

THE PREVOST LIFESTYLE

Advice to newbies from a former newbie

Anyone considering or buying their first Prevost motor home conversion quickly realizes how steep the learning curve on a Prevost motor home can be. No matter how long someone researched the market, no matter what motor homing experience they had, the first Prevost conversion is intimidating. To those on the cusp of buying their first Prevost, keep in mind every single one of us that owns a Prevost motor home conversion was once a “newbie”. Not a single one of us didn’t need help, advice, support or information.

Now that my wife and I are in our 23rd year of ownership,(and have had 3 Prevost conversions about a decade apart in model years) I feel a little comfortable offering advice. If you are reading this you are looking for your first Prevost, or maybe you recently got your first Prevost, or you want to know if a Prevost conversion is for you. I will share my advice with you as long as you realize free advice is worth every cent you pay for it.

The starting point is to understand owning a Prevost conversion cannot be compared to anything else exactly. Yes there are high end luxurious motor homes and some cost as much or more than a Prevost, but that is like comparing a Holiday Inn with the Ritz Carlton. Both have beds and showers, but there is a distinct difference.

A lot of people aspire to own a coach like a Prevost, but feel they cannot afford one. I’ll address that. A lot of folks have a business or job that they can do from anywhere and think a Prevost is a great way to see the country while working from the coach. I’ll talk about that. Some folks love to use a motor home and want to step up into a Prevost. I’ll talk about that also.

What exactly is a Prevost conversion? It starts life as a chassis or an empty shell akin to a seated coach without the seats. It is based on a commercial bus chassis but with some special differences to make it adaptable to conversion as a motor home. In fact Prevost manufactures coaches that are known as seated coaches for charter companies and transit lines like Greyhound. The structure and driveline for seated applications is what Prevost builds for conversions but with an empty interior. The shell is made in two configurations, one for entertainers and one for motor homes. My focus will be on motor home conversions.

Since Prevost conversions are known as the “ultimate class” and have the proven durability of a commercial chassis and the highest quality interiors they are expensive. Today a new Prevost motor home is going to cost about \$2,000,000 give

or take a few cents either way. At prices like that anyone contemplating a new Prevost is usually going to be an experienced owner, or more than capable of affording a new one.

But most owners do not buy a new Prevost. Nobody really knows how many Prevost conversions are still in service, but it is likely to be a couple of thousand. So the real Prevost marketplace today is dealing in used Prevost conversions. Just a cursory look at Prevost coaches for sale quickly reveals professionally converted Prevost coaches can range in asking prices of under \$70,000 to something well below the cost of a new coach.

As you can see there is a Prevost for almost every budget. So the starting point for beginning the Prevost lifestyle is to figure out your budget and see what you can get within your budget. It would take a large book to cover all of the evolution of Prevost coaches, but spending a few days on the internet looking at coaches for sale is a good way to begin understanding what is available within your budget.

Back in olden days all Prevost conversions were XL Le Mirage models. There were earlier models but in such small numbers to be rare. Those early XL coaches were all 40 feet long and were almost exclusively powered with a Detroit Diesel 8V92 engine, coupled to a 5 speed Allison automatic transmission. Until around 1984 coaches were 96" wide, and since then all have been 102" wide.

In the early 90's Prevost introduced the H3 model. Unlike the XL which was recognized by its stainless steel siding, the H3 had structural plastic skins, was about a foot taller and was quickly recognized as having storage bays much higher than those in an XL making it gain acceptance by owners who had the need for greater space for storage.

In the early to mid 90's two significant changes to the product line were introduced by Prevost. The coaches were now available with the Detroit Diesel Series 60 engine coupled to a 6 speed Allison transmission called the "world transmission". This was made possible by the increase of legal lengths from 40 feet to 45 feet the typical length of coaches today. With the introduction of the Series 60 engine, owners saw the fuel mileage jump from 5 to 6 MPG with the 8V92 to 7 to 8 MPG with the Series 60 engine. The 5 additional feet of length was a significant change that allowed the coaches to have more features than were previously possible.

Around 2000 Prevost introduced the XLII which is the body style that did away with rivets and had a clean look with the smooth stainless skins. Shortly after the introduction of the XLII, Prevost introduced shells with Prevost engineered and installed slides. The H3 continued pretty much the same with the exception of some

cosmetic changes to the front and rear.

