

Selling your Discovery by Nina Soltwedel

It's more than just a "for sale" ad

Sooner or later, it happens to each of us: we either want to get a new RV, or we've come to the point that RVing, sadly, is no longer an activity we can pursue. If we opt to sell the unit personally, there are obvious things we would do:

- **Gather** all paper materials which document the entire vehicle (that ubiquitous Fleetwood suitcase stuffed with all those manuals, etc., for starters).
- **List** all the pertinent details about the vehicle, such as amenities, modifications and/or upgrades, any outstanding warranties, new tires and/or batteries, added awnings, etc.
- **Note** current mileage, lack of pets/children/smoke, if it has always been garaged when not on the road, etc.
- **Take** high resolution color photographs of the exterior, and several of the interior.

That's all well and good, but there's one more step *before* taking the photos: **Stage your Discovery**. "What?" you say. "Staging? Isn't that what home sellers do? Why would I want to stage an RV?"

There's a simple reason, and it's the same reason savvy sellers stage their homes: to help the prospective buyer envision himself/herself living there. Like a house, when the RV has been personalized with those accents that make the current owner happy, a potential purchaser may have a difficult time "seeing" it as their space. Many shoppers may not be familiar with our beautiful Discoverys, so it's important to give them an uncluttered view of the coach's assets.

Take a long look at your surroundings

Stand in the middle of your Discovery and slowly turn in a circle. Make note of all the nice touches you've added to your beautiful RV. Obviously, you would never have added them if you didn't like them. But consider this: your taste may not be the purchaser's taste. I happen to be a fan of kokopellis and other Native American designs. If someone who likes Americana décor, for example, looked at our coach with the idea of perhaps buying it, all my "stuff" could prevent them from fully appreciating the D's interior.

So, what do you do? Simply stated, return the coach to its basic, uncluttered condition so that it looks as if no one lives there (apart from a few unobtrusive touches). That means:

- ✓ Remove family photographs and personalized items
- ✓ Remove plants and flowers and throw rugs
- ✓ Remove "themed" decorative items
- ✓ Replace that beautiful quilt on the bed with the original bedcover (if you still have it). If the original is not available, put a neutral cover on the bed.
- ✓ If your coach has a pull-out galley shelf, put it back



Living area before de-personalization



Living area after de-personalization – it sold shortly afterward!

under the counter to show the spaciousness of the interior.

- ✓ Clean - clean - clean. Counters and tables should be clear and clean. If any photo includes the floor, make sure the carpeting has been vacuumed before "shooting." (A previous sale photo on the DOAI website included an empty pop can on the counter and socks on the floor.)

"Shooting" the Discovery

When taking interior photographs, turn on **all** the lights and draw the blinds. Make sure you are not facing a reflective surface (the flashback can ruin your photo and the photo will include you). Take a second set of photos with all the blinds up (all the lights still on). The pictures should include views from all perspectives – the front looking back, the middle looking front, the middle looking back, the bathroom, and the bedroom from at least two positions. Take a lot of photos, and then judiciously cull the best for the ad. *See next page...*

Selling your Discovery, continued

When taking exterior photographs, include various views from both sides. Close the door. Take a couple of shots with the awnings out, and then take several with the awnings in. Take photos with the slides out, and then a couple with the slides in. Again, accumulate all the photos and choose one or two that best illustrate the exterior of your coach.

Advertising your coach

As a paid-up member of DOAI, you are entitled to have a free Discovery sale ad on the DOAI website, and the ad can include up to three photos. That's a real bonus because the sale page on the website is open to **everyone**, not just DOAI members. Your sale ad can be read by anyone seeking to purchase a good used motor coach. Therefore, including as much information in the sale ad as possible is important. There will be prospective viewers who may not know a Discovery from an Airstream. All the amenities that we take for granted (washer/dryer, Cummins or Caterpillar engine, Allison

transmission, slide-outs, Corian® counter tops, etc.) should be listed. And the online ads will be the place potential buyers can see those excellent photos you've supplied.

There are other venues to advertise your coach: Craigslist, eBay, etc. These have proven successful for some, and if you decide to utilize them, check each out very carefully. There are also reputable consignment dealers across the country. Again, check them out carefully before committing. (One of DOAI's membership sponsors, PPL Motor Homes, is a consignment seller.)

There's one more caveat to remember: **Seller beware**. Scam artists are "out there" and they are eager to take your money and your coach. DOAI Webmaster **Bob Cook** has included an excellent tutorial at the beginning of the online sale page. I urge you to read it before you put your coach up for sale. An informed seller is a safe seller. ❖

Nina is a fan of HGTV's various home-selling shows. She believes that how sellers prepare homes for sale can be a good approach for RV sellers, too. Thanks to the DOAI member who allowed us to publish the "before" and "after" photos.

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