



The

# LIFE

## HOW TO GET AWAY

Britton Purser wanted a sweet little camping trailer to carry him into the wild. So he built one. And he'll build one for you.



Photographs by  
TOM FOWLKS





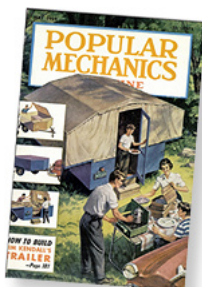
## THIS IS USUALLY ABOUT ALL YOU NEED TO GO CAMPING:

A tent, a sleeping bag, a camp stove, a lantern, beef jerky.

This is what you don't really need, but it definitely improves any excursion into the wilderness or hinterlands or the bush or no-man's-land: a trailer.

A caravan that sits up off the ground, that you haul behind your old Subaru or late-model crossover to get you in and out of just about anywhere, and that not only holds your gear but the comfort of a bed—an attractive salve to the creaky mornings after a night spent on the ground.

Building out comfortable living spaces for the outdoors and hitching them to the backs of cars goes as far back as, well, cars. Check out this *Popular Mechanics* cover from 1954. Britton Purser is a part of that tradition. He grew up on his family's ranch in Grand Junction, Colorado, and he's been a builder of things for as far back as he can remember. A few years ago, recuperating from a motorcycle accident and with two young sons ready to join him on his adventures, he designed a



teardrop trailer as a new way to get out to the vast mountainous spaces around his home in Grand Junction.

He made a business out of it. Vintage Overland trailers—all built by Purser, his two brothers, and their apprentice, Levi—hook up to the back of anything with a tow hook, including his vintage Land Rover. The gang drives out of Grand Junction, past “Open Range” road signs shot through with bullet holes and cows who know to stay off the road but like to crowd the shoulder.

They turn off old Route 50 and barrel up a dirt two-track to a ledge that looks west toward the Colorado National Monument and east to the Grand Mesa, the largest in North America, and down into a valley pocked with lone trees and errant cattle. A half-hour drive leaves you feeling like you're a million miles from civilization.

So you create your own. The light goes out fast once the sun dips below the horizon, and your fire grows stronger. The recessed lights inside the trailer get brighter, casting a warm glow over the Baltic birch plywood interior. The small aluminum shell offers an affirmation of what we've known as long as we've gone out adventuring in our vehicles: You don't need much, even in the most barren, exposed places. Just a small feeling of home.





**A ▷ Old Rail  
Ties, New  
Trails**

The stone viaducts are all that remain of a 1910 railroad in the wilderness outside Grand Junction.

From left, on Cullen Purser: Mountain Hardwear jacket (\$135), Mountain Khakis pants (\$85), Stanley Master Series thermos. On Britton Purser: Mountain Khakis jacket (\$200). On Ami Purser: Red Wing Heritage boots (\$320).

**B ▷ The  
Apprentice**

Levi Lawrence is learning the trailer-building trade from the Pursers.

Eddie Bauer jacket (\$99).





**A ▷ The Hatch**

The back end of the teardrop opens up and makes for a covered spot to set up the kitchen.

Wilson & Willy's jacket (\$298), Vuarnet sunglasses (\$360).

**B ▷ Chaco**  
boots (\$190).

**C ▷ At the Edge**

Fruita, Colorado, a town over from Grand Junction, has become the home base for an international mountain-biking scene anchored by Over the

Edge Sports bike shop. It's become the launching point for the Pursers' trailer adventures, too.

**D ▷ The Partner**

Ami, Britton's wife, is an artist and Britton's partner in their upstart business.

Mountain Khakis jacket (\$170), Filson shirt (\$125).

**E ▷ The Hike**

The sandstone canyons of McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area can be covered by foot, but they also allow horses up there.

On Cullen Purser (far right): Filson shirt (\$125).





