

In the Western HOME

VAN LIFE, FAMILY- STYLE

IT WAS A LONGTIME DREAM for Bob and Kris Galmarini of San Anselmo, California, to own a vintage Volkswagen Westfalia, that nostalgic symbol of the American road trip. No matter that the 1976 model they found online sported a rusted exterior, or that it required a tow from its previous home in Minnesota. With the goal of preserving as much of its retro charm as possible, the couple slowly invested in a renovation. The result is a highway-ready vehicle for their brood: 11-year-old Neve, 7-year-old Shepard, and 1-year-old Sebastian. "We wanted to make it more comfortable for our family without taking away from its original beauty," says Kris, who designs ethically made clothing under the label Neve & Hawk. While additional seat belts and a rack were par for the course, the couple also splurged on a few key items, including a removable solar panel so they could power up off the grid. Still, "we deliberately did not restore the van to perfection," says Bob, senior creative director at software company Zendesk. "If it were perfect, we would never want to use it." —Chantal Lamers

Maxi Circle mat, \$120; gathre.com. Kermit Chair, \$189; kermitchair.com. Mercado Tote, \$125; the-citizenry.com. Spider Rock Spa Towel, \$50; pendleton-usa.com. Renovation, vdbclassics.com. Clothing, neveandhawk.com.



ROAD RULES

1. KEEP IT FRESH

From the start, Bob couldn't shake the idea of pairing the new soft-gray exterior with baseball-glove-leather interior upholstery. "Sand brushes off easily, and spills are simple to clean," he says. "This is so much better than the standard factory-issue plaid fabric." The roof-rack-mounted solar shower is also handy after a trip to the beach. Road Shower, from \$300; roadshower.com. Bare Decor solid teak 35.5" x 19.75" mat, \$105; amazon.com. Gypsy Beach Blanket by Slowtide, \$50; neveandhawk.com. 303 Kid's Board Shorts in navy, \$49; birdwell.com.

2. ADD PRACTICAL TOUCHES

A new bamboo shelf near the passenger seat functions as a charging station. "It was crucial for us to have outlets all over the bus so we could stay connected," says Bob. "The power is sourced from our alternate battery, so we never have to worry about draining the engine." Speaking of engines, the bus can be quite loud, so the couple added sound-absorbing cork flooring that's sustainable, flexible, and durable. "Having something that wears well and can take a beating is important," advises Bob. Macadamia Plank Cork Flooring, \$3.48/sq. ft.; home depot.com. Bamboo



Under Dash Parcel Shelf, \$120; busdepot.com. The Sunny Hills Mug by Miles Holbert, \$44; neveandhawk.com.

3. MIX OLD AND NEW

"It turns out the engineers at Volkswagen were pretty darn good at optimizing the space," says Bob, explaining why he and Kris opted to hang on to most of the existing configuration.

But their primary reason for letting the vintage built-ins go untouched? "It's less stressful to worry about furniture that's already scratched and beat up a bit." Playing off the palette, Kris layered on color. Alternating between vintage fringed African mud cloth and dyed shibori samples from her studio, she sewed narrow rod pockets and draped the fabric from wire to form curtains. Natural

Dye in Indigo, from \$7.69/2 oz.; dharmatrading.com.

4. CREATE GAMES ON THE GO

Who needs screen time? Join the kids in road trip-friendly crafts like this DIY tic-tac-toe set, as well as easy sun prints, marbled journals, a nature-inspired memory game, and more: sunset.com/campcrafts. ▽

PROP STYLING: KAEJA KORTY