Finding a raccoon-infested, abandoned Airstream in a field might not seem like the most likely point of departure to outfitting a beach-side, island retreat center for musicians and artists, but for Teresa Doyle, the unconventional approach has always provided sweet returns. Even before she’d salvaged the “Coon Stream,” Doyle had long appreciated the silver trailers.

“Airstreams caught my eye as sculpture on wheels,” says Doyle. “I’m a musician as well as a visual artist, and even before I understood the integrity of the design work, they appealed to me as objects of art. Once I had one, I got aluminum fever.”

That fever extended beyond just restoring the ‘60 Safari, the first field find, to later acquisitions and restorations of a ‘73 Sovereign and a ’65 Caravel, as well as a late-60s Avion. Those trailering treasures are now beachside bedrooms at Doyle’s Rock Barra Retreat, a spectacular 20-acre stretch on Prince Edward Island (PEI).

She’s no stranger to PEI—she’s a sixth-generation islander, on both sides. Doyle was granted a 50-year lease (for the reasonable rate of one dollar a year) by Sam Sniderman, the acknowledged godfather of Canadian music, a fan of Teresa’s who summered on PEI.

The inspiration for the Safari restoration was Sniderman’s request that the property be made available to artists, yet essentially kept in its natural state. What better low-impact bedrooms than old Airstreams, snugled in scenic niches in the green hills of PEI?

Doyle has divided her musical endeavors between singing Cello-inspired music and jazz, and her award-winning music appears on three dozen compilation albums, as well as on 10 CDs put out by Bedlam, her own record label. She studied jazz in Montreal for over 7 years, and has played festivals and concerts at many international locations. But the trip she’d really love to take would be a jazz tour over Route 66—using her Caravel as her rolling home.

She’s writing an Airstream song that will be on her next album, to continue in the spirit of her latest release. “It’s a celebration of an era that we desperately need. We all need diversion, joy, dancing, something that’s uplifting. I wanted to make an album that made people happy. You want to grab your partner and foxtrot around the kitchen, or around your Airstream,” she says.

You can get information about Teresa Doyle, hear song samples, and see the Rock Barra workshop itinerary on her site at www.teresadoyle.com.

“The new album is a celebration of great American inventions, one being jazz, and the other Airstreams, both great gifts to the world. The big band jazz era has some of the best songwriting we’ve ever known. They’ve never gone out of fashion, and like the Airstream, they are a great design and they endure. They are well-crafted and are unabashedly beautiful.”

Doyle doesn’t have quite as much time for contemplation as some of one dollar a year) by Sam Sniderman, the acknowledged godfather of Canadian music, a fan of Teresa’s who summered on PEI.

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