

Gran Car Vehicles Continue to Roll Along Havana's Storied Streets

By: Ian Stalker

Do newlyweds think that half-century-old American cars look pretty in pink?



Well, Domingo Perez Rodriguez is convinced that that's the case. Perez Rodriguez is with Havana-based transportation company Cubataxi, which includes among its divisions Gran Car, which chauffeurs tourists around the Cuban capital and other Cuban cities in the types of 1950s-era American cars that have become somewhat symbolic of Cuba. And, Perez Rodriguez notes, among the dozens of vehicles in the Gran Car fleet are three pink ones, including a DeSoto convertible that has proven popular with those visitors who have just tied the knot.

The DeSoto and two similarly colored Fords began life with other coats of paint but were then redone in that most feminine of colors. "Now, many people want to change the original paint and experiment with other colors," Perez Domingo reports.

Gran Car vehicles can be rented for short trips or an entire day and come with a chauffeur. They are frequently found outside

landmark Havana hotels.

The vehicles have all been carefully restored and must pass Cuban government mechanical inspections before being put into use.

Perez Dominguez says his homeland is frequently hosting couples wanting to get married on a Caribbean island and French and German tourists in particular seem appreciative of pink vehicles.





Indeed, some tourists request a pink car by e-mail well before they set foot on Cuba, continues Perez Dominguez, who has driven the DeSoto but acknowledges that he personally isn't crazy about cars with that paint scheme.

But he still concedes that having

an uncommon paint job in a large city with a large population does mean that the DeSoto – and its pink Ford counterparts – aren't likely to get lost in the shuffle.

"This car is very easy to see," he agrees.