

A west coast Adventure

By Jess and Charles O'Bryan



What happens when two very active people meet, fall in love, get married and make the choice to leave traditional home-based life behind to live on the road? They build an adventure rig that reflects their very active and dare I say it, 'adventurous' lifestyle. We purchased a 2018 Tundra (used), removed the bed and bolted a **Norweld** aluminum flatbed tray in its place as our solid foundation. The tray resembles a supersized swiss army knife. Next we added a 2.5-inch **Dobinson's** lift and propped it up on 35's, Firestone airbags and threw an **ARB** cow-catcher (think Mexico/Baja rock climbing/surf trips) on the front as our bumper.



What do you put on this badass platform that would be capable of withstanding all the abuse we would be putting it through? Well, we looked long and hard and found only one choice: hands down it had to be a **FourWheel Pop-UpCamper(FWC)**, flatbed Hawk model to be exact. With practical storage everywhere, (and I mean everywhere) we play Tetris with food, clothes, surfboards and climbing gear (let me tell you, that's a lot right there). All living essentials packed neatly, most of the time, into their rightful homes.



Rango in the Avenue of Giants

Heading north:

An adventure from last year that stood out was from San Diego up to Humboldt and Oregon coastlines. We loaded up our FWC, affectionately called Rango and headed north in search of surf and rock climbing crags. One thing we agree on is to share the load on our drives. Alternating driving helps keep us fresh behind the wheel. After a long 14-hour drive however, things start to go a little

sideways, but, just as you're ready to call it quits the sun starts to rise and you enter the '**Avenue of the Giants**' scenic highway and suddenly your spirit is lifted. It's just breathtaking, lined with giant Redwoods on both sides of the road it forces you to slow down and really absorb all the green around you. Make sure to take this magical detour if you're ever in the area as it will not disappoint. After the solid push to get to **Humboldt** and such little sleep the first night, finding a secluded spot to camp next to a river was our top priority. There truly is something magical about falling asleep to the sound of moving water whether it be a river or ocean.



*Charles looked pretty concerned about opting out of the snorkel on this deep river crossing.
Gaberville, CA*

In the back of our minds we were thinking, "How would Rango's pop-up canvas bode in rain, snow and cold climate?" Well, not knowing it at the time, but as we drove north we were heading into the exact location of a huge storm brewing off the coast of Northern California that promised record rainfall, hurricane winds and high surf. As it turned out, I believe the wind gusts reached 106 mph and there was a record wave height that hit off the coast at 75 feet! So, let's just say if we wanted to test out how well a **FWC** could handle the elements, I think we found our perfect storm! Mornings usually go like this: I (Charles) roll out of bed to make coffee because not much can happen until coffee's made, typically with a great local roast. With the smell of coffee, Jess rises and usually makes a bomb breaky. We have yet to grow tired of goat cheese and pesto on sourdough topped with sunny-side up eggs and Sriracha, a camper staple! We have enjoyed discovering all the cool recipes you can make on just a two-burner stove and, even better yet, throwing a cast-iron pan on a

fire. Don't think for a minute that just because you're "camping" you can't make amazing meals. We've made everything from my secret chili recipe to a three-course Thanksgiving meal, all in our badass mobile home. Living in a camper on the road does not force you to give up amenities. It simply allows you an opportunity to be creative! After packing up and waving adios to our river front camp, we headed out to search for what our hearts were craving: waves and rocks. **Patrick's Point** offers both with its incredible 360 panoramic views and switchback trails that lead you down rugged cliffs dotted with Redwoods and past banana slugs to some of the most pristine beaches where both surfing and climbing can be found.



Jess trying to convince us there's a corner out there somewhere, but realizing the 8 foot plus sets

Realizing surf was not going to happen due to a rising swell that resembled a very tumultuous and unwelcoming washing machine, we cruised over to a spot called **Wedding Rock**, where we heard there were traditional climbing routes we could plug gear into and work our way up. After several attempts to visualize routes from a series of chaotic cracks with minimal beta, we were beginning to think the day would be a bust, but low and behold not only did we run into another climber, but 'the' climber who wrote 'the' book on climbs in the area, some of which he set himself. Talk about a score!



Jess' idea of walking down the aisle at Wedding Rock

He gave us all the info we needed to find spectacular routes n Humboldt right at the water's edge. Imagine climbing a route where you're exposed above crashing waves and your belayer is being sprayed (happily) with ocean mist. We are so lucky to have such an amazing playground right here in our backyard. All you have to do is go find it!



Jess finding new ways to use the rig for cleaning our climbing gear.



See the little blue dot? That's Jess at the anchor of the climb at Klamath , CA

We drove up the road a little further the next day and found more quality climbing with no one around. After a few more days of rock climbing on magnificently steep ocean cliffs and camping nestled in tall Redwoods and thick ferns, the ocean began to rear its head with a massive swell pushing through and no surfable waves in sight. We decided to seek refuge from the incoming storm by exploring the mountains near the **Rogue River** in Oregon. The Rogue connects the Cascade Range to the Pacific Ocean. It's a perfect place to experiment with fly fishing, so we did just that.

