

A Tiny House Blog Publication

TINY HOUSE

FOR MICRO, TINY, SMALL, AND UNCONVENTIONAL HOUSE ENTHUSIASTS

www.tinyhousemagazine.co




VOLUME 5 :: ISSUE 58



Years before tiny houses entered the mainstream scene, van dwellers began their adventure blogging, or Millennials touted the benefits of working remotely, a couple of Bums beat them to it. In 2003 Pat and Ali Schulte of the [Bumfuzzle](#) website sold nearly everything, bought a 34 foot Wildcat catamaran and sailed around the world with no experience. That would exhaust most people, but they continued on. After selling the boat, the couple then raced across the U.S. in a 1965 Porsche, drove around the world in a 1958 Volkswagen bus, sailed Mexican waters on a 43 foot monohull boat, hit the road in a 1966 Dodge Travco and an Airstream Safari and are now starting a new adventure in a 1986 Grand Banks 42 foot trawler. Oh...and along the way they had two children.

I've been following the Bumfuzzle crew adventures since 2003 and love that they sidestep everything that has to do with a traditional life and follow their dreams—no matter how far out. Both of them were kind to answer a few questions about family life on the water and on the road.

By Christina Nellemann
Photos courtesy of Pat & Ali Schulte



“When we showed up at our boat in Florida to move aboard, our broker took a look at our borrowed pickup truck and asked, ‘Where's all your stuff?’”

34 foot Wildcat Catamaran

What was the catalyst that made you and Ali know that you wanted to keep living small and mobile? What would make you hang it all up and buy a house in the suburbs?

We never lived particularly large, even in our pre-travel days. Eight-hundred square-feet was the biggest place we'd ever lived as adults. So even in the very beginning, moving from a Chicago loft to a 35' catamaran sailboat wasn't a big step for us. When we showed up at our boat in Florida to move aboard, our broker took a look at our borrowed pickup truck and asked, "Where's all your stuff?" He couldn't see the few boxes lying in the bed of the truck, and he was completely bumfuzzled by new boat owners showing up with anything less than a U-Haul. That was fifteen years ago, when we were still in our twenties.

We're in our forties now, with two kids, and we hardly own any more now than we did then. It's not even a conscious decision to not own "stuff"—it's just who we are at this point. We've seen on any number of occasions how easily we are able to pivot—from a boat to a VW bus, to another boat, to a motorhome, to an Airstream camper, and now, just weeks ago, to another boat—and how unlikely those pivots would be if our lives weren't so compact and mobile.

Honestly, a house in the suburbs isn't even an option that would ever come under consideration for us. Everyone is different, and everyone can make their own decisions, but we know ourselves and know that we would be miserable inside of a week. So, while I'll never say never, I will say that only the most dire of circumstances would cause us to abandon the life that we live and settle down in suburbia.



1958 Volkswagen Bus

Out of your various homes on wheels or on the water, what has been your favorite and why? Which home has been the most challenging and why?

Our 35' catamaran was a palace for two on the water, and carried us around the world safely and comfortably. Our VW bus was a cozy home for 500 nights driving around much of the world. Our 43' sailboat was a spacious and beautiful home for four that sailed us around the Sea of Cortez. Our 27' 1966 Dodge Travco Motorhome was gorgeous and homey and provided everything our family needed to travel around the U.S. and Mexico. And our 22' 1966 Airstream was adorable and compact enough to zip across Mexico in. I don't know that we have a favorite.

We have fond memories and great adventures to look back on from all of them. They all had their challenges—the catamaran had to weather 30,000 miles of wide open ocean, the VW didn't have a toilet or any cooking facilities, our family of four sailboat was a rolly monohull, our 50-year-old Travco Motorhome had too small an engine and wonky brakes, and the Airstream had not even a small space I could be alone to work in. But none of those challenges were difficult to overcome, mainly, I suppose, because of the experiences we were having while living in them. We're only just starting out in our latest boat, a 42' Grand Banks Trawler, so I guess we'll just have to wait and see if maybe we can finally declare a winner.





“We have fond memories and
great adventures to look
back on from all of them.
They all had their challenges”



What do you teach your children about living small/minimalist/mobile?

Kids absorb their surroundings. We discuss how our choices affect our lifestyle and how living small allows us to do so many amazing things. We talk about the impact that we all make on the world with our blasé consumption. They know about the effects we humans have on animals, and our environment, and even on each other. They see and hear about so much and it opens their eyes. They're still very young, ages 6 and 7, and I don't want to project too much, but they at least know and understand the benefits of living small, and they know that by living this way the whole world is available to them to explore and be a part of. These are not kids that can't see beyond their own backyard.



What features do you look for in a new boat or RV?

We don't ask much of our boats and RVs other than for them to feel like home. That's pretty vague, I know, but when you step into our boats or RVs you feel like you are in a home. They may be small, but inevitably after people come in and sit down they look around and say, "I could live in this." That's because even if it is a boat or an RV, inside it feels like home.





43 foot Spindrift Monohull



I'm sure everyone asks you how you afford this lifestyle. What are your sources of income and what has been the most beneficial for your family?

I've always been a self-employed trader. I started out trading commodities in the pits of Chicago, and now I trade stocks online from anywhere. A couple of years ago I randomly offered to mentor a few people, and the response was amazing, so I sort of ran with that. I now do a daily chat with a large group of new traders and trade stocks live with them. I also have a weekly financial newsletter to teach people about the markets, and I send out alerts when I make a trade. I really didn't expect to be doing this, but I've found that I really enjoy it, so two years later I'm still at it. And it's hard to complain about working from anywhere.

What do you hate to spend money on?

Insurance, food, and labor.

You've both been doing this for quite some time. What would you recommend to others who want to do what you do?

I'd recommend that people spend a lot less time planning, and just go. Buy a vehicle/boat that you can afford, and just start. We have spent so little time planning our life and so much just out living it. The plans just sort of fall into place. And frankly, all that time spent worrying about getting this boat or that boat, or choosing a motorhome or trailer, is wasted time. Once you are out there you quickly forget about those things—what you have is what you have—and that's okay. You're now spending the majority of your time outdoors, exploring, and doing the things that you really wanted to do in the first place, before all that planning took over.



**“I'd recommend that
people spend a lot less time
planning, and just go.”**



1966 Dodge Travco

**What do you think of tiny houses and are there any
you would live in? Why?**

We love tiny houses, and building one ourselves, as a family, is something we'd like to do at some point. We haven't really considered settling down, but when we do we have the vision of a few acres somewhere, with a tiny home we built with our own hands—now how is that for a cliché? Should I add in a cow, a goat, and a donkey? For us, the idea of owning a big home now seems silly. We own nothing. What would we put in it? We've been filling our little 22' Airstreams, and 42' boats with just the stuff we need in our lives—no excess. So having a house that was stationary wouldn't—shouldn't—mean that we'd need to suddenly change our lifestyle to include owning things that we don't really need. So, yes, the idea of a tiny home on a bit of land is appealing. Just not yet.

GET BUMFUZZLED

www.bumfuzzle.com

www.wandererfinancial.com

www.omentoring.com

www.patreon.com/bumfuzzle



1968 Travelall & 1966 Airstream Safari





42 foot Grand Banks Trawler

