

Luxury Las Vegas Magazine | Features | Luxury Travel Hits the Road

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The well-known adage “It’s not the destination that’s important, but the journey that takes you there,” has endured repetition to the point of cliché. Nevertheless, this overuse is for good reason, there is much wisdom in this adopted traveler’s mantra.

But all too often it’s difficult to appreciate such wisdom in the midst of long check-in lines, cramped quarters, lost baggage, delays, checked baggage fees, misplaced reservations – the list of tiny travel annoyances goes on and on, and adds up, and the

only thing that gets you through this transition is the thought of your vacation destination.

If the very thought of travel causes you stress, then it’s time to remember there are many different types of transportation. Such as travel via RV, where the journey truly is the destination. Like any good Jack Kerouac protégé, recreational vehicle users desire to hit the open road, journey through wide, open spaces, answering only to their own schedule as opposed to a timetable.

Don’t think I can’t see you reader, wrinkling your nose at the thought of spending a week in a motor home. Before you make up your mind, I encourage you to take a look at what’s on the market today. This isn’t Cousin Eddie’s rusty RV from “National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation”. We’re talking about luxury motor coaches with amenities ranging from marble countertops, home theater systems, stainless steel appliances, multiple slide-outs, electric fireplaces, built-in barbecues, blackout shades and Sleep Number beds to name a few.

The local Las Vegas Motorcoach Resort (www.lasvegasmotorcoachresort.com) is a veritable community of such luxury motor coaches. Boasting its own Owner’s Association, the area serves as a second or seasonal home for many of the residents of this guard gated, exclusive Class A community, including retired NFL players, Nascar drivers and company executives.

Resort resident Tom Poteet explains the evolution of the motor coach. “Over the years RV companies and builders started building upscale motor homes, and the term motor coaches came into being.”

Travelers are drawn to motor coaches for the lifestyle they offer. “It’s a vacation home in itself,” says Poteet. “My family and I use this as our travel hub and take off to our favorite destinations like Yellowstone and Pismo Beach, oftentimes caravanning with friends.”

For Poteet the appeal of motor coach travel is the combination of adventure and ease. “You can relocate for the weekend or for a month, visit local sights you may have missed otherwise, and with all the conveniences of a home,” says Poteet.

With a plethora of customized options available, many motor coaches exude a “condo-on-wheels”

feel. Knowing what your needs are in terms of comfort is key. For Poteet a spacious interior was a must-have. “The additional space was an important feature for me – so we have four slides, king beds, a sofa, recliner, convection oven, double-door refrigerator and the like.”

Far from tiring of these quarters, Poteet insists that every year it seems he can never take enough trips.

The Las Vegas Motorcoach Resort has many attractions in itself, boasting such amenities as a theater, library, multiple pools, golf course, tennis courts, spa and fitness center to name a few. The resort features a mix of motor coach owners and renters.

For those looking for less of a commitment, RV rental is a popular option. Ryan Kruger has been renting RVs for the past five years and enjoys the social nature this method of travel affords, noting that he and his wife usually travel convoy-style with two or three other RVs full of family and friends.



“It allows us to travel into very remote areas without having to rough it. One of my favorite memories is sleeping on the roof in the Black Rock Desert and seeing a million stars in the pitch black sky,” explains Kruger. “Some of the higher end units I’ve been in would rival some of the best hotel rooms in Vegas. Name a luxury feature you can put into your own home and I’m sure it’s available — walk-in closets, outdoor projection screens, full kitchens with islands. And all while allowing us to visit a number of different locations on one trip.”

Perhaps no one understands the appeal of RV rental better than Sandra Bate, president and CEO of Bates International Motor Home Rental Systems. The first person to establish a privately owned RV rental franchise company, Bate fell into the industry by chance. In the early 1970s Bate was living in Los Angeles with her former husband who insisted on buying a motor home, which then proceeded to sit idle in their driveway.

When they did use the motor home strangers would approach them, curious to see the interior, being LA naturally some of these visitors were celebrities. “One day we had a knock at the door and when I opened it there was Dick Clark — all I could think of was “American Bandstand”,” recalls Bate.

With so much interest Bate and her husband got the idea to place an ad in the Los Angeles Times to rent out their RV. By the following day their phone would not stop ringing. “Soon enough we were borrowing motor homes from friends and family to fulfill people’s requests,” recalls Bate. “No one else was renting RVs at the time and there was clearly a demand for it.”

Aware of the business opportunity Bate quit her job in the insurance industry two months later and the couple devoted their time to their new business. Nearly 30 years later Bates International Motor Home Rental Systems (www.batesintl.com), having transitioned its headquarters to Las Vegas, is still going strong.

According to Bate, throughout the ups and downs of the economy RV rental is one facet of the travel

industry that is not suffering. “People always want to get away, escape. RVs allow the freedom to journey. You can wake up to a different back yard every morning — whether it’s an ocean or mountain view,” says Bate. “And when you calculate airfare, rental car fees, hotel reservations and restaurant bills, motor homes can be a more affordable way to travel.”

Popular getaways from Las Vegas include Napa Valley, Grand Canyon, the annual Burning Man Festival, Bryce Canyon, Yosemite National Park, Montana, Colorado, even ventures cross-country and up into Canada.

“One of my most memorable vacations was when my former husband and I drove our motor home up to San Francisco. Well at least we meant to. It took us two weeks and we never quite got there,” recalls Bate. “We were enjoying touring the wine country. There is so much to see and do and you have no idea until you are out there. It’s wonderful to not be subject to a rigid schedule.”

Understanding the appeal of flexible travel herself, it was important to Bate to offer the same experience to her customers, as such the company features multiple pick-up and drop-off locations throughout the country and Canada. Ideal for the traveler who is lacking in time, but still harbors the desire to explore a more distant region of the country, renters can pick up a motor home from the company’s Los Angeles hub and finish out at their New Orleans operation, then fly back home. RVs also serve as a wonderful extension to a trip.

Bates International strives to make RV travel accessible not just on a rental basis but through ownership as well. Customers who purchase an RV through the company qualify for their Revenue Sharing Program in which the motor home is enlisted into their rental fleet so that when the owners themselves are not using it, as opposed to sitting idle in a driveway, the vehicle is available for rent to Bate’s customers.

As one owner, Richard K. Leefe, put it, “To have my motor homes in the fleet and earning income through rentals has made the experience of owning them affordable and much more justifiable.”

This summer season travelers can also take advantage of Bates “Ready Camp Go” program in conjunction with Equity Lifestyle Properties, Inc. (ELS). The program features access to the ELS and Thousand Trails portfolio of more than 150 plus properties and 67,000 public and membership sites across the country at discounted rates.

So whether the summer sun is calling you outdoors, or out of state to cooler climes, one thing is certain — it’s time to travel. And while an RV won’t take you to far-flung destinations such as Paris or Abu Dhabi, it’s a nice change of travel pace, providing the opportunity for an adventurous, and wallet-friendly, travel experience.