



The Return of The Road Trip

On our new series *Behind The Adventurer*, we interview those who inspire us to take to the open road. Who better to be our first interviewee than my father & business partner, John Long. There is nothing better in our opinion than being able to continue our shared passions of design, adventure travel and craftsmanship through our family business.

Let's get started:

Geneva Long: What three words would you use to describe your travel philosophy?

John Long: Serendipitous, it's a journey, not a destination, Impulsive.

GL: How do you incorporate your travel philosophy into everyday life?

JL: Travel is a break for me. It's all in my desire to have a new experience, to meet new people, to see new locations. I like to live my plans wide open.

GL: How do you strike a balance between adventure and relaxation?

JL: I try for adventure but as I'm 65, I need to recharge along the way. I like to plan my days with our Road Chief as follows: exhaust myself with a 3 mile brisk walk in the morning and another 3 mile brisk walk or hike in the early evening and spend the rest of my time doing what I love. Last December I had some trouble with my heart and needed to have a stent put in, since then I have been working on building my strength over longer hikes and am happy to have worked up to 7 miles per day.

GL: One thing you can't travel without?

JL: My camera. Shooting landscapes is one of my favorite aspects of travel. I shoot on a [Sony Alpha 7riii](#) with a [24-105mm F4 lens](#) most of the time. This year for the holidays, I got



a [DJI Mavic Pro](#) drone, which I have been loving.

GL: What book are you reading right now?

JL: My family comes from Iceland and there is nothing I love more than reading novels from Icelandic writers or [Icelandic Sagas](#). I'm currently reading [Butterflies in November](#) by Auður Ava Ólafsdóttir.

GL: Who is your go to travel buddy?

JL: My go to travel buddy is my wife and business partner [Helena Mitchell](#). She's always up for any adventure. Recently, I've taken some very fun father-son trips with our son to share our passion of nature photography and videography. Having shared experiences together is really important so we can have time together.

GL: Favorite snack on the road?

JL: Granola or nut mixture that reminds me of my summers working for the BC Forest Service counting trees in Northern British Columbia and the Yukon and all the backpacking trips I took in my 20's.

GL: Soundtrack of your travels?

JL: Sweet, sweet jazz. I also like listening to Radio Plays and Podcasts. My favorites are [Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar](#) and [Saga Thing](#).

GL: How do you start planning your next trip?

JL: I don't. Planning is overrated and with a Road Chief you don't have to. I like to use my 30



minute scramble. To do this I: Pull up the Road Chief to our front door, Load what we need, empty the fridge of our home into the fridge in the Road Chief, fill up the water and simply go!

GL: What does a typical day of road tripping look like for you?

JL: I like to skip off early on a Friday afternoon and take as many small roads as we can. I loved reading [Blue Highways](#) for some inspiration while driving. I stop as many times as we wish, again my philosophy is on the journey not on the destination.

GL: Most epic to you, road trip route?

JL: When I was young, I loved reading the story of [Zikmund and Hanzelka](#), two Czech engineers who drove across most of the world in a Tatra 87. When Helena and I retired (for the first time), we were looking to celebrate in a special way and reconnect with our children. I was inspired to take our [1947 Tatra T87 on a big trip around North America](#) with our family and my best friend from 7th grade and his family. We called it the Three Ocean's Tour and dipped the Tatra's front tire in the three oceans surrounding North America, Atlantic, Pacific and most difficult Arctic Oceans. It was on this trip that Helena said to me "Wouldn't this be better in a trailer?" and so I went to find our [1935 Bowlus Road Chief](#). It was the trip that started our obsession with the Bowlus Road Chief.

Helena and I are planning on re-doing the Three Ocean's Tour and dipping in the back wheel of a Bowlus Road Chief to all three oceans again.

GL: Where is your happy place?

JL: The bedroom in our [1935 Bowlus Road Chief](#). I restored it by hand myself and every time I go inside it I'm overwhelmed with the feelings of what my family has devoted themselves to for the last 10 years and feel very lucky.



GL: Next road trip you are dreaming of?

JL: There are so many road trips left on my bucket list. There are two very special ones I will share with you. First, I would love to drive the ring road in Iceland with a Bowlus Road Chief. You could say this requires quite a bit more planning than my usual packing scramble but easily doable. Second, I'm inspired everyday by the trips I hear that our owners take in their Bowlus Road Chiefs. I would love to do Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada in a Road Chief.

GL: If you stop at just one place, go here:

JL: Any [Bureau of Land Management](#) campsite. It fits perfectly with our travel philosophy and we have enjoyed so many wonderfully serendipitous experiences while camping at these, meeting the most interesting people who share many of my passions. Geneva's favorite camping location is a [BLM](#) site just four hours north of our workshop, so that is my favorite location for our family to go group camping together.

GL: One piece of advice you would share with travelers?

JL: See the country before you can't. Don't wait. There is nothing like a big health scare to make you realize just how little time you can have. For truly the first time in my life, I realize time is more precious, there are more reasons to celebrate the small things, more reasons to reconnect with family, more reasons to just say yes to something new and exciting. So every time I think dang I'm getting old, I make sure I go make more memories because you just never know when the fun might be over. With my renewed health I am so grateful and take nothing for granted anymore.