

ON THE JOB

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Rollin' Home

WHAT HAS THE MOBILITY OF AN RV and the spirit of a well-crafted home? A one-of-a-kind house truck with all the creature comforts anyone could want—kitchens, baths, sleeping quarters, Internet hookup, satellite TVs. But we're not talking about any ordinary RV. Instead of the plastic and chrome decor of a cookie-cutter camper, house trucks are more likely to come with fine wood paneling, leaded- or stained-glass windows,

This hand-crafted mobile home has a 1948 log truck chassis with cedar siding and skylights that brighten up the interior's galley kitchen, sitting area and sleeping loft.

hardwood floors, and Craftsman-style built-ins made of real wood, not faux grain. Of course, this sort of thing doesn't drive off the lot. You need to build such a unique home on wheels yourself—and many have. If you keep your eyes open, you just might spot one of the several hundred that share the black-top with more than 7 million more common RVs, says R. Sparks Scott, who keeps track of such things on his house-truck website, www.mrsharkey.com.

Most are owned by people like Damien Boyd, who loves the challenge of a renovation and the freedom of the open road. The Toronto DIY-er spent \$150,000 and 14 years turning a 1969 Ward La France ladder fire truck into a mobile cabin complete with oak paneling salvaged from a local mansion. Sure, he could have saved himself the trouble and bought a new RV. But that's not the point. Where else can you get the satisfaction of building your own house, along with knowing that wherever you go, you're home? —Lisa Selin Davis

THE WHEEL LIFE



MOVEABLE FEAT

The Prairie Schooner, sort of a 19th-century house truck, offered shelter like a house, but the pre-shock-absorber ride was so bouncy an overlander could fill his churn with milk in the morning and have butter for his evening meal.



FAMOUS RV-ERS

Henry Ford won fame and fortune for his assembly-line cars, but he was also an early RV enthusiast. Outfitting his Model Ts with cooking and sleeping accommodations, he and buddies Harvey Firestone and Thomas Edison would rumble off on camping trips together.



MOBILE MANSION

While house trucks move along on only a diesel engine, houses themselves need a bit more oomph to get from one place to another. A 14-room, 680-ton brick Georgian in Winnetka, Illinois—perhaps the largest residence ever moved—required the help of bridge-strength steel beams, industrial trailer winches, and supersized hydraulic jacks to relocate it across the street.