

Subject:

September 2023 Newsletter from Air Safe Hitches

## September 2023

Newsletter

9/1/23

### Articles in this Newsletter:

- [The RVs of the future are here](#)
- [GMC Is Turning the Hummer EV Into a Gigantic Overlander](#)
- [The Great RV Revolution: Navigating New Trends in 2023](#)
- [New Kid on the Block: Your Guide to RVing for Newbies](#)
- [Our gas was stolen! Tips for protecting against fuel theft](#)
- [The Boondock Life](#)
- [Air Safe Hitches](#)

---

**The RVs of the future are here**— and they use free, off-the-grid energy powered by a surprising piece of technology

**Mila Dyson**

Wed, August 9, 2023

You've been dreaming of hitting the open road in your RV, but you're worried about the cost of fuel to power the RV's functions on arrival. You also might've heard that you could run your RV's functions entirely on solar panels, but you're unsure if it's possible.

Luckily, thanks to constant innovation in the solar tech space, it is possible to run your RV accessories on solar panels, and it's becoming more and more popular. Here's what you need to know about powering your RV with solar.

#### **What are the benefits of installing solar on your RV?**

Solar panels can be an excellent way to power your RV's appliances. Solar panels can generate enough power to run your RV's lights, refrigerator, and other electronics.

Perhaps the main benefit of putting solar panels on your RV is to gain freedom from the grid. Firing up all your appliances anywhere you go can make your road trip memorable.

It's also nice to not have to worry about running out of fuel or stopping to refuel as frequently.

### **Are there any solar-powered RVs?**

Yes, there are solar-powered RVs available on the market. RV manufacturers now offer RVs with solar power, and aftermarket solar kits are also available that you can install on your existing RV.

The RV manufacturer Bowlus recently announced the production of the "world's first production all-electric RV," the Bowlus Volterra travel trailer, which can allow travelers freedom from the grid upon arrival at a destination. Due to its addition of 480 watts of solar power, you can charge your RV while you camp, hike, or drive.

While this might be the only widely available all-electric RV trailer, other brands offer models with solar panel attachments. The Coachmen Apex Ultra-Lite, Nano, and Remote travel trailers, for example, provide solar attachments for their roofs (with 200 watts of power, according to the brochure) that'll allow you to charge your appliances without needing the grid.

The tech company Anker has recently released its line of solar panels designed perfectly for use with RVs. The foldable and waterproof Anker 531 solar panels (each providing 200 watts) can be hooked up five at a time to an Anker PowerHouse 767 and were created to allow you to light, heat, and power functions easily.

More than 11 million households across the U.S. have RVs, and solar panels are getting cheaper. It'll soon be incredibly easy and affordable to power your trip with clean, abundant solar energy.

Join our free newsletter for easy tips to **save more, waste less, and help yourself** while helping the planet.

---

## **GMC Is Turning the Hummer EV Into a Gigantic Overlander**

**Mack Hogan**

Fri, August 4, 2023 at 3:56 PM EDT

GMC Is Turning the Hummer EV Into an OverlanderGMC

GMC teased an overlanding version of the all-electric Hummer pickup on Friday, with a solar roof and a deployable camper mounted on the bed. It looks spacious, capable, and—of course—gigantic.

We have only two teaser images to go off of. The first revealed a roof blanketed in solar panels but little else. The second shows pretty much the whole truck, with a camper shell mounted in the bed that pops up to provide a window-covered sleeping area. GMC says the company is collaborating on the concept with EarthCruiser, an overlanding outfit known for RV-sized off-road builds. Their trucks are built to handle long expeditions far from pavement, with self-sufficient solar and water facilities built into highly capable platforms.

The Hummer EV is actually smaller than EarthCruiser's usual builds, though with a 9000-lb curb weight, it's closer in mass. The smaller space means it's unlikely to have the full living quarters you'd expect from an EarthCruiser. Instead, we'd guess it'll be a much nicer version of something like the GoFastCampers Platform Camper or Rossmonster Lagom.

