

### A Garage Worthy Of Any Ferrari

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BRIDGEHAMPTON

**T**HINK pampered auto storage. That's what the Bridgehampton Motoring Club is about. The club, which began accepting memberships last fall, runs a garage that offers car enthusiasts a resortlike repository for their prized possessions.

"This is a place for people who love and really care about their cars," said Matthew Harris, an owner of the motoring club and a managing director of Credit Suisse First Boston in London.

This is no dark, damp garage. The cars are kenneled at a constant 68 degrees, with 50 percent humidity. The place is well lit and immaculately clean.

The cars undergo "mechanical integrity" checks every two weeks, which means they are started and the engine temperatures and tire pressures are recorded. An e-mail report is then sent to the owner.

The garage, which has 12,000 square feet, provides other services as needed — washing, vacuuming and underhood cleaning — and will take the car to a mechanic or inspection station. The garage will even send a truck with a tilting flat bed to pick up and deliver cars.

The club's fees depend on the level of service required, but the average cost of membership is about \$325 a month, Mr. Harris said. "We didn't want to make it exclusive," he added without a trace of irony.

Mr. Harris, who has a home in Southampton, said the club meets a need because many East Enders are seasonal or weekend residents who want a storage garage. This being the Hamptons, the cars are usually expensive, often exotic or collectible. And because the ocean is nearby, the salt air can lead to corrosion if cars are not carefully garaged.

Bill Hickman of Manhattan keeps his gray 1970 Mercedes-Benz 280SL, a two-seat roadster, at the Bridgehampton Motoring Club.

"The car is in a clean, stable environment, and that's very important to me," said Mr. Hickman, who described the car as a "treasured family possession" that he has always pampered.

A part-time investor who heads out to the Hamptons for day trips or weekends, Mr. Hickman said he used to store his Mercedes at a garage in East Rockaway but when it closed, he began looking for a garage on the East End.

He came to the motoring club. "I found the place, and I liked what it offered and decided to move my car there," he said.

There are currently 16 cars at the garage, including a 2003 Ferrari 575M Maranello, a 1978 Alfa Romeo Spider, a 1969 Ford Bronco and a 1965 Ford Shelby Mustang. The original Chitty Chitty Bang Bang is being stored there during promotions for the musical that is to open on Broadway this spring.

Although there is room for 60 cars, Mr. Harris said the garage would not be filled to capacity.

"It's about trying to maintain the spirit of the facility," he said. "We want to keep it small and not turn it into just a giant garage." To that end, a member lounge and outdoor picnic area add to the club feel, he said.

Owners are allowed 24-hour access to their cars — key cards open the doors — and if they like, they can log on to the club's Web site and monitor their cars via seven cameras that pan, tilt and zoom.

Mr. Hickman said the garage's location, on Tradesman's Pass a couple of blocks from the Bridgehampton train station, is convenient. "I just take the train out, walk a few feet, and then I have my car," he said. "It's very efficient."



Photographs by Deirdre Brennan for The New York Times

Tom Mueschke, the general manager of the Bridgehampton Motoring Club, above, and one of his tenants, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, below.



There are other storage garages on the East End, but none are as fancy as the Bridgehampton Motoring Club. The Kensington Motor Group in Bridgehampton, which is best known for its annual auction and show of vintage cars, has two garages, one heated and one not, with a total capacity of 60 cars.

"It's definitely not as elaborate as that place," said Peter Mole, Kensington's president. "There are no weekly start-ups or anything of that sort, but if a customer asks for it, I will do it."

Cindy Brower of Manhattan, who is building a house in Bridgehampton, took her 1956 Ford Thunderbird to the Bridgehampton Motoring Club. "I just love this car and needed a good place to keep it," she said.