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Camp Like A Girl: Finding Health And Wellness In Nature. A Cargo Van Conversion Story.



Synopsis

In this humorous memoir and technical guide, Sara Riley Mattson shares the story of converting her cargo van into a mold-resistant camper in order to pursue a full recovery from mold toxicity and biotoxin illness. Along the way, she charms with her intimate writing style and dedication to helping others live well, be healthy, and explore our beautiful world. Excerpt: I also needed to feel safe, and I didn't feel safe at all in a home made from drywall and particle board cabinetry. With the exception of high-quality hardwood, whenever I looked at the way houses were made now, it was like looking at mold restaurants. "Welcome to our new restaurant, Mr. and Mrs. Mold. On the menu tonight we have some damp drywall, a nice assortment of ply woods and particle boards, and some fantastic dusts we have been letting age in the duct work. If you'd like to stay for a while, we have some special dust-filled insulation and carpet I think you will find quite cozy. Oh, and of course, for the benefit of any little mold children that might come along, we have the full assortment of anti-fungal paint and fungicide-resistant genes already in full complement in our facilities. All mold offspring from this establishment have shown full resistance to these rather pitiful human attempts to control our numbers." •Praise for *Camp Like a Girl*: "The authenticity is warm & palpable. I feel like I sat around a campfire with a new friend who somehow already knew me and from whom I learned much, not just about conversions and overcoming illness, but about life, especially about resilience and how tenacity, when tempered with gratitude and optimism and sprinkled with creativity, doesn't strain your forearms or leave your fingers permanently clenched. It gives you freedom to let go of fear and lay hold of peace and joy." - Brooke Young

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Customer Reviews

My wife and I have been on the road, staying in hotels, crashing with friends and "car camping" for the better part of two years in an attempt to escape the effects of toxic mold. This lifestyle is not really sustainable, either emotionally or monetarily. That is why for some time now, we have been bouncing around the idea of converting a van into an at hoc RV. I habitually "bite off more than I can chew" when it comes to taking on projects. For this potential project, searching the Internet for advice seemed fruitless. There are lots of sites, blogs and videos out there by people who have converted their vans, but when you start digging into the fine print, all of them seem to be done by highly skilled professionals of one type or another. Carpenters, electricians and engineers can make much of the work look ridiculously simple, when, in fact, it is not. Much of the time, it appears, at least to me, that these people are simply doing a hobby build to show off their skill and knowledge. Part of this supposed ease might also be explained by the fact that these conversions are usually done in a driveway, with a garage full of tool ready and waiting. Enter Sara's book. This is a real-world account of a van-to-RV conversion done by a real person like you and me. She has not done this conversion as a hobby or to make a weekend toy, but to live in to escape toxic mold just like us. The RV she has built is not a showpiece of the latest technology. She has instead built a usable, workable and, most importantly, budget friendly home on wheels. The book starts with the reason that Sara is going on the road, moves on to the vehicle choices, and then on to the conversion itself.

I really liked this little book. A lot of us need a 'spare' healthy bedroom, a place to camp in, a 'hotel' room when travelling, or even a place to live in fulltime while exploring wild and/or pristine areas. But not all of us have the time or ability to figure out how to do it/make it. Personally, I bought and sold two fiberglass trailers. I hated them both. When new they are very toxic, but when used they often had maintenance issues, hidden leaks, mold, and most of them have some kind of carpet all over the walls and ceiling. They are small, but they still require towing, hitches, stabilizers, chocks,

levelling, maintenance, winterizing, and managing the terror of changing lanes on highways where semi's are barreling by. It's just too much stress, and so I just frequently tent camp, and throw the tent out and get a new one when it gets somewhat yucky. A tent is low stress. But often I've looked at vans--especially the E350's with lots of windows, used by schools and churches, and wished I could convert one. I realized that I could convert a van and just store it at a storage place when not using it, for \$18 a month for the parking space. I wouldn't have to give up my own vehicle. No towing, no hitches, no trouble, no axles, no worries about plumbing leaks or rain intrusion, no learning how to maneuver a trailer on the road, making narrow turns, learning how to back up, managing traffic, and on and on. Just drive. I just had no idea how to do it. It's all too much of a time sink to figure out. Here, it's laid out. In fact, I wish the author had included many more photos, even diagrams, and much more detail. I hope in future editions she adds as much detail as humanly possible. The more the better. Having a guide to converting a van makes the idea so much more approachable.

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