



Smoothing Out the Wrinkles

in Classic Aluminum

By Tom Bentley



Andy and April Hershberger's Airstream adventure started out innocently enough: They bought a used 2005 CCD a few years ago specifically for an extended family trip. Before the purchase, they were so unfamiliar with Airstreams that April said that oft-heard comment to Andy, "I wonder if they still make those silver trailers."

Andy too, had only a passing understanding of the brand, commenting later, "I wasn't sure what she was referring to, so we looked them up on the Internet and sure enough they did still make them." But with Airstreams, one thing leads to another. And another and another.

Now, the Hershbergers have what might be considered a small museum of vintage trailers, and some of them are doozies:

- 1939 Clipper
- 1948 Liner
- 1949 Limited
- 1950 Limited
- 1955 Cruiser "whaletail"
- 1959 Sovereign of the Road International
- 1961 Overlander International
- 1962 Bambi
- 1967 Globetrotter

The couple very much now understand all things Airstream, and then some. It does help that they live on an acre of land with no harsh zoning restrictions. It also helps that the Hershbergers are not merely collectors—they are active restorers. The Globetrotter was their first vintage coach, and it was nicely restored by Colin Hyde. However, expense and interest put the Hershbergers directly in the restoration driver's seat.

They do farm out some welding and cabinet building, but they aren't afraid to tackle the serious jobs. "Our first shell-off restoration we are working on is on the 1949 Limited. It is a pipe frame that we are

converting to a ladder frame. The trailer was gutted when we received it so it was a good one to start on," says April.

They plan to restore the vehicles to their original floor plans, with some modernization. They are rebuilding the frames from scratch on the '49 and '50 Limiteds to allow for black, grey and larger freshwater tanks.

"The 1950 Limited is one we plan on keeping for ourselves and modernizing by putting in a shower and modern electronics, which it did not have originally. We want them to look original from the outside and somewhat original inside, while having the modern amenities of a new trailer," says April.

Some of the trailers will be restored for sale; in the past year they sold a 1956 Overlander on eBay to a man in Switzerland. As well as the '50 Limited, they plan on keeping the '39 Clipper, the '48 Liner, the '55 Cruiser and the '59 Sovereign. April says, "My favorite is the 1959 Sovereign of the Road—it was in a movie and it has nice clean lines despite its immense length. Once it is restored we will use it for our longer camping trips."

The '61 and '67 trailers are the ones the couple currently use for camping trips and for guest bedrooms on the property. Last year, from April to October, they used them at least once a month for camping. They are doing extensive research on the proper restoration for the very rare '39 Clipper, which they intend to pair with a '39 Chevy 5 Window Business Coupe for towing.

April also sells Airstream-embossed stationery and Airstream-inspired earrings on eBay and also does some blogging about restoration projects and Airstreams in general on their site. However she's been pretty busy with a brand-new baby the last few months, so some of those projects are hibernating for now. They've done a lot of camping with four dogs and a lot of goods—seeing how deeply they jumped into Airstreaming after a tentative start, we're sure that baby will be singing a sweet song in a beautiful campground soon.

For more photos of the trailer collection, visit their website at www.ClassicAluminumTrailers.com

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