

European parking system stacks cars on top of each other

By Vanessa Ring

Europeans do some things very well. They have contributed much to art, literature, music and food. With Klaus ParkLift, they have contributed much to parking.

Yes, parking. Created in Germany more than 30 years ago, Klaus ParkLift is a hydraulically operated parking system that lets two or three cars park in a space normally taken up by one car.

The cars are stacked on platforms that move up or down in less than a minute by holding down a button. The quiet "bunk bed" system moves one car below grade so the top car can drive off, or moves both cars above grade so the bottom car can be driven. (Other models stack more cars.)

Stacking is necessary

This type of parking system is popular in Europe, says Manfred Heidinger of Klaus Parking Systems Canada Ltd., which has North American rights to the system.

Stacking cars is popular in Europe "by necessity," he said.

Klaus ParkLift is being offered at a Townlind Homes complex in the Metro Toronto area as an extra to turn a two-car garage into a three-car garage. The upgrade costs \$15,000.

Reduces frontage

On the design front, many new homes have garages as their front focal point simply because of high land costs — putting the garage to the side increases the lot width, and the home's price, too much.

Klaus ParkLift can cut down on the frontage needed and cut down on the garage-with-a-house-attached phenomena, Heidinger said.

In existing homes, the system "is an assist when you're in a tight squeeze," he said.

However, the home's foundation must be at least 1.8 metres deep and the garage at least 3.35 metres high.

The system could also be a real boon to the commercial and business world. Parking is a problem in downtown Toronto and proposed developments must include a certain number of parking spaces to meet city standards.

Sometimes developers offer "cash-in-lieu" to the city to bypass the parking-space requirement. However, city officials can turn that option down and insist on the minimum parking spaces. Sometimes that means "the whole building would have to be redesigned," Heidinger said.

It can also help existing businesses to ease up tight parking situations. Prudential Assurance Co. Ltd. on Adelaide Street West used the system to increase executive parking. Prudential Assurance at 141 Adelaide St. W. also uses it.

However, the system does not have the popularity here that it has in Europe.

Heidinger believes part of the reason

is "mindset." North Americans haven't had to worry as much about a lack of housing and development space. As a result, parking is like "a fifth wheel in design" and is not given much thought, he said.

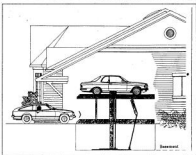
Klaus ParkLift works by inserting a key into a wall-mounted box about the size of a light switch, but deeper. Then the operator pushes a button. For safety reasons, "the minute you take your finger off the button, it stops," Heidinger said.

Article appeared in

TORONTO STAR's

Real Estate News

Friday, July 10/93



Brudijum Construction Inc.
P.O. Box 1696
Lafayette, CA 94549

Planning/Sales Office

76 Fairway Drive, Aurora, Ontario, Canada L4G 2H4 • Tel. 905 841-3223 • Fax 905 727-8856