



# Freedom of Choice

Exotic car shares give enthusiasts the joy of variety without the burden of ownership.

BY MATTHEW PHENIX

*The all-American Saleen S7 takes center stage (in front of a few Italian exotics) at the Gotham Dream Cars garage.*

**S**HARE YOUR TOYS. It's one of the first lessons every kid learns in kindergarten, and it's the guiding principle behind a fresh (and exclusive) take on the old-fashioned business of renting cars. Not unlike fractional real estate or aircraft ownership, an exotic car share is designed to give passionate automotive enthusiasts the opportunity to

sample a diverse array of extraordinary vehicles on public roads and in their own driveways, without the commitment and financial pitfalls of ownership. The concept has spawned more than a dozen car-share clubs across the country, including Gotham Dream Cars and Classic Car Club in New York, and Club Sportiva in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Although its first home is New York (hence the name), Gotham Dream Cars operates a satellite location in exclusive Dania Beach, Fla., offering members a sunny counterbalance to the Big Apple's icier months. Both sites maintain extensive car collections, though the company—which, in addition to its DreamShare program, offers traditional exotic-car

rentals and daylong multi-vehicle "Dream Tours"—shuffles a few fair-weather models (including its recently acquired Lamborghini Murciélago LP640 Roadster) between New York and Florida on a seasonal basis. Gotham's DreamShare program consists of three membership tiers with annual dues that range from \$18,000 to \$49,000. Points are redeemable



*Clockwise from rear left: Classic Car Club displays a 2005 Lotus Elise, 1965 Shelby Cobra, 1972 Jaguar E-Type, 1965 Ford Mustang Convertible, 2005 Ford GT, and 1967 Chevrolet Chevelle SS in their Manhattan showroom. Opposite, top to bottom: A Lamborghini Murciélago, Lotus Elise, and Ferrari F430—a few exotics available at Club Sportiva.*



at either location, but the company's flagship garage in Hasbrouck Heights, N.J., 15 minutes from Manhattan, appeases DreamShare members' social hankerings with a sprawling clubhouse bedecked with fitness equipment, pool tables, and video-game systems.

With a paltry \$1,500 initiation fee (for a Classic Collection membership) and annual dues that range from \$8,000 to \$20,250, the Classic Car Club offers a lot of bang for the buck. Founded in 1995, the company has garages in London, Copenhagen, and New York, although ambitious expansion plans call for new offices in Los Angeles and Miami. Classic Car Club offers its members not merely the latest

and greatest, but a few golden oldies, too. The company has built both a Carbon Fiber Collection, comprised of new models including a Ford GT and a Maserati GranTurismo, and a fastidiously preserved Classic Collection, brimming with such confections as a 1967 Chevrolet Chevelle SS and a 1972 De Tomaso Pantera.

The indisputable bargain of our selections, San Francisco's Club Sportiva is nonetheless a first-class outfit whose personal service and growing assortment of cars—not to mention its proximity to roads like the superb stretch of California's Highway 1 near Monterey—make membership nearly irresistible. After paying a nominal initiation fee (which

essentially buys a daylong driving academy with a professional instructor), applicants pick from four membership levels, with annual dues that range from \$5,000 to \$28,000. All membership grades offer access to Club Sportiva's full fleet, which includes such goodies as an Audi R8, a Lotus Elise, and a pristine 1969 Jaguar E-Type. Members are also allowed to vote on the club's future acquisitions.

To those who have known the acute pain of paying for a tune-up or a brake job for a Ferrari or another auto of that ilk, the notion of a car-share doubtless makes sound economic sense. But these clubs aren't merely the most prudent way to drive a dream. They afford members the

rare chance to commune with other like-minded motoring enthusiasts, share more than toys, and expand the exotic-car experience beyond the familiar (and expensive) owner-mechanic relationship. "It's about a lifestyle, really," says Club Sportiva's manager of client relations Zephany Fischl. "It's about getting together with people who share a passion for pure driving. This isn't a rental car company. For our members, it's a way of life." ☐

*Gotham Dream Cars, 877.246.8426, [www.gothamdreamcars.com](http://www.gothamdreamcars.com)*