



## Road Warriors: Entrepreneurial Women Discover Life on the Road Can Feel Just Like Home, Thanks to Ford Transit

- As more people become familiar with Ford Transit, many are discovering it is the ultimate platform on which to build their own home that enables a life on the road and all the adventure that entails

- Vans are no longer just for men; women are now finding the freedom, flexibility and lower costs of van life not just liberating, but empowering

- A grandmother who works as a photographer, a champion cyclist, and a graphic artist who surfs are among Ford owners who cite cost, reliability and the country's widest dealer network as purchase considerations for converting a van into a home for the road

**DEARBORN, Mich., Jul. 16, 2018** – When Teri Lou Dantzler returned home from her New Zealand vacation in 2016, one of the first items on her to-do list was researching vans.

That's because Dantzler, a landscape photographer and grandmother, had just spent her holiday camping in a large vehicle, or "camper-vanning," as it's known in some parts – and loved it. After deciding to purchase a Ford Transit, she spent the next four months working with her father to outfit the vehicle with everything she needed to accommodate long road trips to capture the best photos around the U.S. – a bed, workspace, refrigerator, freshwater system and plenty of storage – and documented the whole thing on [YouTube](#).

Living in vans – once upon a time a lifestyle dedicated mostly to surfer dudes – is now expanding to include women like Dantzler. In fact, more and more women are tricking out vans and taking their lives on the road, choosing Ford Transit and Transit Connect as platforms on which to build their own homes. Women buying Ford vans cite their lower costs, reliability, safety and security, and serviceability through Ford's extensive North American dealer network as key purchase considerations.

"Now, I can live out on the road for extended periods of time," says Dantzler, who also added solid maple cabinetry and purpleheart wood inlays, power inverter and solar panel to recharge the battery to her Transit. "In between venturing to unique photo locations, I do meet-ups and conduct live photography classes – all from my home on the road."

### **Freedom is 'Incredible'**

For Rebecca Gross, a former Air Force captain and champion cyclist, it's easy to be productive out on the road. Eight months out of the year, Gross depends on her 2017 Transit cargo van to get her to cyclocross and mountain biking events. She says the freedom is incredible.

“It’s always an adventure,” says Gross. “I’m happier having control over my time. I can coach and work on the road – anywhere I choose – then stop when I want and go for a ride.”

It took just a matter of days and a few hundred dollars in materials for Gross and a friend to outfit the Transit for her home on the road. She built a platform bed with storage underneath, a counter and another storage system for cycling gear and personal items.

“On a cyclist’s budget, the Transit is a lot more affordable option,” says Gross. “The dealer was surprised to hear what I was planning to do with it, but personalizing the van just the way I wanted was really fun.” She estimates the cost was \$10,000 less than competing vans.

Equally important to Dantzler and Gross is the extensive Ford dealer network across North America. With more than 3,200 Ford and Lincoln dealers and more than 675 commercial vehicle centers in the United States, Ford Transit owners enjoy significantly greater access to service and maintenance compared to Mercedes-Benz Sprinter owners.

“I need reliability because I put a lot of miles on my van and so far, it’s been awesome,” says Gross. “It’s my happy place.”

### **No more rent?**

Surfer and graphic designer Tasha Rivard lives in a 2010 Transit Connect in Carbondale, Colorado. Like Dantzler, she spent much of her free time studying abroad in Australia traveling the Outback in a rented van. After, she moved to Hawaii, where she met friends living in their vans. When she “stumbled across a Transit Connect at a Ford dealership” two years ago in Texas, Rivard began planning her own home on the road.

Rivard’s Transit Connect includes a compact bed that rolls up to expose a workspace with a desk for her freelance design, and art and jewelry projects. A 100-watt solar panel charges a house battery that powers her refrigerator, lights and other electronic devices.

“The whole ‘not paying rent’ thing gives me the freedom to live in places I might not be able to otherwise,” says Rivard. “That has allowed me to go after new job opportunities and live basically anywhere while keeping life simple.”

Like many who call their vans home, Rivard keeps up a gym membership where she can exercise and get a shower. She also has a portable electric shower hooked up to a freshwater tank in the van where she can rinse off after a morning surf.

Van life is very community-oriented, and once you get into it, you quickly realize how many other people are doing it too, says Rivard, who credits social media with helping her create connections with like-minded individuals. Safety has never been an issue either. “You get used to picking the right spots, and you just rely on common sense,” she says.

*Certain modifications and equipment installation may void manufacturer warranty. Consult your Ford dealer before installing any aftermarket equipment.*

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#### About Teri Lou Dantzler

Teri Lou Dantzler is a professional photographer, based in the Seattle area. She teaches creative smartphone editing and leads tours in the Palouse region of WA. After living on the road for over a year she has decided to become a consultant to those who want to live a similar VanLife style. Follow Teri Lou on Instagram @artisticadventurervan or learn more at <http://teriloublog.com>

#### About Rebecca Gross

Rebecca Gross is a performance coach and professional mountain bike and cyclocross racer based in Colorado. She was the 2012 cyclocross masters world champion and 2014 cyclocross masters national champion. Learn more at <https://www.rebeccagross.com>, or follow her on Instagram @rebeccagross.

#### About Tasha Rivard

Tasha Rivard is a graphic designer/artist and digital marketing professional. She is an avid surfer currently based in California. She has produced logos, websites and social media content for a variety of apparel, sporting goods and outdoor products retailers. Follow her van journey at [www.tinyvantravels.com](http://www.tinyvantravels.com), or on Instagram @tinyvantravels. Learn more about her work at <http://www.tasharivard.com>, or follow her art Instagram @tasha.rivard.