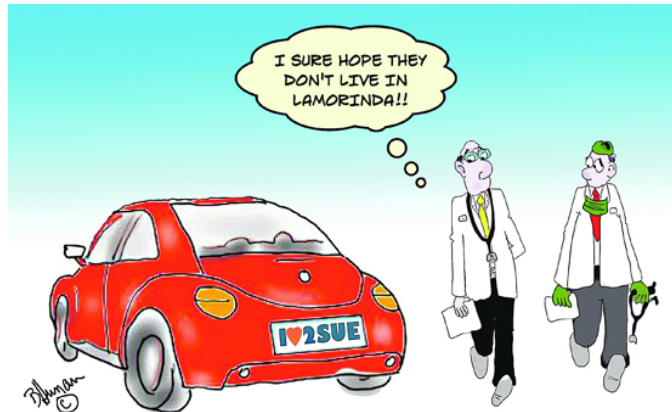


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Licensed to Thrill: Vanity Plates in Lamorinda

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Feel like taking a mini-vacation, without ever leaving Lamorinda? Craving something to amuse, challenge, and perhaps educate, all from the comfort and confines of your own automobile? Join us on a visit to the world of vanity plates, coming soon to a street near you. California DMV offers a dozen specialized license plate backgrounds, with themes from environmental to academic, and well-known vacation destinations. There are Olympic plates and those which honor firefighters and veterans. But it's the words across those metal tags that sometimes puzzle, and then delight us, as we sound out the shorthand (seven across, maximum) of a cryptic message.

Someone wears their love of town on their car bumper: 4M♥RAGA.

Others enjoy their "wheels"- I♥MYCAR license was seen on a little red sports car cresting a local hill. Another sports car considers itself AMAESIN, and a red coupe promises FUN41N1. There's a bit of retro/Beach Boys vibe going on with the paneled car with the KL WOODY plate spotted in Orinda.

Some cars get to travel, as evidenced by the license plates ECHO LKR, 4T2TAHOE, ISAIL, and LIK2DIV. One even brags about the ultimate northern destination with its 90NORTH (North Pole) nomenclature. Getting there must be half the fun for this vanity plate owner, who prefers to MOZEON. Some dance around their wordplay, like the car sporting CHCHCHA tags, while others promote their occupations MRBLOOZ (a jazz musician?), SAY CHZ (photographer?), MC NANNI ("hold the pickles, hold the lettuce, even children don't upset us..."), and USAFCOL (retired?). Getting tired? Consult the owner of the car with plates recommending 40 WINX.

Is the owner of the SPEKTREM plates a chemist or physicist? And who wouldn't want to meet the financially secure MR401K? One Cooper car came adorned with MNI AHA, and someone HADABAL either coming or going somewhere. Another car gets lovey-dovey with its plate adorned with HNYBNY, while on Sundays you may find ALELUA or FRIAR82.

Speaking of Bears, we found BEAR ECO, (a Cal natural science grad?), TWO4CAL, OLDOSKI and HAASMBA. Parents show off with plates like RAWK MOM and (my) IIIIIONS. Is it the car they're driving, perhaps that is OLDAZUS? One woman feels the carpool pressure and calls herself TAXI GAL. Another plate is easy to unravel: KNIT WTY.

As with most stories, we've saved the best for last: Lamorinda Weekly staff feels a special kinship with the minivan spotted cruising along Olympic Boulevard recently. It said... and we quote: WE EDIT. We do, indeed.

Whether or not a vanity plate is in your future, you'll enjoy this link: <http://www-chaos.umd.edu/misc/>.

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