

CHARLOTTE FIVE

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Why this couple went across the country to buy an Airstream — then named it and gave it a social media account



By [Katie Toussaint](#) -

It wasn't until Jenny Vallimont bought plane tickets to Portland, Ore. in 2015 that her husband, Josh, started to take her urge to buy an Airstream seriously. She had already been emailing the trailer's owner, Brian, who lived 2,800 miles away from their house in Charlotte. A house that, after 10 years, had become jam-packed with the couple, their three dogs and their two kids. A house that, Vallimont thought, would pair quite nicely with a vintage camper that could serve as a guest house and weekend getaway mobile. And maybe even a home office.

Josh, the more grounded of the two (Jenny's the adventurous one in the relationship), was open-minded.

“If it was up to me we’d probably be living on a beach with our kids in Costa Rica,” she said.

Instead, the two flew to Portland to pick up the 1976 Airstream Argosy that the owner, Brian, had acquired on [his own whimsical, 100-mile adventure](#). He had fixed up the interior, treating it as, [he wrote](#), “a blank canvas to begin anew,” complete with a kitchen area and stove, a shower, a bed and a table. ([Take the tour here.](#)) Unfortunately, due to poor health, he was ready to give it up.

The Vallimonts, inspired by Brian’s story, landed in Portland, picked up that blank canvas, hitched it to a U-Haul and hefted it across the country back home.

Never mind the fact that, every time they took a hard turn, they had to stop the truck, hop out and plug the rig back in.

“I call it dedication,” Jenny said.

And while some people might call it “crazy” to name the Airstream, give it a website (see www.larkandleigh.com) and give it an Instagram account (follow [@larkandleigh](#)) on top of repainting the exterior and decorating the interior, Jenny, who has a background in corporate real estate and general contracting, calls it branding. She currently works in impacting consulting with Gökotta, LLC, managing the creation and execution of specialty projects in an effort to bring positive change to the environment and community, mainly with the real estate industry.

The name “Lark and Leigh” was inspired by a branding option with a previous work project, so Jenny took it and ran with it. The word “Lark” matched the Airstream’s bought-on-a-whim background, and the name “Leigh” is her middle name, and therefore a nice fit.



Brian had already created a website for the Airstream under a different name, with the story of his renovation. That's how the Vallimonts found it in the first place.

“He’s really kind of driven by story, which I am,” Jenny said.

She redesigned the website with all his content included, then she added to the story as her own unfolded. The Instagram account came to fruition on the way out to Portland to capture the journey.

You can see [evidence of a problematic trailer hitch](#) they encountered in Portland, [bridges sweeping overhead](#) on their road trip home, and, later, [a family camping trip](#) and more.

Over the years, they've used Lark and Leigh as a family camping mobile to the mountains, then as a permanently parked guest house (they had to rebuild the fence at home to accommodate it in the backyard). It became too tightly fit to bother pulling it out for more adventures, so it remained as a guest house, and an occasional home office.



Photos courtesy of @larkandleigh on Instagram

Jenny would bring her laptop out there and tap into the WiFi at the house.

“It was a good place to go and just be quiet,” she said.

larkandleigh

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larkandleigh The desk is coming together. Replaced the spring in my vintage desk lamp and added one of my new plants. #airstream #airstreamlife #airstreamreno #liveriveted #airstreamrenovation #argosy #vintage #trailer #tinyhome #tinyhouse #argosyairstream #rvlife #desk #plants

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20 MONTHS AGO

The next chapter

But it wasn't as functional as it could have been, with the lack of air conditioning for guests and the potential awkwardness of professional meetings (read: there's a bed in her home office space). While working on a project at Camp North End this year, Jenny was suddenly inspired once again to give the Airstream a new home.

It had been up for sale for about a month, and she was hoping to land it with a unique buyer, when the industrial site's developer, ATCO Properties & Management, expressed an interest in using Airstreams on the property for temporary office and studio spaces.

It was the perfect fit.

Lark and Leigh went on display during the [Vintage Charlotte Summer Market](#) at the site this month, and is now settling into its new home at Camp North End.

[\[Related: Why are adorable goats living at Camp North End?\]](#)

Jenny and Josh will help with some renovations to make it a true office (sans shower, bed and stove, for starters).

"The sky is the limit as far as what you could use it for," she said. "For me, that's my business. My business is all about innovation, creativity and environmental work and that is really what that Airstream represents."

ATCO developer Damon Hemmerdinger confirmed that Lark and Leigh will be one of multiple Airstreams available for Camp North End tenants, who can use them as retail spaces, studio spaces or production spaces in the Boileryard area. Airstreams are a great way to jumpstart small, available spaces onsite, he pointed out. The Boileryard area can likely accommodate three to five of the tiny "offices."

When Jenny parked Lark and Leigh at its new home and drove away, she cried.

"it's a place," she said. "And I'm all about memories being created, and relationships and connections happening."

And so, the next adventure of Lark and Leigh begins.

Featured photo courtesy of [@larkandleigh](#) on Instagram.