour. She thinks this might attract student customers from nearby Saint Mary's College who need a temporary 'set of wheels.' When her own college students return for spring or summer break, they can still use the car; it will simply be unavailable on Getaround while her kids are home.

The market for open ended person-to-person (P2P) rentals is accelerating, with other companies like Zipcar and RelayRides in the U.S., WhipCar in the U.K. and DriveMyCarRentals in Australia gaining in popularity.

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