

PICKIN' AND GRINNIN'

The summer heat seemed to follow us from our Southern California home as we worked our way along the majestic Sierra Nevada on U.S. Highway 395. Our destination was Mammoth Mountain RV Park in Mammoth Lakes, a town that offers splendid RVing opportunities once the snow melts. As we settled into our site, we heard the sound of guitars filtering through the trees. We quickly discovered that a large group of RVers had congregated in adjacent sites for a weekend of jamming.

In the warm evening, all the musicians gathered in a circle to play, while the numbers of onlookers from other sites grew rapidly. It didn't take long to transform this mountain campground into a mini music festival site and transcend this camping community into musical bliss. How lucky for us to have picked that weekend to be in Mammoth.

MUSIC IS CERTAINLY A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE, AND WITHOUT A DOUBT BRINGS SMILES TO RVERS IN JUST ABOUT ANY SETTING

There's something magical about sharing beautiful — and especially natural — settings with a strumming guitar and voices singing old camping favorites. Let's face it, singing around a campfire is about as American as apple pie. Even the cowboys played their beat-up guitars, blew into hand harps and sang the nights away to the sound of howling coyotes. The coyotes don't serenade us too often these days, and it's always comical when our campfire participants hit the wrong chord or sing out of tune. But that's part of the experience, and nothing a good s'more won't fix.

As a guitar player, I always enjoy meeting fellow pickers who might want to jam in camp. Since I never leave home without my guitar, I make sure to carve out space for it when I pack for a camping trip. I have even rigged up



ways to stash a gig bag in out-of-the-way places using straps to attach the bag to the ceiling or wall. Motorhome enthusiasts who don't have the luxury of huge pass-through storage know how difficult it can be to stash odd-shaped items. When I discovered the Voyage-Air guitar, a full-size acoustic guitar that folds at the neck and stores in a clever bag that's easy to stow, the paradigm changed.

Until I found the Voyage-Air, I considered one of the diminutive guitar models that are designed for backpackers, looked at guitars designed for youngsters and even bought a couple of travel guitars. But none of them provided the big sound that most players desire, especially when making music outside. When you read the article by Preston Gratiot (page 23), you'll see just how well the Voyage-Air fits the bill as an RVer's travel guitar. He also provides a few tips on how to keep from damaging your guitar while playing outside and especially around a fire.

Music plays a big role in planning our trips throughout the year. My wife, Lynne, and I are big fans of traditional jazz and literally follow the festival circuit when our schedule allows. We've attended bluegrass festivals, which can be quite lively, and traveled to cities just to attend special concerts.

But by far our most memorable trips are those where fellow RVers pull out their instruments and jam until quiet time forces the guitars and voices to be silenced. Music is certainly a universal language, and without a doubt brings smiles to RVers in just about any setting — and enhances the senses already afforded by the great outdoors. ♦

MOTORHOME

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MotorHome (ISSN 0744-074X) is published monthly by TL Enterprises, 2575 Vista Del Mar Drive, Ventura, CA 93001. Periodicals postage is paid at Ventura, CA 93001 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription price for U.S.: \$19.97 for 1 year. All other countries, including Canada and Mexico: \$31.97 for 1 year.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MotorHome, P.O. Box 5860, Harlan, IA 51593-1360.

Publication Sales Agreement No. 1488163. Canadian Post Sales Agreement No. 40012332. Canadian return address: Affinity Group, Inc., 4960-2 Walker Road, Windsor, Ontario N9A 6J3.

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