But the Prevost models, while maintaining their basic appearance, were constantly being updated with features that made them capable of handling the greater weights of coaches with slides and other features demanded by the market. They were also gaining sophisticated systems ranging from stability control, adaptive braking, fire suppression and multiplex electrical systems.

Around 2011 the Series 60 engine was replaced with a Volvo engine that was a big improvement in power, while getting back some of the fuel mileage lost to stringent environmental standards.

Having owned an 87, 97, and now an 06 I can say with confidence the coach and conversions keep getting better and better.

So how does this translate into a budget? From my perspective the newer the coach the better it will be in almost every respect. The quality level of both the shell and the conversion has gone up with every generation. The coaches are more reliable, have better fit and finish, and drive better with each passing year. But don't interpret that to mean earlier Prevost conversions are not reliable or are of poor quality. All conversions regardless of model year are going to outlive all of us. They are built that well. How this translates into your budget however is you have to decide what features in the evolution of the coach are important to you. Or conversely you set your number for purchase price and you see what you can get for that amount.

One thing that is important in creating a budget is to recognize that the purchase price is the beginning. Once you own a motor home regardless of its quality level there are associated expenses. They need insurance and license plates. They need tires, batteries, oil changes, and periodic repairs or preventive maintenance. A Prevost may be capable of a million or two miles, but only if it is regularly maintained.

The cost of maintenance is totally dependent upon your preferences. Some people want to create a preventive maintenance schedule (I fall into that category). They arbitrarily set what they consider a service life for all components and change them and all fluids and filters and belts and hoses to a schedule. For example, regardless of tread depth, tires are presumed to have a 5 or 6 year life. At about \$7000 for a set of tires that translates into about \$1200 per year for tires. If we assume batteries have a 5 year life we can plan on about \$2500 for all batteries every five years or \$500 a year. The same can be said for oil changes, fluid changes, air bags (air springs which are the rubber suspension components), various valves, brake chambers, brake linings, etc.

Add to the cost of mechanical maintenance insurance, and fuel and you get an annual value that reflects the ongoing cost of ownership. For reference if I use my coach 10,000 miles per year, apart from depreciation it costs me around \$1.20 for every mile I drive. I do all my own maintenance and repairs so for those who choose to have others do that work the cost may be higher. Obviously if you drive less or more the cost per mile is inversely proportional to the miles driven.

Since none of us are alike, the maintenance and ownership budget is going to vary. Some owners prefer to not replace air bags or brake chambers until they fail, and then to only replace the one that failed. That is another way of dealing with repairs and maintenance and nobody can criticize either way. What is more of a requirement however is the Prevost maintenance schedule that calls out specific miles or days for routine service ranging from fluid and filter changes to a lubrication schedule.

No matter how you approach your budget for ownership costs it is important to remember all of the costs including fuel are likely to be relatively insignificant when compared to depreciation. Unfortunately the depreciation that allows us to buy excellent, barely used coaches for pennies on the dollar also is an ongoing expense that needs to at least be recognized. A Prevost coach is not an investment. It is a depreciating asset and that depreciation allows most owners to buy nearly new coaches well below the cost of a new one, but it continues to erode the money they put into the purchase as well.

So here is one of my nuggets of free advice to begin. If your budget is so tight as to influence you to park your coach when fuel prices reach \$X.XX, give serious thought to buying a Prevost conversion, or any high end motor home for that matter. While you think driving less because of fuel prices is rational, remember when the coach is parked in your garage depreciation continues (more on newer coaches, less on older ones) along with insurance, and the time related maintenance items like tires and batteries. If you cannot justify the average increase in operating cost of \$3000 when fuel jumps \$2.00 a gallon and based on 10,000 miles of use a year, you may not want a Prevost.

If however you understand the costs associated with ownership and would rather own a Prevost coach than keep your money under the mattress, the next step in embracing the lifestyle is to buy your coach.

While every one of us wants a coach that has our favorite colors or décor the real starting point for selecting a coach is to list wants and needs. If you are one of the few buying a new coach this is especially important because you have no need to compromise. But for the vast majority of buyers it should be understood flexibility on defining the wants and needs is important. My wife and I have some items on the top

of our list of wants and needs and a coach without them will not be considered no matter how much we like its colors or appearance. The important features that you as a buyer want in your coach will be based on your personal preferences, how you use the coach, your budget, and even where you will use the coach.