Unfortunately, we didn't catch dinner, but we sure had a blast trying. We rolled Rango, our **FWC**, right onto the Rogue's pebble-skipping riddled shoreline to set up camp for the night, insert campfire and whisky. A young man showed up in his own camper. He parked far enough away to respect our space and came over to invite us into his home-on-wheels for dinner. We live in an ever growing heavily populated world and when you run into others who have made the same effort you have to find seclusion, they usually turn out to be very like-minded and a welcome conversation about where you've been and where you're headed manifests into a quality campfire conversation.



Jess always excited to try and learn new things, but finding it a little challenging threading line with a few shots of bourbon down the hatch.

The fire turned into ambers and we turned into our respective campers for the night, falling asleep to the sound of the Rogue's waters drifting toward the Pacific. After a wonderful night's rest on the lower Rogue we fly fished again to no avail and read books in the camper to the sound of rain on the tin roof (best sound ever). That afternoon we set off for a mountain peak we had our sights set on. We were told by locals the pass should be open, but with the massive cyclone heading our way, we should be prepared for high winds, heavy rainfall and if in higher elevation snow. That's all we

needed to hear to fire us up for the day's adventure. We pointed our **FWC** up a windy road that lead us to our mountain peak destination. After experiencing an extremely cold winter night at the top we couldn't have been happier with how cozy our home felt. With the heater blowing and snow falling on the surrounding trees, we knew we made the right choice for our rig.



The snowstorm started while looking for our next camp spot.

We've been enjoying discovering all the many useful things about the new set up. With **GoPower** solar panels, propane, 40 gallons of water storage, a two-burner stove, large fridge, a sink, queen size bed, hot indoor and outdoor showers, and a toilet, we are living an incredibly comfortable nomad life. Not to mention this thing was built for overlanding. You can tell it was built with 'resilience' in mind. We've never regretted going with the **FWC flatbed** model or the Australian made Norweld aluminum tray that was custom built for FWC. Build something that is going to do everything you need it to do and then some.



Winter wonderland

Naturally, we woke to a winter wonderland to play in! After a full day of snow play, plenty of snowball fights, a few holes punched in some empty beer cans and exploring a forest of freshly dumped snowfall, there was still one thing we had yet to accomplish on our trip: Catching waves. So, off we headed back to the coastline in hopes that the swell had calmed enough for us to surf. Well, what we found was not ideal. If you're a surfer, then you know the ocean, well, she's a fickle one. The waves that were pushing in excess of 14+ feet a few days ago were now a scrappy 2-3 feet in size. Did we

suit up in our 5/4s, booties, and gloves to bear the cold and headout? You better believe it! As surfers you can watch all the reports and predictions you want, but sometimes you just have to paddle out. Sure, you can miss the perfect swell by a day or two if not an hour or two, but sometimes just getting in the water no matter what the conditions are is what you really need.



Charles waxes boards like a boss

We didn't drive all this way to not get wet, so off came the boards from the roof rack and on went the hot water heater! After spending hours bobbing around in super chilly waters, we really look forward to a hot shower. It's funny because we both will be floating out there on our boards waiting for the next set and even though we know for a fact we turned the water heater on, we'll still question each other, "Did you turn the heater on?!"



"Post surf session hot water shower powered by [GoPower](#) solar on our FWC"

Ultimately, at the end of the day when we crawl into our comfy camper, we remind each other of how grateful we are that we made the choice to leave the house/apartment life behind now and not wait for "someday." I can't tell you how many times we are approached by people asking us about our rig and say, "You guys are living the dream." I ask them, "What's stopping you from doing the very same thing?" We tend to overthink life and over complicate it. We live in a time where so much information is available on the web and social platforms that it can leave us with so many options we

are unable to make the “right” decision and it can stop us from pulling the trigger. We are so fortunate that today more than ever there are newer and more amazing rig build designs and products that can fit anyone’s budget; anyone who still has that desire to not conform to the house with the picket fence and perfectly manicured lawn. Not that I look down on anyone who has that as their goal and vision in life, but if you’re still reading this article and you found your way to The Adventure Portal, there’s a reason. It’s in you and all I’m saying is don’t sit and wait for that perfect rig or perfect time...**get out there and live life now.**



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Prior to meeting, Charles Rollins and Jessica O'Bryan were individually dirtbags that loved surfing and rock climbing more than double IPAs (that says a lot). It was only a matter of time before their two paths crossed and when they did it was a match made in dirt/sand. They travel from one spontaneous excursion to the next in their 2018 Toyota Tundra, Four Wheel Pop-Up Camper, Norweld aluminum tray, GoPower solar powered rig. Jess fuels her fun by threat hunting (she nerds out hunting hackers) while Charles is a licensed electrical contractor (he likes to check people’s shorts). They are prepping for a two year trip from California to the tip of South America. **Follow their shenanigans on** <https://www.instagram.com/surf.climb.travel/?hl=en>

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