One Gallon, Please?

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In the days of yesteryear when most activities centered around the home, the horseless carriage was considered a luxury enjoyed by only a minute percentage of our population. Going for a drive in the car was an end in itself — a big event that engendered much excitement among the children, made Mom a bit nervous because of the unpredictability of this new-fangled creation, and inflated Dad's ego at the saturation point as he cranked 'er up, felt the power and gave 'er the gas.

Today, a family's psychological reaction to automobiles is very much the same. But, the feelings have been spawned by entirely different factors. The children are excited not by the ride, but by where it is taking them. Mother is nervous because of the role of chauffeur has been added to her many other pressing tasks of the day. Dad's ego is hitting tilt because he was able to afford that second automobile to sit opposite the first one under the carport adjacent to the family boat.

In short, our mode of living has projected the automobile from the ranks of a luxury to that of a necessity. Whether in rural areas where conveniences are scattered or in our sprawling cities where activities are, unfortunately, spread across the town, the use of a car as an essential element in our society has had far-reaching implications.

Service Stations

Today, there are over 97,527,000 publicly and privately owned vehicles in use in the U.S. This has resulted in an overwhelming production of gasoline in mass media and as a corollary development, the construction of the thousands of service stations in our urban and rural areas to dispense this fuel.

You can hardly drive four or five blocks in the city without coming upon a service station and usually, where you find one you will notice a cluster of competitors nearby. On the highways, "oil stations" (as the Yankees call them) are a familiar sight.

No one doubts the necessity and convenience of these stations, but the pity has been that until recently, most of them have been eyesores that could be categorized in one of two ways. Either they had a cold, impersonal, porcelainized look that gave one the impression he was driving up to a refrigerator, or they were characterized as the junkyard type with old tires cluttering things up, spare automobile parts hanging around and unsightly oil stains covering the premises.

Good Examples

The trend today is fortunately toward more aesthetically acceptable places to get gas. In Lafayette, improvement has now been noticed in stations constructed by Esso, Mobil, Texaco and Shell. Stations at Pinhook and Evangeline Thruway Pinhook and Surrey, and S. College and Johnston are particularly good examples of what a good design can offer. The station at South College and Johnston will even offer a small picnic area for travelers. I am sure there must be other oil companies doing a good job, but Esso, Mobil, Texaco and Shell are the ones that come most readily to mind.

Some major oil companies will still send mounds of money buying prime land to construct service stations that lack imagination and eye appeal to such an extent that they actually detract from business. On one particular site along the Evangeline Thruway a very expensive piece of land was purchased for a service station.

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