All Prevost conversions are going to share the Prevost chassis, but even that enters into the process of listing wants and needs. Do you want the XL or the H3? Does the coach need to be 40 feet? What about slides? Is over the road (OTR) heat and air important? Long range fuel? Series 60 engine? Rivets or bonded skins?

Every one of the options listed in the previous paragraph require some thought. Some decisions are taken away if you settle on a specific coach or feature. For example if you want a coach with the 8V92 engine it is almost assuredly going to be a 40 foot coach. Conversely you can get a Series 60 engine (a more economical engine with a greater lifespan) in a 40 foot coach, but those are rare. Similarly if you need OTR the odds are it will be a Liberty conversion because other converters generally used shells without OTR.

Your list of wants and needs should reflect how you wish to enjoy the lifestyle. Some owners buy for the long term. Our coaches are kept for an average of 11 years. Obviously the coach needs to be close to matching our list of wants and needs otherwise we end up having to live with a coach that doesn't suit us. But if we enjoy trading often, our wish list is less important because if we lack something the next coach which we may buy in a year or two may more closely meet our needs. How we participate in the lifestyle therefore influences how we create and value our list of wants and needs.

To understand the two approaches to coach ownership above it is important to understand your own personality. I am not one to go through the process of buying and selling things like cars, planes, or coaches. So when we make up our mind that we want to buy a coach we make sure what we buy is what we want. We use a pretty detailed list to guide us, and getting what we want is more important than getting the absolute cheapest price. In fact I am willing to pay a premium to get the right coach. But I know others who enjoy trading often so while they may have a list of wants and needs, they are not willing to pay a penny more than the lowest market price for a coach so they can trade often with minimal economic impact.

It is probable the average buyer negotiates a decent price for a coach that requires some compromise regarding the wish list.

How you use the coach is more important than most realize on their first purchase. We rarely use our coach for dry camping (camping without hookups) so a lot of

battery power is not important. We typically go from RV park to RV park or we run the generator so the 4 house batteries we have are ample. But if we spent a few weeks a year at Quartzite one of our requirements would be 6 or 8 large batteries.

If we put relatively few miles on our coach, but instead left it in Palm Springs all winter as a second home, OTR would not be important to us because we would value the space it occupies as additional storage and having ample house AC units would be a need. If on the other hand we put a lot of miles on the coach, especially in warmer weather such as in the humid south east or the scorching desert southwest OTR would be high on the list, and lack of it would be a deal breaker.

The layout of the coach can be a factor in the wants and needs list. We prefer a coach with a private toilet. Some coaches have an open bath plan. Depending on how many friends or kids accompany you on a trip, the floor plan, especially the bath area becomes an important consideration.

If you spend little time in one spot, and tend to use the coach for travel slides may actually be a negative. They are complex, add weight, and increase maintenance costs. This is especially true if the coach is used by a couple and when parked they spend most of the time outdoors under the awnings. But if you are likely to spend several days at a time in one spot slides add interior floor space that makes the use of the coach feel less crowded.

Should the living room have two sofas? Or what about a sofa and a lounge chair with a desk for a computer? If you intend to do business on the road via a computer having a place to use as a work station may find its way to the top of the wish list.

If you bring your furry family members with you your wish list may include hard surfaced floors so muddy paw prints do not become an issue. Carpeting quickly gets soiled if pets are on board.

The point is to figure out what is important, not only in terms of floor plan, accessories, and body size and style, but in condition. Not every Prevost (except new ones) will be perfect. Not only in features, accessories and colors, but in its condition. As part of your list defining what you need recognize your willingness to accept wear and tear or some defects. Coaches for sale in the market place, regardless of age represent the full range of ownership care. If you know you do not want to buy a coach that in itself will initially seem overwhelming and then be faced with having to do repairs or upgrades make that a part of your wish list. While I feel capable of making changes or repairs to a coach, I do not want to start out with a recent purchase having to restore it to the condition we consider acceptable.

If on the other hand you are willing to handle some repairs, you can expect to negotiate a better price in exchange for accepting what might be cosmetic faults, or even broken components or systems. If you are willing to accept a less than perfect coach at least do the homework to determine what it will cost to deal with the problems.