The key difference will be the on-board power. In addition to the giant battery pack already onboard the Hummer, the overlanding version appears to have solar panels all over the roof. These should be able to power a fridge, lighting setup, and bucket full of consumer electronics for days on end. But don't expect it to extend your range meaningfully. The math just doesn't work out. In fact, with all the extra weight in the bed, we'd expect this camper to have a significantly lower real-world range than the 329-mile EPA rating for an unladen truck.

The full concept will be revealed in late September, and we imagine it'll have a few more overlanding-specific touches.

---

## **The Great RV Revolution: Navigating New Trends in 2023**

Hello all you road warriors, trailblazers, and free-spirited nomads of the asphalt! Buckle up and get ready for an exciting trip down the highway of the latest trends in RVing in 2023. This isn't your grandparents' "Winnebago ride to Yellowstone" scene anymore - it's high tech, high comfort, and high time you knew about these exciting developments!

### **#1 Tiny but Mighty: Compact RVs**

Let's kick things off with the incredible shrinking trend. Yes, you heard it right, compact is the new king on the road! Many of us have embraced the mantra of "less is more" and applied it to RVing. Compact RVs are all about smart design and efficient use of space. With more streamlined profiles, they're also more fuel-efficient and easier to maneuver.

◆ **Product Highlight:** The Camco RhinoFLEX 20' RV Sewer Hose Kit is a perfect companion to compact RVing. Small, easy to use, and tremendously handy, this kit keeps things neat and clean.

## #2 RV Tech Overload

Next up, tech enhancements that would make James Bond trade in his Aston Martin for an RV! From solar panels and lithium batteries to cutting-edge navigation systems, smart appliances, and more, RVs are turning into real-life sci-fi spaceships. The future of RVing is all about sustainability, efficiency, and connectivity.

🔥 Product Highlight: Check out the Renogy 100 Watt 12 Volt Monocrystalline Solar Starter Kit. This kit will let you harness the power of the sun and make your RV trips more eco-friendly.

## #3 Hygge on Wheels

The Danish concept of 'hygge' is making its way into RV culture. It's all about comfort, coziness, and a sense of well-being. Soft, warm lighting, plush pillows, comfy bedding, and a well-stocked galley can turn your RV into a cozy Scandinavian retreat on wheels.

🔥 Product Highlight: Set the mood with the PeakPlus LED Battery Operated Motion Sensor Lights. With their easy placement, these lights will help you create the perfect ambiance in your RV, not to mention great for those boondocking adventures!

## #4 RVing Goes Remote

Working remotely has never been easier, and now the digital nomad lifestyle is married to RVing. With satellite internet, ergonomically designed workspaces, and high-quality noise-canceling headphones, the "office" can be a beachfront, a forest, or a mountaintop.

🔥 Product Highlight: Enhance your connectivity on the road with the weBoost Drive 5G & 4G-X RV Cell Phone Signal Booster. This device is a godsend for anyone looking to maintain a stable internet connection on the road.

## #5 Outdoor Living

The last trend to hit the RV world is all about maximizing outdoor living. RVers are finding creative ways to turn the space outside their RV into an extension of their living area. Think outdoor screens, foldable patio furniture, and even portable fire pits!

🔥 Product Highlight: The Coleman Portable Camping Quad Chair with 4-Can Cooler is a perfect way to enjoy the great outdoors in comfort. It's sturdy, comfy, and comes with a cooler built right into the armrest!

So there you have it, folks! RVing in 2023 is a kaleidoscope of innovation and excitement. Whether it's adopting the tiny home mindset with compact RVs, harnessing tech for a smoother ride, channeling hygge for maximum coziness, leveraging the freedom of remote work, or enhancing your outdoor living space, the world is your oyster, and your RV is the pearl.

So, why wait? It's high time to hit the road, embrace these exciting trends, and explore the boundless beauty that this big, amazing world has to offer. See you out there on the open road!

---

## **New Kid on the Block: Your Guide to RVing for Newbies**

### RV NEWBIES

Hello, fledgling nomads! Are you ready to trade your four walls for four wheels and embrace the thrilling freedom of the open road? Well, buckle up, because we're diving into the most crucial tips and tricks that every newbie RVer needs to know. This journey from RV rookie to road-tripping whiz has never been more fun. So let's get rolling!

