



Related Information:

[Early Models Intro a Scam?](#)

[Buying an RV: The Issue of Trust](#)

[RV Reporter Articles](#)

[E-Bulletins](#)

[Motorhomes or Motor Homes...?](#)

[Motor Home with 53% Wheel-base-to-Length Ratio](#)

[Class A Motorhome](#)

[Class B Motorhome](#)

[Class C Motorhome](#)

Information on Towables:

[Fifth Wheel](#)

[Trailer Coach](#)

[Models Rated List](#)

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.

Beware the Con



Wikipedia defines a confidence artist as someone who is making "an attempt to intentionally mislead a person or persons (known as the "mark"), usually with the goal of financial or other gain". Unfortunately, many RV consumers have experienced such cons.

As an example, quite recently, the former owner of an RV dealership was arrested and charged with defrauding six customers — including two elderly RVers — to the tune of \$500,000. These customers had initially approached him to sell their motor homes on consignment or to trade them for newer RVs.

Police detectives revealed that this con artist's modus operandi was to "agree to pay off the outstanding balance of the seller's loan" on the vehicle, but, subsequently, fail to follow through. Then he'd sell the motor home and pocket the money, leaving the buyer unable to obtain clear title and the original seller with empty pockets and no RV. His crafty deeds, however, caught up with him, and he is being held on six counts of grand larceny. As it turns out, this dealer had had his vehicle merchant's license revoked in 2002.

Another type of con artist is known in the RV trade as the "gypsy hustler". Gypsy hustlers don't need resale licenses. They buy almost new or new entry-level RVs in volume "on the cheap" and sell them with a hard-luck story at high prices. Like panhandlers who flock to warmer climes in winter, gypsy dealers follow the snowbirds south to the most desirable tourist areas, where they ply their trade, usually in groups (unlike the erstwhile dealer above).

The lack of a dealer's license enables them to waive sales taxes, and minimal or sometimes no overhead allows them to undercut established dealerships. They frequently sell RVs with open titles (which is illegal) and do not share the facts with the customer when a vehicle has been restored from salvage. Inexperienced RVers are especially vulnerable to the attractive prices offered by these slick characters.

Recognizing and avoiding gypsy hustlers may, at times, be difficult. Here are a few pointers for those of you who are first-time buyers or for experienced RVers to share with friends and acquaintances who may be in the market for an RV. Although these pointers may seem like plain common sense, you'd be surprised how often people are reeled in by such obvious tactics:

1. Don't do business with an individual (or group) who gives you a "hard-luck story" and then claims to have a great deal for you.
2. If you come across a deal from a private party that appears promising, ask lots of questions and get straight answers. Any evasiveness should be a signal to opt out.
3. If you are convinced that the offer is legitimate and worth consideration, be certain there's a clear title and that all paperwork is in order.
4. By all means, examine the RV before buying; or hire someone trustworthy to do so if the RV is in a location you can't get to easily.
5. Don't sign anything until the seller has kept his agreements to your satisfaction. For example, has he (or she) provided references, phone numbers, necessary paperwork, and/or anything else pertinent to the deal that you need for assurance of legitimacy?

A final word: The gypsy hustler's song and dance may beguile you, but if you succumb to his charms thinking you've saved a bundle, he, not you, will be *jingling* the loot all the way to the bank.