So now let's assume you have created your list of wants and needs based on how you perceive to want to use the coach. If you haven't already, take the time to introduce yourself on internet forums or to owners and ask questions. Nobody can create a list of wants and needs for you, but all owners can offer opinions as to why you need to consider the various features found on Prevost conversions. You will find owners are typically very loyal to their coach's converter, and will often defend how their coaches are equipped. Learn how to evaluate those opinions in the context of what you think you want. One good way to separate emotion from factual answers is to ask hard questions.

Just because an owner prefers something compared to something else doesn't mean he is correct. It might be he has no experience with any other system, or he is just repeating what he has heard. It might also mean he really can support his preference based on how he uses his coach. By asking owners to explain why they prefer one feature over another you develop a better appreciation for certain features, and may actually realize others are not acceptable to you.

One often debated topic for example is the use of roof air conditioners versus split systems like Cruiseairs. Cruiseairs have the condensing units mounted in the bay, and the evaporator system up in the "house". They are quiet, durable, and work well when parked. But roof airs have the entire AC unit combined into a single roof mounted unit. They can be noisy (but not always), and are usually not built to the same standards as Cruiseairs. But a Cruiseair does not work as well when driving on a hot highway that is radiating heat. Roof air units work well up in clean relatively cool air over the roof. This is important because if the bus has OTR, Cruiseairs are fine. If it does not have a whole bus engine driven AC system (OTR output is in excess of 80,000 to 109,000 BTU) then roof airs might be a better choice.

When you are trying to sort out questions such as the above you have to make a conscious choice as to what you want or need and the best way to decide is to deal with facts combined with your understanding of how you will use the coach.

There are many different ways to build a conversion and while they may vary a lot, the end result is likely to be the same. Some coaches use a heating system called Aquahot. It heats the interior when parked, but it also heats water replacing the traditional HW heater. Some coaches use a device called a Webasto which

accomplishes the same thing. Aquahot transfers heat to its own heating fluid, where Webasto transfers heat directly to engine coolant. Both fluids circulate through the coach and both accomplish the same thing. If you know about or have experience with motor home systems your list might include the systems you prefer. Just remember the more detailed the list and the less flexible you are in what you want the smaller number of coaches available to meet your requirements. Another piece of the free advice: Keep an open mind when questioning others so you can list those things truly important.

When you actually begin looking at coaches with your list in hand you will begin to recognize your list may have defined the coach you have to focus on. As previously mentioned if OTR is a must, you can almost rest assured the coach you will buy will be a Liberty Conversion. If you really want an all wood interior it is a safe bet the coach you buy will be a Royale. If you insist on a Series 60 engine with no emissions devices you will have limited the model years. Most of the important things that end up on a list of wants and needs tend to define the model, model year(s), the converter, and price.

As you look all over the internet for coaches it will not take long to recognize what is available within your budget and how those available coaches match up to your list of needs. You may have to modify your budget or your list. As a buyer in today's economy it should be understood up front that the asking price on most coaches may not reflect what it will sell for. The point is if the coach you are seriously considering is outside your means do not hesitate to offer what you can afford even if it is not close. Sellers were once buyers so they know all about budgets and price negotiating.

There are three places to buy a coach. You can buy one from a private individual. Private sales place a burden on the buyer unless agreed upon terms placing responsibility for the condition of the coach are on the seller. It is rare when a private seller accepts responsibility once money changes hands so a buyer must accept responsibility for the coach condition once the dollars are in the seller's hands. Because of this a pre-purchase inspection is highly recommended. I have yet to come in contact with a seller that openly states the maintenance program was lousy. In fact almost every coach advertised will claim Prevost maintained, or excellent maintenance history, or words to that effect.

The reality is the burden is on the seller to prove the claims. Unless you have documentation a coach you are pursuing has various maintenance events up to date you may be faced with thousands of dollars of cost to bring things up to date. So in a private purchase my advice is to make any price contingent on a complete inspection and an agreement it is as the seller is representing it to be or the price will be adjusted or the seller will repair the defect.

Buying a coach from a dealer, especially a dealer that routinely sells Prevost conversions is a little less risky. Most reputable dealers will go out of their way to present a coach in excellent condition with everything working. They may not have access or possession of maintenance records so the same cautionary advice about maintenance should be heeded. With a dealer you are in a better position to negotiate a warranty or an as-is purchase. They do not get emotional when you point out defects and recognize fixing them may be part of their responsibility as sellers.