#### #1 Take it for a Spin

Learning to handle your new mobile home is paramount. These beasts don't handle like your average sedan, so find yourself a big, open space and practice. Maneuvering, reversing, and parking should be your top priorities. Remember, slow and steady wins the race - this isn't the time to unleash your inner Formula 1 driver.

#### #2 Packing Essentials: RV Style

Pack like a pro with the rule of three P's: Practicality, Portability, and Purpose. Be practical and don't overload your rig, keep items portable for easy storage, and ensure everything serves a purpose. Your new life in an RV is a great opportunity to embrace minimalism - Marie Kondo would be proud!

#### #3 Master Your Systems

Your RV comes with its own set of systems, and it's crucial to familiarize yourself with these. Electricity, plumbing, propane - understanding these will save you headaches down the road. A few YouTube tutorials can make this task less daunting.

#### #4 Campground Etiquette

RV parks and campgrounds have their own set of unspoken rules. Don't be the noisy neighbor who blares music at 3 am or leaves trash outside. Respect quiet hours, keep your area tidy, and be friendly. RVing is also about the community, so let's keep it pleasant for everyone.

#### #5 Plan, but Be Flexible

Yes, having a plan is great, but remember, the beauty of RVing lies in the freedom it offers. Don't be afraid to detour if you spot a sign for the "world's biggest ball of twine." Some of the best memories come from unplanned adventures.

#### #6 Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance

RVs need love too! Regular check-ups are key to ensure your RV remains in tip-top shape. Keep an eye on tire pressure, oil levels, and battery status. Your RV is your home and vehicle rolled into one, and it deserves care on both fronts.

## #7 Safety First

Finally, always keep safety in mind. Equip your RV with a first-aid kit, fire extinguisher, and smoke detector. And remember, seat belts aren't just for cars - they're crucial in RVs too.

There you have it, soon-to-be RV gurus! With these essential tips, you're well on your way from being a 'new kid on the block' to becoming a seasoned road warrior. As they say, every expert was once a beginner, so embrace the journey (and the puns), and get ready for the adventure of a lifetime! Keep on RVing, friends!

---

## Our gas was stolen! Tips for protecting against fuel theft

This was a first for us: The first time someone stole fuel from our truck. We'd taken our fifth wheel to an acreage in the country approximately three hours away from our stix-n-brix home. In exchange for full hookups and fresh country air, we were helping friends build their new house. The beautiful Ozark Mountains provided a wonderful backdrop to their home site and things were progressing at a steady pace on the build. The furthest thing from our minds in this peaceful setting was protecting ourselves against fuel theft.

### Robbed!

It must have happened during the nighttime hours. We didn't hear a thing. When we fired up the truck a few days later, we noticed that our fuel level was significantly lower than before. We'd been robbed! If we were going to continue working here, we had to figure out some ways to protect ourselves from further fuel theft.

### Here are ways to prevent fuel theft we're considering:

- **Parking strategies.** The serene setting lulled us into a false sense of security. We'd made it relatively easy for the thief to snatch our diesel fuel because we'd parked the truck quite a distance away from our RV. There's no way we could hear clanking gas cans or any other noise, for that matter. The truck was also far from the yard lights that helped illuminate most of the long driveway. If we'd parked under one of the bright lights, perhaps the thief would have thought twice about taking a chance on being seen. From now on our truck will stay under a light and much closer to our rig.
- **Locking fuel cap.** There are lots of choices for locking fuel caps on Amazon. The price is quite reasonable, too! This seems to be a simple yet effective way to secure our fuel from the opportunistic type of thief. However, there have been reports that some thieves have gone so far as to completely rip out fuel caps, so a locking cap isn't completely theft-proof.

