

Me and My Car

Citroen HY helps baker earn a crust

You drive a 1971 Citroen HY van?

I found the van on eBay in Germany. It belonged to someone about to start a catering business for his wife in the Dominican Republic. Sad story, he divorced and had six HYs. I bought the lucky last one for a reasonable price. Almost no more restoration was required, just a bit of rust repair to get the certification and the seat belts had to fit New Zealand standards. Besides that, my mechanic, Ross, installed some safety features — a rear-view camera and additional back lights for reversing . . . and a stereo. It's cream, but we will change to a chocolate brown — our business colour — with some beige highlights. HYs were manufactured only as left-hand drive. I have never seen a converted one. We use it for deliveries and, from November on, we will be part of the Victoria Park Market revamp every weekend. I use it also for visits to suppliers and I am planning a road trip through New Zealand to visit other artisan bakeries. We just need a TV producer who is interested in the story.

What do you look for when buying a vehicle?

Citroen and vintage. My next one will be a Traction Avant — but don't tell my wife!

First car?

A VW Beetle 1974 with a special



Olaf Blanke, Eden Village's artisan baker, is a German-trained baker, pastry chef and chef

PICTURE / TED BAGHURST

paint job of the Swedish national flag. My name is Swedish and I spent a few summer breaks in Halmstad at my godfather's house.

Your dream car ...

Guess what — HY, or wait, another HY maybe.

Who taught you to drive?

It was in Germany. My brother gave me a brief lesson on a Mercedes-

Benz truck, which belonged to my Dad's business. After that experience I taught myself with my mate, Hubertus. There was a time when it was kind of a competition to turn up with Dad's car at the other one's house for a ride. That included having to push the car out of the garage to the street. One night Hubertus disconnected the

odometer of his dad's VW Golf, because his Dad started to write the mileage down before he went to bed. Oh, did I mention that we were both 15 years old? When it came to the legal part, my teacher could tell right away that I had some experience.

Manual or automatic?

I prefer manual. I learned driving a manual. It involves a bit more

thinking while driving.

Most memorable road trip?

Definitely Bali. We went there for our honeymoon 22 years ago. Instead of using the main roads, we always drove into the hinterland and found amazing landscapes.

What do you listen to?

At the moment, Xavier Naidoo.

Which celebrity chef would you most like to go on a road trip with?

It would be Yotam Ottolenghi. I love his style of cooking. The road trip would be Portugal.

Do you judge people by what they drive?

In general not, but I am smiling when I see a Ferrari, Maserati or Porsche. Where is the point driving them at a top speed of 100? New Zealand roads are not made to speed and that is what I love about this country.

What irritates you most about other drivers?

Drink or drugged drivers. My dad died as the result of somebody who crashed into his car on a highway. The driver was three times over the limit.

Who else is allowed to drive your van?

My head baker, Nigel, is probably the only person in my circle of trust. My wife isn't interested in the van, even though I offered her a drive.

■ As told to Donna McIntyre

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