



## Island Girl

### Description

Island Girl is a 2004 National Tropical 39' Class A motorhome. We renovated the interior to create a comfortable, cozy, and usable space that we could enjoy living in during our full-time RV adventure. The path to Island Girl took several years, and started with our first RV, Luna...

#### **Luna**

Around 2007, we became interested in the idea of traveling in an RV. This was a new and different kind of travel that we hadn't experienced and it would give us the opportunity to explore more of the west while we were living in Denver. We also briefly entertained the idea taking a few years off sometime in the future to travel the country in an RV. We started attending RV shows and fell in love with Airstream travel trailers.

After an extensive search in the Denver area, we headed south to Colorado Springs, where we found the one. Since we didn't have a truck to tow her, we had to leave her behind. While driving home that evening, we watched a beautiful full moon rise and decided to name her Luna (Spanish for moon). About a month later, Hector and I, along with our dog, Shasta, headed back South in our new Toyota Tundra to get Luna.



Luna was a beautiful trailer. She really felt like a piece of

Americana as we towed her to Utah, New Mexico, Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, South Dakota, Arizona and, of course the mountains of Colorado. We were thoroughly enjoying the experience of owning an RV. During this time, we lost Shasta to cancer and a few months later adopted Angel and Rags. As we continued to travel, it became apparent that the space in Luna was a little tight for the four of us, especially if we were going to live in it someday in the future. We started looking into the possibility of changing the layout to create more space.

After considering and pricing out various options to improve the layout, we realized we actually needed a larger RV. Then we made the tough decision to put Luna up for sale. One of the reasons we selected an Airstream was that they are known to have a high resale value, and this proved to be true. In a fairly short period of time, we sold Luna. Although it was sad to see her drive away, we were very pleasantly surprised when a few months later we received a letter from her new owners and photos of the happy family camping. Luna was in good hands. Now it was time once again to continue our search for a larger RV.

### ***Upgrading to a motorhome***

We continued our research and settled upon a Class A motorhome. We also decided on a diesel rather than a gas model, for two main reasons; diesel engines have a much longer life span and diesel motor homes give a much quieter ride since the engine is in the back. Our budget was not enough for a new diesel motorhome, as they are considerably more expensive than the gas models, so we budgeted for some renovation work on the interior.



During our search, we found a small dealer located in an

area of town where there were mostly automobile, not RV lots. Squeezed into this relatively small piece of real estate was a small business, owned by Barry Ross, named [Ross RV](#). Barry specialized in selling used diesel pushers at the price point that we had budgeted for. His "one man shop" bought used RV's and brought them back to good working order as needed. There is where we found a motorhome that met most of our requirements, including the layout and the general condition of the exterior, interior, the engine and the chassis.



Since the motor home's model name was "Tropical", we

decided to name her Island Girl. Hector thought this was very clever, since he would have two island girls – the motorhome and me.

### ***Island Girl makeover***

Once we purchased our 2004 National Tropical motorhome, we started to plan the renovation. Of course, we decided to go with a tropical island theme. The interior surfaces in Island Girl had held up fairly well, but many were pretty dated. That first winter we had fabrics updated and upgraded the dining table and light fixtures. Then Hector replaced the mirrored backsplash.



That spring, we camped at a nearby state park and christened Island Girl along with a group of close friends.

The following summer we camped in Colorado and New Mexico for our first test runs. It's important to do multiple "shakedown" and we uncovered several issues during these first two trips.



The next phase of the makeover included redesign of the living room area to incorporate a custom computer desk and new sofa bed. Then we added finishing touches by decorating with some items from the Caribbean. We truly enjoyed living in our new, improved Island Girl for just under three years and sold her to a lovely family after we moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico. But there was to be a new RV in our future...



Copyright watermark



default watermark

**Date Created**  
September 2012  
**Author**  
island