

REMODELISTA

Casamidy on Wheels: An Idiosyncratic Airstream Rehab, Victorian Card Table Included

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Above: When not on the road, El Cornichon, as it's now known—"because it's a little pickle"—is parked under twin oaks across from the family ranch: See Home on the Range with Casamidy in Mexico. "I know the idea of painting the shell seems crazy, but I really didn't want a shiny object disrupting the view from the house," Jorge says.

Inspiration for the new color came from a small Bang & Olufsen speaker (see it below) and required multiple paint coats to get right: "First matte black, then iridescent yellow, then the green, and then a sealant because it's going to be in the sun and we don't want it to yellow," explains Jorge. "The guy who did the painting is a true artist."

Of the new paint job, he points out, "In daylight it's olive, and at night it turns forest green

What would you do if someone offered you a fixer-upper Airstream? When a fellow San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, designer asked Jorge Almada and Anne-Marie Midy if they'd like to take on her father's long-abandoned 1968 Overlander as part of a barter deal, the couple jumped to the challenge.

The two, owners of the luxe-rustic furnishings company Casamidy, were entirely new to the world of RVs. But Jorge had grown up hearing tales of his produce-farmer grandparents' Airstream in the fifties: "They outfitted it as a bar that they'd take to the beach. My father and aunts spoke very fondly of those times and, in particular, that trailer." An Airstream also seemed to fit right in to their already peripatetic life: The couple, who have two young sons, are based in Brussels; run their workroom out of San Miguel; and have a family ranch in Sonora, Mexico, just over the Arizona border.



Above: Inside, the Casamidy polyglot style has been scaled to trailer size: 27 feet long and eight feet wide. "The floor plan is perhaps the most difficult thing I've ever had to design," Jorge tells us. "It's really a game of inches and each solution creates another obstacle."

Rather than mimicking trailer furnishings, he made use of Casamidy's signature Altamura sofas of waxed canvas and saddle leather. They're bolted to the floor, and, Jorge quickly learned, everything else also has to be battened down or put away, so that when El Cornichon is on the road, all the pieces remain in place. The existing floor had a lot of rot and was replaced with a veneered oak slotted in board by board: "We went with veneer because it's light; otherwise, we'd have had a weight issue."



Above: Anne-Marie and sons at the trailer's entry with its original screen door. Jorge loves old airplanes and notes that "the rounded door has that kind of feel."



Above: The sofas easily transform into twin beds. Coleman folding picnic tables are slotted on the sides, and underneath, vintage English leather suitcases (found in San Miguel) hold essentials from shoes to dishes—"they're super practical, and nicer looking than rolling boxes," Jorge says. "And I like the look; I didn't want everything to be built-in."

Pajamas and bedtime reading are kept in the hanging Leather Saddle Bags, and the overhead bin is piled with serapes. As for the copper window and skylight trim, Jorge explains, "Our ranch is near Bisbee, Arizona, and there's a lot of copper mining in the area. All of the copper fittings are my way of acknowledging Bisbee and Sonora."

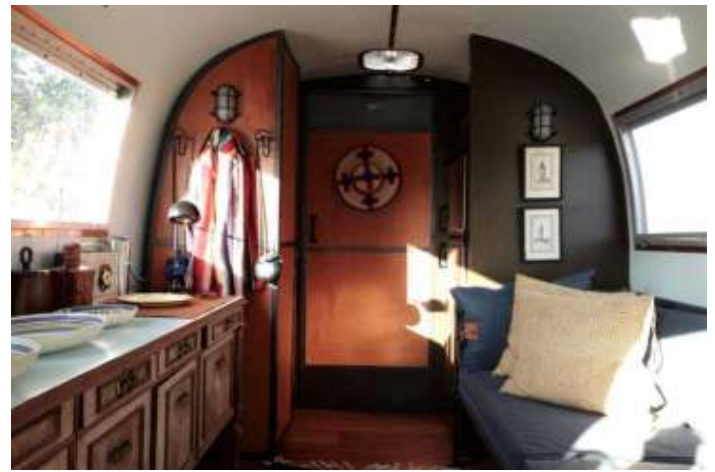


Above: The stove was purchased at a regular appliance store and fitted out with a stitched leather panel on its exposed side. Metal rails are used for hanging mugs and kitchen tools, and the copper hood is custom. A big design decision: whether to include a kitchen sink? Jorge opted to just use the sink in the bathroom: "Having one general sink freed up the counter and made the interior feel more like a studio and not so much a kitchen."

The rugs are from Evoke the Spirit, which has shops in San Miguel and Sayulita.

The back wall closet and bathroom door are made of iron inset with stitched leather. And the fridge is tucked behind the "smoke-roomy" black-painted wall.

Striking the overall right tone, Jorge says, was tricky: "I didn't want it to be too kitschy or too safari, so I tried to balance all the elements." He also looked to nautical design: The wall lights are Original BTC Oval Bulkhead Light.



Above: Jorge was about to have a chest of drawers made to extend out from the stove when he discovered this 1970s credenza that came out of a fancy Mexican law office. "It's fifty-six inches long and was to the inch the perfect size. Also the eleven-inch feet fit exactly in the wheel wells underneath, and the drawers lock, which you need so they don't fly open when you're driving."



Above: A detail of the stitched leather.



Above: The compact bathroom has a leather-detailed iron vanity with a hammered copper sink. The couple found the vintage cabinet pulls in Arundel, England. The galvanized tin rooster is the work of one of the Casamidy artisans. Also made of galvanized tin: the washtub mirror.

Another space-saving design decision was to forego having a shower in the trailer: Instead, when they're on the road, Jorge hangs a solar shower (with curtain) from the tow vehicle.

Hard-pressed to come up a place for a queen-size bed in the trailer, Jorge found a two-person rooftop tent by Front Runner that fits atop the tow vehicle (see below), so that's what the family uses when they're on the road with El Cornichon.

"Everything here is functional," Jorge says, "but since we don't live here permanently, there's also an element of fantasy."



Above: The sofas are detailed with saddle leather; this one is 30 inches wide and the other is 35 inches wide.



Left: A surprise element that Jorge insists is actually practical: an ornate Victorian claw-foot card table, which, when pulled out from the wall, serves as the dining table (and is secured with bungees when the Airstream is rolling). For a Thanksgiving meal, the couple paired the table with the two Coleman picnic tables and comfortably staged a feast for 12.



Above: The table set for dinner. Shifting the table around in such a small space, Jorge insists, is easy.



Above: The interior walls and credenza top are painted a subtle mint that Jorge notes is two shades lighter than the classic Land Rover color. (Land Rovers are another of his passions.) Circular bronze sombrero hooks—Gancho de Bronce Modelo Aro from Mexican hardware company Counter Cultures—are used as catchalls.

The small hanging Beoplay Portable Bluetooth Speaker inspired the color applied to the outside of the trailer. The tin lantern is a 1917 American Army relic that folds flat. And the steer head is made of ceramic and came from Evoke the Spirit.



Above: A dramatic eroded gully leads to the Casamidy ranch. The family drives a Land Rover Discovery 3 V-8 that provides crucial extra storage space for on-the-road living.



Above: The Airstream is used for weekend getaways and as extra quarters at the ranch.



Above: Thanks to the Land Rover's flat roof, the Front Runner Roof-Top Tent serves as a lofty extra bedroom.

A black and white photograph of a vintage Airstream travel trailer. The trailer is parked on a paved surface, possibly a parking lot or a road. The front door is open, and a small tree is visible behind the trailer. The trailer has a classic rounded design with a single window visible on the side. The overall scene is captured in a vintage, slightly grainy style.

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