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Rent a Clean Ride

by Jessica Ridenour



Los Angeles is famous for many things: movie stars, infinite summers and, unfortunately, freeways jammed with a bazillion cars spewing pollution into the celestial sphere.

As if answering the collective wheeze of 3.8 million pairs of Angelino lungs, Shaun Stenshol has brought his successful Maui-based Bio Beetle Eco Rental Car business to the mainland. Now vacationing greenies and eco-conscious locals alike can pick up an environmentally friendly, low-emission rental in a convenient location near LAX.

Bio Beetle has been offering 100 percent pure biodiesel-fueled rental cars to environmentally aware drivers on Maui since 2003. The decision to set up shop in LA was a no-brainer for Stenshol, a former Greenpeace activist. "LA is the car capital of the world," he says.

The cars get 30 to 45 miles per gallon and can range between 400 to 800 miles per tank, depending on tank size and how the car is driven (excessive speed sucks down the juice, no matter what kind of fuel you're using). They also release fewer smog-forming hydrocarbons, particulates and carbon monoxide than your standard ride.

At the moment there's only one place in town to refuel the cars—at a biodiesel co-op in Culver City. Renters just call the co-op folks up when they're ready to refuel, and are expected to deliver the car back to the rental office with a full tank.

While LA Bio-Beetle's diminutive fleet includes only four cars so far (a Beetle, two Jettas and a Passat), they plan on having 20 by the year's end, according to west coast manager Joe Blackburn. Daily rates range from \$49.99 to \$69.99, and weekly rates start at \$199.

Four biodiesel cars may seem to get lost in the crush of LA traffic, but it's an important start. "This is one small step moving us towards sustainability," says Stenshol. "We're for people who want to be part of the solution."

Bio Beetle is located at 9146 S. Sepulveda Blvd., LA. 310.570.3896 or visit bio-beetle.com.



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