

LADY TRUCKER ENJOYS COMFORTS OF CUMMINS POWERED "CONDOMINIUM"

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Lady trucker, Deborah Hoffman of Washington, Michigan, travels in first class style. Her Cummins powered Peterbilt is a "condominium" on wheels offering the ultimate in deluxe comfort during long hauls. On the road, Debbie enjoys the luxuries of condo living with her customized all electric LivLab sleeper, complete with microwave oven, refrigerator, and bathroom with shower, small TV and queen size bed. Her interior color scheme is sophisticated black plush carpet, walls and ceiling of black diamond tufted vinyl! and rose tapestry curtains and bedspread.

Need Power, Cummins Delivers

During her ten years in trucking, Debbie has always chosen Cummins engines. "I like Cummins because I like its power. When I get in the hills on the hard pulls, I want to keep my speed up," says the petite blond independent trucker. "I want power. I need it, and my Cummins has it."

Debbie started with a 1974 400 horsepower Cummins, then bought a 1976 350 hp Cummins and now owns a Big Cam III NTC-400 rated 400 hp at 2100 rpm. It has a 13 speed Fuller transmission, 3.90 rear axles and rolls on 11-24.5 Michelin XM+S4 radials. She says she gets 61/2 miles per gallon.

PeekaBoo's Pete

Calling her ritzy rig the PeekaBoo's Pete, Deb bought the 1982 official pace truck of the Pocono Bobtail 500 for \$ 105,000.

"Secondly, I like Cummins dependability," Deb declares. "I've been around other engines and none can compete with Cummins."

Both power and dependability are essentials she needs because she specializes in over-dimensional loads. Recently, she bought a 1984 Transcraft 45-foot drop deck trailer. She often hauls overwidth TW 25 and 35 series tractors from Romeo, Michigan's Ford Tractor Plant for George Bennett Motor Express.

It's a Challenge

Running with 80,000 lbs. GCW, Debbie describes her loads as awkward hauling, not heavy hauling. "Not many like to get involved in overdimensional," she points out. "You can't run in the rain, nights, holidays, or weekends. There's a lot to it. You go certain routes and need permits in each state, but I like it. It's challenging."

Thinking back to 1972, Debbie recalls, "I would have bet my life I wouldn't be a truck driver." At that time, she was married to a trucker and the mother of three young children. When she decided she wanted a job, she checked into nurses' training and decided it was too complicated. Knowing how fascinated her husband was with trucking, she called the International Truck Driving School in Dearborn. The school advisor encouraged her, so she enrolled and graduated six weeks later. She even paid for her schooling by working the night shift in a plastics factory.

At Deb's first employer, she hauled bulk cement. When her equipment kept breaking down, she watched mechanics doing repairs until she could do the work herself. In 1980, her

second husband, Don Hoffman, urged Debbie to take a two day written test at Macomb Community College, thus earning her diesel mechanic certification.

The independent lady admits she's a stickler for routine maintenance for her own engine. "Everything Cummins says to do in their Operation and Maintenance Manual, I do. I follow the manual to a 'T.'"

Describing herself as a perfectionist, Debbie says she did her own inframe overhaul on her 76 Cummins engine. "The whole life of an engine is how clean you keep it," Deb says.

For repairs, she's invested over \$2,000 in buying the best tools, including \$ 600 for a 0-600 pound torque wrench. Her routine is greasing the truck every week or in hot weather every third day. Oil changes are done every 10,000 miles.

Cummins Parts Readily Available

"When I take the engine apart, it's spotless," she declares. "Cummins parts are readily available. You needn't tear your whole engine down if one part needs replacement. I can go find a Cummins distributor or dealer anywhere." She notes that her home base distributor is Cummins Michigan, Inc. at Novi.

On long hauls throughout 48 states, Deb's favorite music is Cummins "Ride the Road to Freedom" 8-track tape. She's worn out one tape.

Ninety percent of her runs are done alone, although she's often accompanied by two bodyguards. One is a Chihuahua, the other is a salt and pepper Bouvier named Honey Bear.

Hard Work the Key to Success

As a professional, Debbie attributes her success to lots of hard work She'd like to help other women truckers attain what she has and recently started the Women's National Truck Drivers' Organization, Inc., P.O. Box 147, Washington, Michigan 48094. In the few months since organization, memberships have poured in. Debbie estimates there are 165,000 women truckers on the highway who might be interested in a support group.

Dream Come True

On her tenth anniversary in trucking, Debbie gave herself a present. The unique unit she dreamed about was a LivLab sleeper from West Palm Beach, Florida. Aerodynamically designed for over-the cab mount, it acts similar to an air foil, weighing only 2,800 pounds. When used with a cab-over tractor, hydraulic lifts raise the sleeper back while the cab stilted forward, making it compatible with every model truck. Deb is a dealer for the units, holding the franchise for Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois.

Deb attributes the showy, sleek look of the rig to her husband, Don, a professional truck painter. He added the red and blue striping design that turns the truck into a showstopper.

Although she enjoys life on the road, Deb looks forward to home coming. Her children Raymond, 34, Vicky, 31, and Christine, 28, welcome her with a clean house and a vase filled with roses. "If I were home every day," she says, "I wouldn't get that."

Driving her plush Cummins powered rig, Deb admits she feels like a celebrity. "I would never change from Cummins. When you're happy with what you've got, why change?"