

Vegetarian Car for Vegetarian Conservationist

By Barbara Swail

DAWSON CREEK, BC – With the fragrance of French fries wafting down the road behind him, photographer/conservationist, Jerry Pavia blew into town. Jerry, from Bonner's Ferry, Idaho, is driving a collection of his photographs to Whitehorse in his vegetable oil powered 1984 Mercedes.

“The car really suits me,” Jerry said. “We're both vegetarian, both doing our best to give the environment a break. When you consider the environmental cost of getting my pictures to Whitehorse, it's ideal. And I can visit friends along the way.”

His wife, Ingrid Elena, purchased the diesel-powered car for him at auction. The next item on the block was the conversion kit to enable the vehicle to run on vegetable oil so she bought that too and the car was soon fueled with recycled restaurant oil. “The used oil is heated to remove any water that is picked up from frying potatoes, then filtered to remove bits of food. The only thing left is a slight smell of French fries. It's caught on so well in the States the price of old diesel vehicles has doubled. But any diesel engine can be converted. I've seen huge brand new pickup trucks converted as well.”

Jerry was hoping to refuel in Dawson Creek with the help of local owners of veggie oil fueled cars but couldn't find anyone with a converted vehicle. Northerners may have concerns about freezing winter temperatures affecting the viscosity of the oil. Jerry, who lives in the mountain region of Idaho and experiences winters like ours, explained that his car has a block heater like those in all northern cars, plus another small heater on the fuel line just before the engine that ensures the oil is up to temperature before it is injected.

“Art and the environment go hand in hand in the Yukon,” said Jerry who has been exploring the remote areas of northern Canada for decades. CPAWS, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, is sponsoring the show in the hope of creating public objection to plans to push roadways into the deep wilderness of the far north by highlighting the irreplaceable beauty of the region. The show will run from July 14 through August 2007 and features platinum and colour prints.

The photographs will be included in a larger show, “Yellowstone to Yukon Corridors” in New York City in 2010 which will highlight the importance of the wild western landscape to it's natural inhabitants

Jerry Pavia is an internationally known photographer, considered one of the foremost garden and flower photographers in North America, and has published 15 books of his images. He is also one of a small number of photographers creating platinum prints. On his forays into wild places, he uses an 11x14 plate camera to create exquisitely detailed landscapes which, when printed, have a beautifully ethereal quality.

For more information about vegetable oil fueled vehicles:

www.greasecar.com

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vegetable_oil_used_as_fuel

<http://autos.canada.com/news> - McDonald's to recycle used cooking oil for fuel