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PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRET GUM

Colorful Camper Couture

A chair stylist/author who embraces the bright side of life fills a reproduction camper with color and whimsy, putting the glamper in camper.





HAPPY CAMPER. The Shasta reissue campers come in three colors: yellow, red and turquoise—and Wendy liked all those colors. “When I first saw the camper in person, I knew I loved it and the hue was perfect,” she says. Even this curious visitor couldn’t resist a peek at the camper.



When the world slowed to a stop during the 2020 pandemic and Wendy Conklin of Round Rock, Texas, found herself with canceled travel plans she decided to get a little creative. And getting creative is as natural as breathing for Wendy, who is the founder of Chair Whimsy and is an author and chair stylist known for her effervescently bright and happy aesthetic.

Camper Life

A camper is a big investment, so Wendy is here to share a few insider tips to help you if you are considering taking the plunge into camper life.

- **PUMP THE BRAKES.** If you’ve never had a camper before, don’t spend a lot of money on one before knowing if you will like it or not. “Before purchasing a big one, think about the stress of hauling a long camper,” Wendy says. “Taking sharp curves around a mountain is not for the faint of heart if your camper is really long!”
- **MODERN OVER MOD.** Vintage campers have stylish appeal but, if you aren’t a renovator, consider investing in a reproduction style camper. “I would have loved an old camper, but we needed a functioning bathroom, and we are not equipped to service an old engine or fix mechanical issues,” Wendy says. If you get a reproduction camper, all you need to worry about is decorating it and hitting the road.
- **FIND IT ON FACEBOOK.** Facebook Marketplace is where Wendy found her camper. Not only is it a good place to look for campers, it’s also an efficient way to research them as well and see different specs and options at a discounted price. “There are plenty of campers to be had on FB Marketplace, especially if you are willing to travel to get it,” Wendy shares.

PATTERN PLAY. Wendy adores checks and experimenting with pattern play in her spaces. “And since I already had a stripe in the camper, a check was the natural pattern to go for,” she says. “I wanted to pick up on the red in the camel wallpaper and in the new cushions I had made for the banquet. The vibe is ‘you just HAVE to have fun if you are in here.’”





DELIGHTFUL DINING. Roomy benches and pillows for comfort as well as accents were a no-brainer. “I chose as many different patterns and colors as I could to tie to the overall space,” Wendy says. “Then my dishes had to be fun too! Why not have fun dishes when you are camping (as well as gold flatware!)?” She felt like she could go over the top since it was a recreational vehicle and she enjoyed doing so—to delightful results!



“Late that summer of 2020, my husband and I decided to buy a camper so we could safely travel,” Wendy says. It was a big purchase—the couple weren’t sure they were “RV people” and didn’t have previous experience with campers. But after much contemplation and many conversations, they decided to take the plunge and purchase a 16 ft Shasta Reissue off Facebook Marketplace for \$14.5k (\$5k under their \$15k budget!).

They prepped the camper the following month, learning all the technical aspects of hookups and giving it a deep clean. Since the camper is made to look vintage but isn’t actually old, it didn’t have any mechanical issues, making it friendly for first-time camper owners. As they got the camper ready, Wendy began thinking about redecorating it and planning out her design decisions. She painted the inside, wallpapered it, and had new cushions and curtains made for it.

Wendy’s surroundings have a great deal to do with her happiness and color makes her happy so, naturally, the camper is bursting with every shade of the rainbow. “I wanted a whimsical camper and that’s what I ended up with,” Wendy says. “It was all driven by a Katie Kime Camel Wallpaper that I just couldn’t get out of my mind. I took the color scheme from that wallpaper to create the rest of the space.” Some might get nervous at such




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WHITE SPACE. Since there is so much pattern all over the camper, Wendy needed some white space. “The Annie Selke white quilt gave that to me. But then, of course, the pillows create color. I used an antique quilt at the base and tiny pineapple printed sheets,” she says.



an explosion of hues in a small space, but Wendy is an expert at color and pattern mixing and gives her camper’s interior room to breathe by building off white. “White is a great backdrop to layering color. It also helps the eye to rest as you bounce from color to color within the space and that’s exactly how I used it here,” she says.

Now, she and her husband are living colorfully ever after in the camper as they take it for trips while being reminded of how it let them get out and explore nature during a time of worldwide hardship. As Wendy says, “We’ve just had a blast.” 

TO SEE MORE OF WENDY’S HOME, CAMPER AND BUSINESS, VISIT HER ON INSTAGRAM @CHAIRWHIMSY AND CHAIRWHIMSY.COM.

