

YOGASLACKERS AND THE PEACELOVECAR: RIDING TINY, LIVING BIG

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RACKPACK

YOGASLACKERS

A 1988 Ford Festiva is a small car. Super small. At 28 square feet, it's efficient and easy to park, but not much of a living space. But the YogaSlackers made it a mini mobile home – and office, and gear hauler, and spreader of good vibes.

For ten years, Sam Salwei – one of the original YogaSlackers – has made it his adventure mobile. For the last five of the years, he's shared the 28 square feet with fellow YogaSlacker, Raquel Hernández-Cruz.

YogaSlackers is a group of folks – almost 150 of them – all over the world who teach yoga, slacklining, acro-yoga, conditioning, and various combos of all of it. It started with Sam Salwei and Jason Magness, back when they owned a climbing gym in North Dakota. They are still grass-rootsy, but since their founding in 2005, YogaSlackers has taught slacklining to over 30,000 people and at over 40 festivals worldwide.

But enough about the humans, you're here for the car...



Meet the Peace Love Car – "A Dirtbag's Dream"

Here's how Sam says the Peace Love Car – PLC – came to be: "The car was purchased by Jason's brother for \$400, then passed down to Jason, and then to me. It was never intended to become my home. Just like Slackline Yoga found us, this car found me and provided me with the opportunity to travel.

" Sam considers it a special little car. "It has a salvage title – meaning that someone declared it officially dead. Seems like dying once made this car truly immortal. Since I got it for free, I treated it as a disposable car. But, after a while, we realized this car is awesome – let's change the oil every so often and fix a few things to make it run better."

Being able to do simple modifications allowed Sam to sleep in it, freeing him to travel throughout North America without having to 'return home'. And it delivered in ways only small cars can. "Empty it gives around 35 mpg, and when it breaks parts are very cheap. Plus no one ever thinks there is someone sleeping inside this car." This allows Sam to pull over pretty much anywhere without being asked to move on.

"It's a dirtbag's dream."



The Transformation

Festivas are not designed to be mobile homes. So how did this one become an adventure mobile spreading the gospel of peace, love and YogaSlacking? It started with a spray paint.

"The first thing that happened was that Jason gave his high school students a few cans of spray paint and said 'go ahead; decorate the car'. They wrote 'Peace, Love and be Happy'... this officially nicknamed the car the Peace Love Car. Then the stickers slowly started materializing."

Then Sam tweaked the interior. "I trimmed the headrest connection point to allow the front seat to lay down and meet the backseat creating a perfectly flat bed. I added extra padding with camping sleeping pads and a sleeping bag and I was good to go!"

He packed his climbing gear and hit the road. With time he accumulated more gear and required a bit more space. "I installed a RocketBox on a homemade roof rack. This pretty much allowed me to have all my worldly possessions and opened up space to either drive some friends or sleep with ease. I also modified a Yakima bike rack to transport two bikes inside the back. That's pretty much all I did until somehow I convinced a Raquel to travel with me in the PLC."

To accommodate her – and make sure he didn't lose her in the first trip – Sam upgraded the camping mat to a memory foam mattress, installed a home battery system, a solar panel, a small fridge and a second cargo box." We were set to travel for the summer... and somehow, five years later, we are still together."



Creating Their Smaller Hauler

"The SkyBoxes are definitely what allows us to convert any vehicle into a road trip machine," says Sam. The Yakima boxes add an additional thirty-one cubic feet of storage space and make life in a subcompact car possible. "With the boxes, we can literally carry everything we own everywhere we go. If you are traveling to play, take all your gear with you. There's nothing more frustrating than getting to some location and not having the gear you need. Plus, having your gear will encourage you to use it more. We are able to keep all our gear neatly packed on top of the car. And we have tons."

"One other particular item that we adore," adds Raquel, "is the ability to switch the Core Locks to use the Same Key System. We currently have two boxes, bike rack, eight towers, bike locks, locking straps – that's over sixteen different locks that we can open with the same key. This is great!"

Pro Tip: Packing for Your Road Trip

Here's how Sam suggests choosing what you need to create your own mini-adventure mobile:

- Pack heavy – if you leave gear behind, you leave fun behind
- Lay it out – pull out everything that you would love to take, spread it out, and measure it
- Go big – get the cargo box that will comfortably store all your gear, then...
- Go bigger – go up a size (or use two boxes) for the things you'll gather down the road
- Keep track – as time goes on you'll learn what you don't need, shed it and add new stuff



Living La Vida Small Car

Tiny car living isn't for everyone. But Sam has some ideas how – and why – it has appeal.