I have learned however some dealers that sell motor homes and just happen to have a Prevost on the lot may actually know little about a Prevost conversion. As a buyer don't be afraid to do a little checking on the dealer and don't accept everything the salesman might say about the coach. You as a buyer still have to bring your "A" game to the table. Some dealers however are very good, have an excellent reputation and go out of their way to do right by their customers. A few conversations on a forum usually reveals who you can feel comfortable dealing with and who you need to be a little wary of. But dealing with a dealer will generally place less of a burden on you as long as you "trust but verify".

The third way to buy a coach is from the converter. Every converter has trade-in coaches and that inventory of used coaches is likely to be sold with the converters support. Not all the time depending on your negotiations, but usually they stand behind the coach, especially if they did the conversion. You still have to inspect the coach, you still have to know the maintenance status and you still need to do your due diligence but you will likely get the greatest peace of mind purchasing your coach from a converter.

In the above three scenarios I mentioned learning the coach's maintenance status and I mentioned an inspection. Both are very important because of the dollars that are involved. Some maintenance events like changing the transmission fluid or engine coolant is very expensive. In fact if you use the Prevost maintenance schedule as a guide you will see there are mileage and date triggered maintenance events that need to be done. Not only are you exposed to the cost of doing them if they have not been done, you may pay the price for repairs not needed if they had been done on time.

A coach may look pretty and have a nice wax job and a lot of tire dressing on the tires, but it is how it is maintained that really counts. No matter how smitten you may be with the appearance of the coach make certain you understand fully the real beauty in a coach is a well documented maintenance program. In case you missed it, let me repeat: No matter how smitten you may be with the appearance of the coach make certain you understand fully the real beauty in a coach is a well documented

maintenance program. Without documentation assume no maintenance has been done and that YOU will be responsible for bringing it up to date.

A coach inspection can be done in any number of ways. For some specific recommendations on procedures I wrote an article on inspecting a coach that is in the articles section of Prevost Community. I won't get into details here, but regardless of how the inspection is performed it is important that it gets done systematically and if possible by following a check list. Some examples can also be found on the Prevost Community web site under articles.

I have done the inspections on coaches I purchased in two ways. On my first coach I had no confidence I even knew enough to do an inspection so I asked a converter (who did not build the coach) to do the inspection. Both he and his wife helped me and my wife not only inspect the coach, but to learn about the various systems and how they worked. In doing the inspection he operated every switch, button, knob and dial and explained what he was doing and how it was to work.

While I was working with the converter, his wife was working with my wife operating and explaining all of the devices and systems she would need to understand. With the four of working we went until 10:00 at night before the inspection was done. But in the end I knew everything worked and the coach was in excellent shape. This was a private sale.

By the time we bought our second coach I had been doing all my own repairs and maintenance on my first coach so I did the inspection myself. I did almost all of the inspection at the dealership but the dealer was willing to have his driver put the coach over the pit (in my garage) so I could do the inspection of the mechanicals. It checked out very well and I identified a few needed repairs which the dealer did at his expense. Since no maintenance records were available the dealer went so far as to provide me with every drop of fluid needed, all replacement belts and filters and generally everything needed to put the maintenance status of the entire coach back to zero. The purchase from a dealer was actually a very pleasant transaction.

The current coach raised the bar in every respect. I bought it from Liberty Coach and they were the ones that built it from a new shell. The coach was significantly more complex than our previous two. I had access to the records, but knew I needed a detailed inspection but also detailed training. I provided a listing of how I would inspect the coach and using that as a guide Liberty provided the training on the coach and its systems, while the systems were being inspected. It was two intense days of effort, but when we were done I knew it needed no maintenance because it was completely up to date and I knew everything worked. I was still in awe of the coach and its new systems, but confident if something failed to work it was operator

error and not a failed system or device.

Far too often we see new owners make their first post on a forum, and it is usually a question about a device or system that should have been a basic part of the pre-purchase inspection. The question usually indicates the owner did no pre-purchase inspection. That new owner's inspection probably involved finding the key so he could hop in and drive away. It is likely his first few years of ownership are going to be both expensive and unpleasant. Free advice: Don't be that guy.

