

# RV Revival

*RVs are no longer just family vans. Now they're becoming the vehicle of choice among student road-trippers.*

Six friends, one road trip, and one small car—what to do? Rent an RV, a recreational vehicle. It has enough room for your friends to cruise comfortably down the longest highways.

Once called mobile homes, RVs earned blissful suburbanites (and all their belongings) to various vacationlands. Today these vehicles provide a way to take off without a schedule. Your RV is your castle.

Just ask football fans at the University of California at Berkeley. When the Cal Bears play archrival UCLA in Los Angeles, Berkeley students take rowdy RV road trips that include pregame tailgate parties. You can't miss the Cal vans—renters paint graffiti murals on the sides with washable poster paint. "You see everything from GO CAL to pictures of sperm and eggs," says economics major Scott Pollack. Fans have to clean the paint off to recover the damage deposit (\$250).

Aside from giving you the chance to sharpen your graffiti skills, road-tripping in an



RV saves time that's wasted on stops. Most rigs have bathrooms, ranges, small refrigerators, and microwave ovens. And travel is cheap. For a 10-person weekend trip to Arizona, Pollack and friends each spent about \$60 for rental and fuel.

Two national companies rent RVs: U-Haul (800-468-4285) and Bates Rent-A-Motor Home Inc. (800-732-2283). Because of insurance stipulations, Bates and U-Haul require that the person signing the rental contract be at least 25 years old; local dealerships may not be as strict. Also, it's wise to buy rental insurance (\$10 to \$12 a day) if your policy doesn't cover rented vehicles.

—Richard Cretan

## for Unbeatable Deals

\$57 a day. The same setup in March is \$97.

If you have a PC and modem (300, 1,200, or 2,400 baud), dial the Colorado Travel Bank at 303-671-7669. It lists events, weather updates, and ticket deals.

If you yearn for sand and sun, remember: trips with the same itinerary vary from tour operator to tour operator. And one company may have different rates for the same destination, depending on the city of departure.

A travel agent, tourist board, or tour operator can often find package trips at rock-bottom prices. But to set up your own adventure, follow these rules of thumb:

- Book domestic flights at least 14 days ahead.

- When flying, depart and return between noon Monday and noon Thursday.
- Take advantage of lower room rates on Friday and Saturday nights; they're usually 35 to 50 percent less than those on weeknights. (Most ski resorts don't discount, however; some charge *more* on weekends, since that's when they're the busiest.)

To receive more information on trips to beach resorts, call American Airlines Fly AWay Vacations, 800-433-7300; the Caribbean Tourism Organization, 212-682-0435; Delta Airlines' Vacation Center, 800-872-7786; or the Mexico Tourism Office, 212-755-7261.

—Mary C. Weaver



## NEWSLINE

If you're an outlet-store hound, find the best bargains—on everything from clothing to kitchen appliances—with the "Fabulous Finds" newsletter. This 24-page guide to 83 factory-outlet shopping centers around the U.S. lists all the stores in each mall. Send \$3.95 to Fabulous Finds, 9109 San Jose Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32257, or call 904-733-8877 for more information.

By taking courier flights (on which checked baggage space is used by the courier company for transporting packages), you can save as much as 80 percent off regular air fares to most major international cities. Find out how by reading *A Simple Guide to Courier Travel*. The book lists some 25 travel companies that use couriers to fly to such destinations as London, Paris, and Moscow. It's available for \$9.95, plus \$2.50 shipping. To order, call 800-344-9375.

Finally, a youth hostel in the Big Apple. American Youth Hostels (AYH) opens its first New York City facility this spring on the Upper West Side, near Columbia University. Housed in a restored historic landmark building at 891 Amsterdam Avenue, the hostel boasts a cafeteria, a theater, and a great security system. Cost is just \$20 per night for a dormitory-style room with a shared bath. The rooms are open to all AYH members (you can join upon arrival; annual dues are \$25 for the first year, \$15 renewal). Call 212-932-2300.

—Jane Clover