"We didn't set out to prove that you can live in any car, we just kind of did it. There's one thing that always pains us to hear and is people saying that they don't have the time or money to travel. They think they have to wait to buy the perfect vehicle, while in reality with a little imagination – they can convert any vehicle into their perfect road trip machine." Smaller haulers offer efficiency. "The less you spend in gas the more money you will have for food and other expenses... essentially increasing the amount of time you will be able to travel"

Then comes stealth factor. "The PLC gives us the ability to park and sleep pretty much anywhere. The car is so small that no one ever believes that one person – let alone two – are sleeping inside. Truly opening the world to you as your home: from campgrounds, to store parking lots, to downtown New York City to uptown. Most people don't know we are there, therefore they don't care."

But there are drawbacks. "The least awesome part of living on a subcompact car is not always having a toilet next to your bed for when you need it," shares Sam. "If we are parked in the woods it is no problem, but parked in cities our bladders get a workout."

"What keeps us on the road more than anything is the ability to connect with wonderful people everywhere you go," says Raquel. "People often asks us what place is best, or where we would like to settle and we can't honestly answer that. The more you travel, the bigger your community – your home – becomes. We love the fact that we can truly say not that we live nowhere but that we live everywhere. Home is where we are."



Legends Never Die

Facts must be faced – the PLC is getting worn down. When asked if Peace Love Cars last forever, Sam is sure they do – in one way or another.

"Last forever? Yes. If not in their own life, they last forever in the minds of those that have seen it. We have still not seen one person that has not reacted to the Peace Love Car. People either love it or hate it, but either way, they speak about it. Therefore, our Peace Love Car will live forever. And we want to make sure that the legend of the Peace Love Car continues to inspire people to get outside and travel. We started doing this through a series of videos about the car... and we are working on a film about it."

But reality has set in, and it is time to find a new home. "After over ten years on the road – five with Raquel – we decided that we needed at least a twin sized bed. We purchased a 1988 Mitsubishi Delica. Same year as the PLC. We hope to get this Delica – purchased with a hundred thousand kilometers – to a million.

The Slacker Van has no stickers – yet. "Oh, we are not against it," says Raquel. "Maybe one day we'll feel inspired and open a few cans of spray paint too."



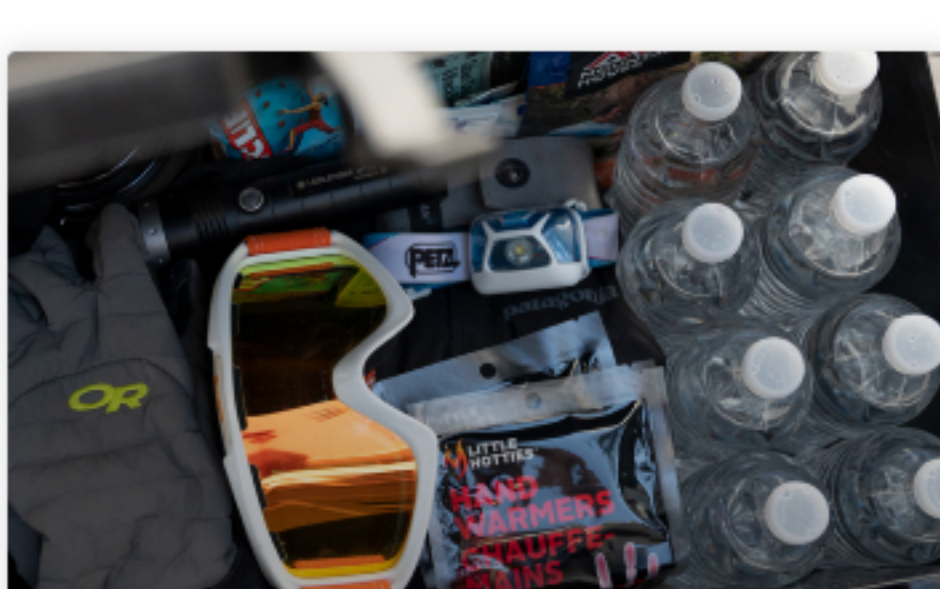
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