- **Fuel alarms.** Wireless alarms are another “add-on” we’re considering, in addition to the locking fuel cap. There are several vibration-sensing alarms on the market with very high customer reviews. Why invest in a fuel alarm? More and more thieves are bypassing the fuel-siphoning method altogether. Instead, the crooks crawl under the vehicle, punch a hole directly into the gas tank, and let the fuel drain out into their container. For these thieves, a locking fuel cap is not a deterrent. It’s important to note that thieves looking to use this “unconventional method” of stealing fuel target SUVs and trucks because they can crawl under the higher-clearance vehicles more easily. Not only does the consumer lose expensive fuel, but they also will need to replace their vehicle’s fuel tank!
- **Cameras.** Security cameras are another safety measure we’re considering. While a camera may not prevent fuel theft, it may help police track down the thief. A highly visible posted sign, “Cameras in use,” may also cause a crook to think twice before attempting to pilfer some fuel.
- **Garage.** When we’re home, away from the build site, we park the truck inside the garage. So far, it has protected our fuel from would-be thieves.

With high gas prices, I’m wondering if this has happened to others, including other RVers. Has this happened to you or someone you know? What precautions (if any) do you take to deter fuel theft?

-----

## **The Boondock Life**

After Four Years of Full-Timing in Two Homebuilt RVs, This Couple has Some Great Advice for Living Off-The-Grid

**RAE SMITHSON**

September 1, 2023

“Where the heck are we gonna park this thing!?”

Crossing the state line on that maiden voyage back in 2019, this question rolled over me with a wave of anxiety.

I had been so blinded by a “just get it done” mentality while Trev worked tirelessly to finish the build of our RV that we had both forgotten to ask ourselves some pretty basic but very important questions. The main one was, “Where do you live when you’re living on the road?”

That first year taught us so much about full-time RV life. For starters, we learned quickly that campsite parking wasn’t our thing. We much prefer the freedom of living off-the-grid and boondocking in places with unique backdrops.

But that ment we were going to have to make some serious adjustments to our build to make it hookup-free.

We are now on our second RV, another homebuilt model, and absolutely Solar Panels

First, we started with solar panels. On the original build, we purchased the solar panels last when we were out of money and anxious to be done. They were useless as there was never enough power. This was a big deal in the beginning since our English bulldog, Louis, was allergic to heat. We were constantly chasing weather, running the generator, and spending money on campsites to make sure we were all comfortable. It made the lifestyle less carefree and more of a stressful chore, which made us question everything.

That's why, on our second build (a 2008 GMC C7500 retired snowplow), neither of us squawked at the large investment or decision to make our first purchase solar panels. The 1,850 watts of solar panels, Victron solar controller and inverter, and Discover Battery 600 lithium amp-hour system is a game changer! We went from constantly checking batteries and mapping colder climates to running blenders, crockpots, and all the A/C Louis could want. We still keep our Honda 3000 generator close by as a backup for emergencies, but in the nearly two years we've had our second RV, we've only had to run it a few times out of necessity.

Lesson learned: If boondocking is your preferred way of living, don't skimp on solar.

### **Fresh Water**

The second priority for boondocking should be fresh water. I'd say the number-one reason nomads have to leave a spot is because they've run out of water. Our RV's 75-gallon freshwater tank with a two-part filtration system and three five-gallon water jugs for daily drinking allow us to go 3–4 weeks without needing a fill-up.

Lesson learned: Be sure to keep plenty of clean water on hand.

### **Finding the Perfect Spot**

While we do love when locals recommend off-the-grid hidden gems, the iOverlander app has been by far the greatest tool we've used when looking for spots and helpful information on boondocking.

The iOverlander app is only as good as its perfect partner, Starlink, for broadband, high-speed internet, which was one of the best investments we've made since living on the road. Starlink is pricey, but when I tell you it's nonnegotiable, trust me on this. And it's a big comfort knowing we can keep in touch with family and friends wherever we are.

Lesson Learned: A reliable internet provider is a must-have resource for us.

### **Safety**

We didn't skimp on safety, either. Everything on our rig is always locked, and doors double bolted. Cameras ensure that things are monitored from afar, and we sleep with a hatchet and flashlight at arm's length. On long stretches of drives, we're no strangers



to well-lit truck stops and Cracker Barrels. Before each drive, Trev does a complete walk-through of the truck to ensure everything looks normal. And like any good driver, he always has an ear out for an out-of-place sound while we drive. We also consider all the risks for a potential parking spot.

Lesson Learned: Our RV is our home, and if anything makes us feel uncomfortable, it's not worth the risk.

