

THE BUSINESS ON...



Brent Hoberman
Co-founder,
PRO-founders
Capital

The bloke from lastminute.com?

Yes, and furniture site mydeco.com, although that hasn't made quite as much of a splash as Mr Hoberman might have liked.

What now?

The pin-up of the dot.com boom, who made a £30m personal profit from last-minute.com, hasn't retired to the golf course. Instead, he's joined fellow celebrity entrepreneur, easyJet founder Sir [Stelios Haji-Ioannou](#), to launch a car club in the UK. Their easyCar scheme will encourage motorists to rent out their vehicles when they do not need them. Owners set the price of their car and its availability, while hirers use smartphone apps to book a driving seat. The pair's car club aims to test the first 1000 cars next spring in London.

Doesn't sound very new?

WhipCar launched in April 2010, allowing car owners to register their vehicles for rent. It's also similar to Zipcar, the car club which last year bought Britain's Streetcar business for \$50m (£32m) and has more than 360,000 members across the US and Europe. But this time drivers are hiring Bob next-door's Mondeo rather than a car club's VW Golf parked a few blocks away. Car clubs are still fairly new in this country, but the

industry is expected to grow eightfold over the next decade to hit 800,000 members. And Eton-educated Mr Hoberman and Sir Stelios fancy a piece of it.

Where's the money coming from?

A mixture of Sir Stelios' easy-Group and PROfounders Capital, the venture capital business which Mr Hoberman runs with serial entrepreneurs including Peter Dubens. But the pair have fingers in lots of other pies: South African-born Mr Hoberman is a non-executive director at Guardian Media Group and chairman at mydeco as well as at rival furniture site made.com. This month Sir Stelios started working on the launch of a new budget African airline called fastJet.

Don't say:

"Can we take Mr Hoberman's wheels for a spin?" There's no word yet on whether the pair will be chucking their own car keys into the mix.

