



My spouse noticed it first. We were sitting on the runway waiting for the airplane to take off when she handed me a section of the newspaper and said “look at this.”. It was an article about the Bowlus Road Chief and the effort by the Longs to reintroduce the camping trailer. We were both smitten. While we had been taking our children camping ever since they were young, it was tent camping from the trunk of a minivan. We loved camping, but now that our 3 children were nearly launched I had grown a bit tired of the all the work involved in breaking down camp. We reached a stage where we would hike and visit parks but stay in a hotel or rent an AirBnB.

Reading about the Road Chief that morning changed all that. We spent the next year reading about campers, 5th Wheels, RV’s as well as what we could find about the Road Chief. We even did the unexpected, and went to a few RV shows to get a better understanding of the lingo, the culture, the options, and the prices. We joined a few discussion boards and read about the problems with many of the campers, we read the discussions about Airstreams, where we even saw a lot of back and forth about the Road Chief, particularly about the price. Many of the articles were critical, even though it was clear that the writer they had never stayed in one. Writers who took on the assignment from their publications of using the Road Chief wrote glowing reviews, and occasionally we see a response to a critical posting by a few people who owned one.

It was easy, without even having seen it in person, to recognize how special the Road Chief was. The design and the quality of the construction was readily apparent. We were initially forced to take the word of reviewers to get a sense of the ease of handling, and the joy of using it. We have family in California and hence we took the opportunity of a family event to plan a trip to Hendersonville, NV to see the Road Chief in person. Helena Mitchell graciously spent several hours with us as we looked in and at the model sitting in their showroom. She patiently answered our questions, many of which were probably quite naïve. She tried to explain how to use the camper and discussed some of the adventures she had undertaken, both on her own and with her husband, John.

Upon visiting with the real thing, but despite never having spent a night in a any form of camper, we took a big leap of faith and decided that ordering the Road Chief and a fancy new car to pull it, would be the perfect way to celebrate our 35th wedding anniversary. We fully expect that our trailer will outlive us, and we hope it will be inherited by one of our



children or grandchildren. We also look forward to the time in which we will be able to take grand-children on short camping trips with us.

About a year or so after we ordered it, it was ready and we able to combined a family event in California with the pick-up of our trailer in Nevada. John Long, greeted us in Hendersonville, where we tried to go through everything. Unfortunately, we had a relatively short time to return to work (we live just outside of Washington DC) and so, after pulling away from the Bowles showroom we spent most of the time driving from one camping ground to another. It was a trial by fire rather than a vacation, but it all worked out. No more morning soreness and none of the work of breaking camp. When it was time for lunch, we simply pulled into a rest area. Somewhere in Indiana we were both certain that we had made the right choice. Once on the road we did have a concern about one of the systems, but a Geneva Long quickly answered our question. She has been there, on the phone or by email, at least two other times, when we had questions.

Only two years hence, and we constantly look for opportunities to use our camper. Instead of renting at the beach, we camped near the Delaware shore. When one of my children graduated from graduate school in Cambridge MA, we camped outside of Boston and then spent a long weekend on Cape Cod. We have taken long weekends near our home in Maryland and have taken longer trips to Shenandoah National Park. Last summer we spent time in Acadia National Forest in Maine followed by two weeks in several of the Canadian National Parks in Nova Scotia. We circled the Nova Scotia peninsula and then took a high-speed ferry from Yarmouth NS to Portland ME. This summer another child is graduating from college and we have already booked campsites outside Denver, CO. From there we are planning a a trip to Lassen Volcanic National Park in California, and then Lake Tahoe, by way of San Francisco.

We have learned what is important to pack and what is not; how to negotiate the trailer with our 80 lb. dog, and how to handle frozen food. Backing up was the scary part, particularly since the trailer turns on a dime, but by the end of last summer, for the first time, I was able to back up a long and straight driveway, without having to make and adjustments, on the first attempt.

We have two regrets about the Road Chief. First, because we are both still working full time, we do not have the time necessary to take many longer trips. Second, we have not yet



found a practical way to undertake trips abroad with our Road Chief.

The truth is, we miss our Road Chief when it has been too long since we last “hit” the road.