If you are new to Prevost ownership and have reached this point in the experience you are overwhelmed and have every right to be. The early days of Prevost conversion ownership can be compared to drinking from a fire hose. There is so much to learn it seems like you will never get it. The good news is every owner has gone through the experience, some multiple times and they are the greatest resource for information, comfort, sympathy and understanding. Never be afraid of asking a "dumb" question. We all have been where you are or will be. In fact ask a lot of questions prior to buying your coach to help you know what you don't know. On our first coach, the first few weeks after the purchase I was so intimidated by the coach I did not even know what I did not know and unlike today there was no easy access via the internet to talk to other owners. In fact we didn't know another owner until months after we bought our first coach. Today there are numerous ways to continue the learning about your new coach using the Prevost Car web site which offers on line access to operator, owner and service manuals, pneumatic and electrical diagrams, and access to technical information relating to almost all components. In addition the use of on line forums will give an owner the opportunity to ask questions of many Prevost owners and enthusiasts.

Once you own your Prevost you have entered a new world. Literally. Ownership of a Prevost coach puts you in a group of people who almost exclusively are hard working, smart folks who became successful through hard work. Their backgrounds may vary but the common thread is Prevost owners earned their coaches the way they earned their success.

No matter what your objectives were when you decided to buy your coach, one thing you should do is begin to develop relationships. Take advantage of the various social groups of Prevost owners to attend rallies and learn from others who have owned their coach(s) for a while. We have developed friendships with other Prevost owners all over the country. Our friendships now go beyond the coach and we visit one another and share a lot of good times.

More experienced owners learn about their coach, develop lists of people to service or repair the coach, have places they like to visit, and things they like to do with the

coach. By maintaining a relationship with other Prevost owners you will flatten the learning curve and things that might seem to be problems may in fact be normal or easily resolved.

Here is some more of that free advice. Nobody will know or care as much about your coach as you do. Nobody. It is up to you to insure it gets the care it needs. If nothing else either learn how to do some or all the maintenance work yourself, or develop a team of professionals you trust to do it for you. You are dealing with two major products, one being the Prevost chassis, and the second being the motor home conversion. Don't expect a Prevost expert to do repairs to the "house", and do not expect people with expertise in the converter's portion of the coach to deal with mechanical issues on the Prevost chassis. If you do you are likely to be disappointed.

Actually you need more than "house" or "bus" experts. You need people with expertise in the engine, the transmission, the generator, house air conditioners and appliances, tires, etc. Often the advice on forums about who is best for certain repairs is accurate, but keep in mind that a fellow owner who recommends a service facility in Texas isn't going to help you much if you live in New Jersey. Adding to the advice offered above make certain you do not think a technician that works on Mack trucks or on RVs at Camping World will possess the expertise to work on your Prevost or Marathon conversion. The differences between a Prevost conversion and conventional RVs and other heavy diesel powered vehicles are numerous and you may be paying for on the job training at best, and paying someone else to undo the damage at worst.

Depending on how you use the coach an owner may wish to develop a list of support services near home base, or if the coach is used for full timing for example, a list of support services with national outlets may be important. One aid to creating a national list is to go on line and find lists of service locations for the various systems and components. Clearly keeping lists of Prevost service center locations, Detroit Diesel dealers, etc. is going to be very helpful. Most of us travel with computers and internet access so all we need to do is bookmark the sites.

There is no single definition of the Prevost lifestyle. Each of us has a Prevost coach for our own reasons. We have used ours as a motor home solely for our personal use and enjoyment. But we also used it extensively for business purposes using it to do trade shows and seminars.. We know of others who have bought a coach while relatively young and full timed in the coach, traveling the entire country while home schooling the kids. Still others use the coach to entertain customers while at major events like NASCAR races. The lifestyle is what the coach owner chooses it to be.

Those who use the coach as a motor home use it year round visiting the northern

states while the weather is warm, and heading to the south when winter arrives. Some travel a lot, others limit where they go to a few favorite RV parks or campgrounds. Some will do primitive camping in style (such as at Quartzite), others will go from luxury RV park site to luxury RV park site. Owners visit family, friends, and pursue special interests like car auctions or civil war reenactments We have made personal use of our coach in almost any way possible, but for me the lifestyle goes beyond using it as a second moveable home. I use our coach as a hobby. I enjoy maintaining it myself, doing all my own repairs and generally expanding my knowledge of how it works and how to fix it.

