



Lee Barron — Owner
Acadiana Destination Services



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If anyone knows how to move people in style, it's Lee Barron.

Airport Van. These two words used to create a visual of limited headspace and insufficient room to move in the hearts of travelers everywhere. But now, thanks to the Freightliner Sprinter, people flying in and out of Florida's St. Lucie County don't need to worry about being shuttled

about the fabled Treasure Coast in a cramped, domestic van.

No, not if they call on Acadiana Destination Services. Lee Barron says he formed the company “to exploit an unfilled niche in the passenger transportation market here that falls between the familiar bare-bones shuttle

and the luxury limousine. Our target market is one we define as ‘moderately upscale.’ ”



Freightliner
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ACADIANA DESTINATION SERVICES
FORT PIERCE, FL

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“Our price position is near the top of the market because we feel clients are willing to pay for superior service that

is delivered in superior vehicles.”

Those superior vehicles are four Freightliner Sprinter passenger vans. “This area is not really the limo area one finds fifty miles further south. We’re targeting airport transfers for upscale resorts and hotels, as well as the airport shuttle and private car markets from high-end condominiums and gated communities.”



“We have other vehicles,” he continues, “but we started the company up with these.” Formerly an agricultural instructor for 20 years, Lee says he drove coaches part time — “driving everything the competition had” — before deciding to launch Acadiana with a van he calls “the better mousetrap.”

He says a Cadillac sedan in airport service may get from 24 to 28 MPG, but that can’t compare to the 23 to 27 MPG diesel performance turned in by a Sprinter carrying many more passengers. “And,” he notes, “you get used to the European-designed ride and handling very quickly.”

Lee says the largest commercial account in the area and his “base customer” is the prestigious

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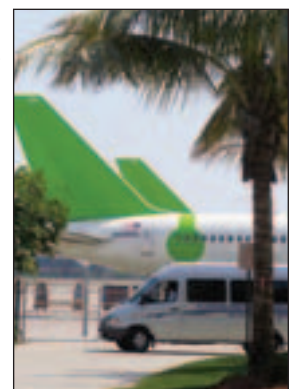
Club Med Sandpiper all-inclusive resort in Port St. Lucie, a two-hour drive north of Miami.

“As most of the management at Club Med is European,” Lee explains, “they were already familiar with the Sprinter from its presence in Europe.

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“And we still own the only Sprinter vans we know of in St. Lucie County,” he continues. “They are novelties.” Maybe that’s why for the first week of the last Department of Homeland Security “Orange Alert,” Acadiana’s Sprinters were selected for vehicle searches nearly every time they headed



through a checkpoint. “The security staff wanted a closer look,” says Lee. “That was no surprise to us. So many people approach my drivers to admire these vehicles that we keep brochures and business cards in the door pockets.”

“We cannot overstate how pleased we are with our Freightliner Sprinters,” Lee says. “We do have a Cadillac for one or two passengers, two Thomas Built motor coaches for large groups, and a standard Chevy van we have on hand as a spare.”

“Our drivers keep the Sprinters, starting out each day from home,” he advises. “The truth is they don’t want to give them up. They even prefer to have routine maintenance done on their personal time rather than chance getting stuck with the Chevy for a day.”

Lee contends the Sprinter is worlds above the typical 15-passenger van commonly used for passenger transportation in Florida. “Our customers do not want to be seen in those vans,” he asserts. “The Sprinter solved that image problem with its comfort and distinctiveness.”

“And because Sprinters are priced between the gasoline and diesel versions of ‘up-fitted’ standard vans, they’re a bargain in the showroom as well as at the fuel pump. Our diesel fuel economy is so good,” he continues, “we enjoy a 40%

advantage over our competitors. On top of that, my drivers are actually competing with each other for fuel economy — two have already broken the 25-MPG barrier.”

Lee figures had he spent about two thousand dollars less and purchased Ford 250 gasoline-powered vans, he would have lost out by not getting the 40% boost in fuel

economy and the ability to operate an attractive, comfortable vehicle in a high-end market that the Sprinter delivers.

He points out, too, that the Mercedes-Benz engine powering the Sprinter is as robust as it is efficient. “We’re continually pleased at how nimble the Sprinter is in parking lots and tight spots. We’re so confident in our choice of the Sprinter that we believe



standard American vans will be out of the market in a few short years.”

He calls buying the Sprinters a “wise decision,” both up front and for the long haul. “The Sprinter has met every expectation, and my choice of this vehicle may be the best decision I ever made,” Lee states. “Our biggest complaint to date is that, at 75 MPH, a high-roof Sprinter has proven unable to repel



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a golf ball bouncing down I-95 without receiving a small dent.”

All kidding aside, Lee figures that while Acadiana currently enjoys a huge competitive edge due to the recent spike in fuel prices, this will not last forever. “I am not the only person who can read the badge on a vehicle,” he points out. “I discovered the Sprinter passenger van after I saw a cargo version on the road. Then I visited Freightliner Trucks of South Florida in Fort Pierce. It was love at first sight.”

“There are now four Sprinter passenger vans in St. Lucie County and I own all of them,” he continues. “It’s just a matter of time before I add more Sprinters. I keep a close eye on the Sprinter inventory around here.”



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