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AUTOS

Grease Is the Word for These Fuel-Conscious Drivers

Pardon the Smell of Schnitzel: Couple Makes Most of Used Vegetable Oil for Their Cars

By **A.J. BAIME**

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VEGETABLE-OIL POWERED CARS



A look at how cars can run on used vegetable oil. *MEREDITH HEUER FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

Liz Elkin, 34, a landscape designer from New Paltz, N.Y., on her "greasecars," as told to A.J. Baime.

I first heard about people driving on veggie oil when I was in college.

When we were ready, my husband and I bought a used diesel and converted it. Now we have two greasecars: a 2002 VW Jetta wagon we use with the kids and our dog, and a

2004 Dodge Sprinter van for our business. (See photos of vegetable-oil powered cars.)

To convert a car, you start with an older model diesel. A company called Greasecar did our conversions. It cost about \$4,000 to convert our van this winter (a little more than usual as it required some custom work). It has two fuel tanks: one for diesel and one for veggie oil. When the van's warmed up (right away at this time of year), a little computer automatically feeds veggie oil to the engine. The engine runs as normally, and according to my calculations, miles per gallon is about the same as it would be with diesel.

We get our fry oil free from a German restaurant, after they're done with it. A filtration system we built in our garage gets rid of the french fries and things.

It was time consuming to set up the system. But now? It takes no time and we drive almost entirely free, burning what is basically garbage. We do get feint wafts of schnitzel, but it's better than diesel fumes.

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