



My old white dodge and I have been through a lot together. It was tough to trade it in and say goodbye to an old friend. (Photo by Mark Rackay)

Bringing home a new outdoor chariot

Very close to every outdoor loving person is a four-wheeled chariot to bring them to and from their favorite outdoor places. In my case, I am trying to remember where I parked the darn thing.

When you drive a white truck, it can be pretty confusing. Do you realize how many white trucks there are in the airport parking lot?

My old man mentor of all things outdoor related, and some things not so outdoor related, did not believe in extravagance in a motor vehicle.

He felt the vehicle was to get you to your fishing or hunting spot, and back home again, while carrying all your gear. Anything else was just a complete waste of money.

Money that could have been spent of hunting and fishing gear.

Mr. Caster drove an old white Jeep Wagoneer. By old, I mean it was probably left over by the Donner party.

This Wagoneer was so dirty, you wiped your feet off after you got out. It was interesting to ride in because you could see the road go past when



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

you looked down at the floorboards.

That wonderful mountain vehicle carried us all over the mountains of Colorado and Wyoming.

None of the gauges worked, nor did the heater. Air conditioning during the hot summer months was the 260 type, two windows down and 60MPH. I loved that rig and wish it was still around.

Driving home from a fishing weekend near Walden, we took the Chambers Pass way rather than the more popular highway. Our plan was to fish the evening rise on the river when we got close to Fort Collins.

On a steep incline near the summit, there was a clanging noise, a bunch of smoke, and then, silence. The mountain rig had died, probably of

natural causes.

When I finally was able to afford a mountain vehicle, I bought a very well used Ford pickup.

This miserable beast looked like the perfect mountain rig, and that it would take you far into the back country for any mountain adventure you desired. The problem was that truck seldom brought us home.

After a year, I got rid of the thing because I couldn't afford to keep repairing it.

We survived with a family car for a long time after that. By the time I was in my mid-20s, I had acquired a wife, kids, job, house, mortgage, taxes, or the full catastrophe as Zorba the Greek once called it, so any luxury like a mountain rig was out of the question.

Somewhere in my 30s I bought a top-notch outdoor truck. A big, tough looking Dodge Power wagon. The Dodge took me all over the mountains, then to Florida where, together we explored the swamps and cypress heads of the Everglades country.

That old truck always got me back home safe.

When the time came to return home to the Western Slope, I knew that truck could not make the trip. She had given me all it had, and then some.

I retired it in Florida and bought another Dodge.

Over the course of a lifetime, an outdoor person will go through many different rigs.

Each rig is a little better, and a little worse, than the last one. Some folks like to get a new rig every few years, while others want to keep their rigs forever.

My grandfather always went to town and bought a new truck off the lot.

He demanded only the basics and reliability, and it was always white. He would come home with a shiny new truck and it would never be clean again. Pa drove the truck, and worked it, until it would die.

Once dead, he would drag it to an area on the property that was a vehicle graveyard, where it would stay, presumably until the apocalypse. I guess I come by the dedication to a vehicle honestly.

About a dozen years ago, I bought a white

Dodge 2500 diesel.

This truck was fairly basic as far as option go, but big on the tow and engine power. The rig was always loaded up with all kinds of outdoor survival and rescue equipment because I used it for all the posse callouts for lost and injured people.

The truck has an 8-foot bed, so my ATV fits easily in the back.

All the hunting gear in the world could fit in the back of the truck with room to spare. The truck and I have shared a couple hundred fishing and hunting trips, seen many a sunrise and sunset, and this truck never failed me.

Alas, the truck began to tire. The telltale signs of old age and abuse were beginning to show. I told my wife of many years that the time had come for me to look at retiring the old boy.

She agreed and I began my search.

Last week, I said goodbye to my old friend and brought home a new one. If you have not looked inside a new vehicle for a dozen years, you are going to need a little assistance.

Keyless this, computer that, all in the interest of confusing me. Fortunately, my buddy Don works for a dealership and he walked me through the operation of the new trucks.

This truck is so high-tech that you have an app on your phone to monitor all the fluid levels and tire pressures. There is even a way to bring up a map to show you where you parked it.

Even with the map, I have trouble finding the truck. You see, the last 40 years I have owned a white truck. I am having trouble remembering the new one is red.

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