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Fulltimers going small...very small

Those of you who think you need a forty-footer to full-time should find the story of a couple who live and travel in a 17-foot trailer interesting.

Originally, Joseph and Melanie Castine planned to buy a larger trailer. But because they'd need to trade in their Astro Van for a hefty tow vehicle to tow something larger, they decided on a 17-foot Casita coach. (See photos) With limited galley space and living space, Joseph and Melanie cook and eat outdoors whenever weather permits, thus saving wear and tear on the trailer's interior, while using nature as their living room.



Because the water pump uses quite a bit of electricity, and battery and water capacities are minimal, they use campground facilities for showers and washing dishes whenever possible. When facilities are not available, they take quick showers in the trailer to conserve water and battery power. Wiping down the shower walls with a squeegee and thoroughly drying the bathroom area helps prevent the development of mold. Having traveled through "lots of rain, hail, sleet, and wind", Joseph believes the trailer's one-piece molded fiberglass construction has effectively prevented any leaks and moisture problems.

Joseph says their Fan-Tastic vent keeps the trailer well aerated. He also added louvered covers for both the vent and one window. Except when the wind is strong enough to blow rain into the trailer, these covers allow both vent and window to remain open all the time.



Those of you who like to travel with pets might learn something from this couple's methods for housing their two feline traveling companions. The cats have their own "kitty condo" cage that not only holds their litter box but can also be placed outdoors when the family is in camp. Joseph created a conduit that connects through a storage area so the cats can go in and out of their condo at will. When the cats are indoors, a separately-installed "cat door" gives them access to their litter box, which is always kept in the storage compartment when it's not set up outside. Most of the time the cats are fed outdoors — or in the RV's bathroom (dry food only) when predators are about

or the weather keeps them inside. These practices keep the cats safe and help keep pet odors out of the trailer.

Space is always a challenge. When the "cooped-up" feeling gets to be too much, or the weather gets too wet, or the sun gets too hot, the Castines attach a 12-foot by 10-foot screenhouse that expands their living space. Storage space is also a problem. Because they are living in the trailer full-time, carrying all the necessities of daily living has meant constantly shuffling items that can't be stored. However, Joseph and Melanie are pleased enough with the overall quality of their "little home" that they feel the occasional inconveniences are worth it.

Although we don't recommend fulltiming in a small, lightweight trailer, we take our hats off to this enterprising couple for their spirit of adventure. Their example shows that the seemingly impossible can be accomplished through goal setting, perseverance, and a willingness to adapt.

Whether you are considering an RV for fulltiming, snowbirding, vacationing, or simply weekend getaways, be sure to check our [RV Ratings CD](#) before you buy.