For some owners it is their only home. They have reached a point in their lives where they are in a position to sell their conventional home and will use their Prevost as their only residence. It is common for “full timers” to establish a state of residence that provides them with the most benefits yet rarely if ever set foot in that state. Full timers have the option of naming a domicile that may offer tax advantages, or other benefits that suit them. Some opt for states with no sales tax so they shelter money that might be used for the sales tax on the coach. Montana comes to mind when I say this, but there are others.

Some want to shelter themselves from state income taxes. States such as Texas, Florida, and Tennessee for example have no personal income taxes as well as some other states. Full timers downsize their possessions and hit the road. Some will own a lot or lots in RV parks so they have a place they can call home, others have no base of operations at all.

Whether full timing or using the coach for limited time periods such as to attend a rally, some conduct business from the coach. We know of a lot of people who use the coach full or part time to conduct business. There is no limit to how owners use their coach with some merely making occasional use to touch base with customers, and some working in the coach all week via internet connections and then spending time being tourists at wherever the coach is parked.

When we bought our first coach we were in our late 40's. We quickly realized that at that time almost every other Prevost owner we met as 10 or 20 years older than us. Despite the lack of widespread internet, we still used our coach extensively for business, taking advantage of where we were to enjoy exploring an area on days we weren't doing a trade show or putting on a seminar.

Today we see younger owners connected to the internet living and working and raising their kids in the coach. As long as there is internet and cell phone signals Prevost owners are able to manage their businesses. Twenty years ago owners used the coach as a motor home and stayed in touch with the business back home via pay

phones, bag phones, or FedEx. Today the coach can become the home office while serving the role as motor home, primary home and executive transport. Only the owner's imagination will limit how a coach is used and what the lifestyle is. What cannot be done in an article like this is to tell you how to use your coach, how to make the Prevost lifestyle work for you, or where to find advice on how. The options are limitless.

Think of any coach as a blank canvas. You can modify any coach to your particular needs. Owners have changed their coaches to add bunks for the kids, to add workstations so they could travel and work. Owners have added large satellite dishes for the transfer of data. Others have converted a bay for a play room for the kids, or a kennel for show dogs. Others have figured out how to store golf carts or motorcycles in the bay. Coaches have been equipped with a roof mounted platform to view air shows or races. Businesses that require more than a computer and a cell phone have been housed in large stacker trailers that will hold the family car when on the road, but which become the workshop when parked.

Each method of enjoying the Prevost lifestyle requires the owner to adapt to the circumstances. For someone on the road all the time they need to figure how to deal with things like medical care. That is rarely a concern for owners who take one or two week trips during the year since they always return to their professionals at their home base. Full timers need to figure out how to get their snail mail. One thing everybody has to worry about is how much to bring. Some full timers bring clothes appropriate for their location, and then if going to a warmer or cooler climate they box up their clothes and ship them to a friend or family member who sends back a box of clothes appropriate for the weather. Or the whole family just heads to Walmart.

With so much available on line, including banking, medicines, bill paying, etc. there are very few limits to how an owner chooses to use the coach.

As owners meet friends on line on the various Prevost forums, or at rallies all owners regardless of whether they full time or use the coach a week or two at a time will find places to stop, often with hookups, all over the country. We have spent many nights parked in the driveway of friends, and we have had friends in our driveway.

Now that our use of the coach is akin to just motor homing we rarely cook in the coach. We use the outdoor grille a lot, but rather than cook inside, we typically just eat out. Full timers and people using the coach for long periods for business may prefer to cook in the coach. While it is unlikely anyone is going to prepare a full Thanksgiving dinner for 20 in the coach, there really is not much that cannot be cooked in the typical coach. Most microwaves are also convection ovens. Most coaches have a minimum of a two element range. Our first coach had a three burner

gas range. With a few appliances like a Panini maker or a crock pot meals can easily be prepared in the coach.

We have traveled for 5 weeks at a time, we have brought our pup with us, we have used our coaches just like a home. We have done our own laundry in our washer and dryer. We bring our Direct TV with us and have the coach set up with a phone system just like at home. We have cooked in the coach. We have been sick in the coach and had to seek medical help. We have partied in and at the coach. I have done business from the coach spending hours on the computer and phone. I have brought the coach inside exhibit halls to unload our convention trade show display booth. In other words the coach has been a motor home, a hobby and a business tool. Only our imaginations limit how we choose to use the coach for a lifestyle.

The Prevost Lifestyle is wonderful.

Jon W. Wehrenberg
April 24, 2013