



resident spotlight

By Sean Madden, Resident Writer



meet JORDAN & MOJI THOMPSON a couple on the move!

Lately, you may have noticed a growing number of Tesla autos quietly gliding along island roads. Jordan and Moji Thompson spoke with us and shared a little bit about what makes Tesla so special.

In this month's piece, resident writer Sean Madden has provided a wonderful piece based on the interview with the Thompsons.

Kailas Narendran, also a resident shared his Tesla story as well. But first a little bit about your neighbors, Jordan and Moji.

Jordan and Moji Thompson have been married since 1985. They have two children, Alex, who works at Rockwell, locally and Serena, who lives in New Orleans. She has a successful career making and selling jewelry.

The two retired a month apart around April of last year. Jordan was a software engineer who owned his own company. Moji, who moved to the US when she was 16 years old from Iran, was a systems engineer with Harris Corporation. Currently, Jordan is partnered with Moji's brother, they own the building where ACE Hardware (previously open in the Satellite Beach/Publix plaza) should be opening in the fall.

These days they are kept very busy trying to fulfill Moji's goal of traveling to every country in the world! So far, one of their favorite trips



was to Vietnam and are looking forward to touching down in Brazil and Portugal in the near future.

When they are home, they enjoy Chinese take-out from the Golden Dragon (in the Panera shopping center on Eau Gallie and Patrick Dr.) and watching Star Wars or the new Star Trek series (on CBS streaming service) or listening to rock 'n roll oldies (Jordan's fave) or Hispanic tunes (Moji's).

They love living in Tortoise Island and have been here since around 1991.



In the final scene of the film Back to the Future, Marty McFly takes off in a flying car that runs on garbage for fuel. Now imagine a car that is so technologically advanced that it can do most of the driving itself; its AI (Artificial Intelligence) and sensory technology let it navigate through traffic and road hazards with ease; it can drive itself to your location and pick you up through its vertically opening doors. It can remotely update its own software such that a car at the end of its warranty has the same updates as a new one rolling off the assembly line - and even improve its performance! A car like this sounds too good to be true to exist in this day and age, but, you don't need a Flux capacitor with 1.21 gigawatts (or get hit by a bolt of lightning for that matter) to meet this vehicle of the future: The Tesla is already very much a reality.

It's hard to believe such an automobile can exist today, when a little over a century ago humanity had only just produced the first automated vehicle that ran without a horse attached to it: Henry Ford's Model T, created in 1913. Tesla cars do away with fossil fuels and run on a more economic and available resource: electricity. Their advanced system allows them to both quickly and smoothly accelerate to fast speeds faster than most motorcycles, as well as practically drive themselves in a way that makes it feel as if it's gliding smoothly down the road. Tesla cars are indeed real, and proof exists right in our neighborhood in the form of the Tesla Model X owned by Jordan and Moji Thompson of Loggerhead Island Drive.

"This is the safest and quickest SUV ever built," Jordan said. "I think the idea of it driving itself is pretty impressive. Elon Musk

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[one of Tesla's founders and chief product architect] claims he's going to have these cars completely drive themselves by the end of the year." Tesla's autopilot features are quite impressive, as they can sense oncoming vehicles and obstacles, navigate through construction sites, and brake if things go wrong. They automatically avoid potholes and their RADAR can easily see through torrential downpours. Several people have even claimed this feature has saved their lives, according to Jordan. However, these cars are not meant to drive all by themselves yet. If you leave your hand off the steering wheel for too long, they will warn you and ultimately shut down. Fortunately, short drives made to pick up a driver at the edge of a parking lot are perfectly within the range of the Tesla's autonomous capabilities. So, today, if you're at the mall without your umbrella when it starts to rain, your Tesla can pick you up at the door with a touch of a button on your cell phone!

Another one of the Tesla's impressive capabilities is its fuel sourcing. Teslas can charge their batteries from multiple sources: simple wall plugs, EV charging stations, and special

Tesla superchargers. These superchargers can have the car's battery raring to go within half an hour most of the time and are constantly being improved to get the job done even faster. "There are plenty of charging stations on the road. We've made several trips to New Orleans and New York without a hitch," Jordan shared. "It's a little more expensive than charging at home, but certainly less than paying for gas in a traditional car. We plug our car in as soon as we get home - we never waste time at the gas station, and unless we are on a long road trip, never wait for charging." You'll never get bored if you do find yourself stuck at a charging station: games on your car's dashboard are included. If you are like Jordan and Moji and have solar panels at home, the cost to charge is free!

With Tesla's strides in constantly improving its technology, we can only marvel as the world of the future is continuously drawing closer. With its features that enhance safety, efficiency, economy, and lessen environmental impact, most car manufacturers are following Tesla's example. Some may even further improving on its capabilities. While not even the Tesla can transport riders into the future (unless you click the "Ludicrous Plus" button!), it's only a matter of time before we finally get those cars that can fly, so wherever we end up going, we won't need roads.

The Narendrans Tesla Tale By Kailas Narendran, Resident Writer

The Narendran family of Lanterback Island Drive is another neighbor with a glimpse of the future parked in their driveway. Katie Fillion and Kailas Narendran had been yearning for a fully electric vehicle for a long time when they finally traded in Katie's Toyota Highlander Hybrid in 2017. "I love Toyotas," Kailas said. "But the Highlander was having mechanical issues, and we had put 230,000 miles on the Prius I had been driving, and our goal was for the next vehicle to be all-electric powered."

Kailas and Katie's main motivation for purchasing an electric car is philosophical. "It's more in keeping with our ideals," Kailas explained. "We feel it's a step in a better direction in terms of not only transportation but also infrastructure and reliance on more sustainable energy sources." Tesla, in particular, appealed to Kailas because each Tesla is "a structurally innovative piece of engineering." Thus, in late summer 2017, the Narendrans added the Tesla Model X 100D to their family fleet.

Kailas' favorite feature of the Tesla is the autopilot, which pretty much means the car can almost drive itself, particularly on the highway, or with wide-open roads with plenty of space between vehicles. On recent road trips to Asheville N.C. and Washington D.C., Kailas claims the car "did 95 percent of the driving. I can relax on the road, and don't have to stay solely focused on driving."

The added safety of the Tesla autopilot system is a comfort to Katie and Kailas. "In high school, I fell asleep behind the wheel because I was tired, and was almost killed in an accident," Kailas said. "Driving home at night, especially when tired, terrifies me. With the Tesla's autopilot, I don't have the stress of worrying about driving while tired, because the autopilot is so responsive."

Kailas quickly shoots down three main popular objections to the Tesla, that it adds too much time to long drives due to charging, limits driving range, and that its seating is cramped. While Kailas admits the Tesla has changed the way the family travels, "we can basically get all over Florida very quickly. The car has a very useful amount of range for day to day travel, or for long road trips. We now have to stop for a bit longer to charge up when we stop, where before we wouldn't stop till we needed to refuel. But then we also have kids now," Kailas added. As family-style travel generally means longer or more frequent stops, Kailas feels the family hasn't really compromised anything when it comes to road trips in the Tesla. Daughters Denali and Petra agree and are big fans of the Tesla also.

As for cramped conditions, Kailas disagrees. "The seating is awesome!" he said. "On our trip to D.C. we had six people, and plenty of room. You'd be surprised how much room you



Tucker, Katie and Kailas

have when you get rid of the traditional engine, transmission and fuel tank."

On the downside, Kailas admits that the Tesla has had some issues with parts and accessories on the car, but believes that just comes with the manufacture of a new car. "Tesla as a company has been really great to work with, so we've been able to resolve all those small issues."

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