Full-time RV living is a very unpredictable lifestyle; it really forces you to roll with the punches, be a good communicator, and trust your instincts and your partner. But when it comes to the “good life,” you won't find a better way of living. Our RV's solar panels, 75-plus gallons of freshwater, and the iOverlander app are the three main ingredients that make boondocking a cakewalk for us.

## **Boondocking Pro Tips**

**Water works.** We recommend an RV with a larger freshwater tank. We use plant-based soaps so that we can recycle our water for various uses as much as possible. A two-part water-filtration system allows you to fill up the freshwater tank just about anywhere.

**Everything is storage space!** Utilize every nook and cranny in your RV for excess storage—steps, seats, counters, etc. Everything should have a dual-use purpose.

**Black tank versus compost.** Having experienced both, I have much to say on the subject. But the bottom line is that compost wins every category for us. In our first build, the idea of composting grossed me out. But our Nature's Head composting toilet is probably in my top five favorite features about our build. We save so much water and time by never having to search for a dump station. And no, it never smells bad in our house. It's amazing!

**Network.** Networking in the nomad community (particularly through social media or nomad gatherings) is going to save you lots of money, time, and frustration. This community is a wealth of knowledge. Everyone is always looking to help fellow full-timers. Whether it's a place to park, recommendations in the area, knowledge on a breakdown, or a connection to a “good mechanic near me,” our connections have been our greatest resource.

**Insulation.** Wazimu 2.0's insulation is 3½ inches of closed-cell foam board, which helps conserve batteries in extreme temperatures. We also have a small woodstove that allows us to heat the RV without turning on the heat pump. Trevor made the woodstove from an old propane tank he found in a junkyard. The chimney is made of steel that has a flap at the top (on the exterior) that lifts by pulling a lever from inside, similar to the exhaust pipes on a tractor.

## **How We Made It: Building the Dream**

After years of dreaming, saving, and planning for a life on the road, we finally purchased our first truck in 2018, a 1998 M1078 LMTV Stewart & Stevenson retired troop carrier. We had been traveling through Uganda on a humanitarian trip when we

got the email confirmation that the truck was ours! The kids in the area where we were working referred to Trevor as “Wazimu Mungaru,” which means “crazy white man” in Swahili. So we named the truck “Wazimu,” meaning “crazy.”

Trevor built the entire house on the back of the truck himself, including the steel box, frame, plumbing, electrical, carpentry, etc. Thanks to a close friend, Matt Wiley, who donated the space and tools, we were able to complete the entire thing in six short weeks! All-in, our first build cost us \$40,000.

We lived in that truck for three years and traveled all over the United States. In 2021 we decided it was time for some upgrades, so we sold the Stewart & Stevenson for \$80,000 and upgraded to a 2008 GMC C7500 retired snowplow and dump truck! This was a major upgrade for us, as the cab included A/C. We went straight to work on the second build, but this time around, we took our time to enjoy the building process and really thought through each piece and upgrade.

Thanks to another great friend, Robert Ashby, we had access to tools and space. All-in, the total cost for our second build was \$110,000, which was more than we originally wanted to spend. But, after living in Wazimu 2.0 for two years now, there isn't a single change we'd make. Complete with 1,850 watts of solar panels, 600 amp-hour lithium batteries (Victron system), 75-plus gallons of freshwater and filtration systems, 3½ inches of insulation, and an open-concept layout, we love our new home and all the places it takes us!

[AirSafeHitches.com](http://AirSafeHitches.com)

### **Air Safe Hitches:**

We try and keep you informed on all your Trailer Towing experience.

[Click to see "About Us"](#)

[Click to see our product videos](#)

[Click to see our YouTube videos](#)

[Follow us on Facebook](#)

Please review our [BLOG's](#) on our website.

**Contact Us**

Air Safe Hitches  
Island Park, New York

**Follow Us**



**Unsubscribe**

11558  
Tel.407-973-2980  
Fax. 866-201-3391  
[airsafehitches.com](http://airsafehitches.com)



---

---

---

---

---

Air Safe Hitches  
ISLAND PARK New York 11558  
United States

This email is intended for [lstegemann@ecpginc.com](mailto:lstegemann@ecpginc.com).  
[Update your preferences](#) or [Unsubscribe](#)