

EnCompass

BY AAA COLORADO

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Retro travelers

Driving 'Candy' and 'Sundance' on a Western Slope road trip p. 32



**Colorado Getaways:
The way it was** p. 36

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© Carrie Patrick

The buildings in South Park City contain authentic artifacts from Colorado frontier life, like this Lexington clothes wringer.

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Glenwood Springs couple restores a 1961 Ford Galaxie Sunliner and 1962 Shasta Airflyte, paints them both candy apple red, and turns heads all along the Western Slope. **By Vicky Nash**

36 | Colorado Getaways: The way it was

The 40th anniversary of James Michener's *Centennial* next year put us in the mood this summer to explore Colorado's smaller museums.

Life on the Prairie Locals in northeast Colorado make up for their few numbers with a strong dedication to preserving the past.

By Susan Pfaltzgraff

Silver and Gold From Leadville to Fairplay is an unparalleled collection of gold rush/silver boom buildings, rail lines, mining structures, and much more. **By Steve Marsh**

Native Colorado Colorado history is rich with mining stories and Wild West tales, but the state's Native American story is sometimes overlooked. **By Heidi Kerr-Schlaefer**

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On the Cover: Richard and Vicky Nash consult a AAA map at sunrise, Grizzly Creek rest area, I-70 east of Glenwood Springs. © AAA/Tom Hess

Mini Tour:

Retro travel.



Onlookers in western Colorado swarm *Sundance* and *Candy*, a Glenwood Springs couple's restored convertible and vintage trailer, as they hit the road.



Destined for the dump, this trailer was literally splitting at the seams and had severe water damage.



An eye-catching duo at Hermit's Rest scenic overlook in Curecanti National Recreation Area.



Richard Nash could see the potential in this abandoned relic found behind a barn.

By Vicky Nash

When people see our 16-foot long 1962 Shasta Airflyte travel trailer for the first time, they respond as if they had just seen a sneezing panda. "How cute!" Yes, the cuteness factor is quite high. The red-and-white combination reminds me of a peppermint Starbrite, so her name is Candy.

Candy displays nostalgic travel paraphernalia inside, including period luggage, 1960s brochures and postcards, tacky souvenirs, camp blankets, red plaid thermos sets, glass Coca Cola bottles, and diner-esque tableware. Car-show enthusiasts selected her for "People's Choice" and "Ladies' Choice" awards at two consecutive Glenwood Springs Classic Car Shows.

My obsession with vintage travel trailers began 11 years ago after reading about a group of women who paint murals on old campers. But I only admired them from afar. I really like hotels.

A few years later, somehow I convinced my new husband, Richard, that it would be fun to buy a fixer-upper. He can repair anything. Plus he is a huge classic car buff. So the hail-damaged 1970 Shasta hunting trailer with camouflage curtains underwent a cosmetic transformation. When it went on the road, it was a big hit. We were hooked.

Shasta is our favorite breed because of the iconic silver wings. The search began for an earlier model shaped like a "canned ham." We rescued the 1962, doomed for the local dump, for \$100. A flat tire, broken jack, dilapidated interior, split seams, leaking roof, and damaged siding were just a few of the problems.

Nine months, and \$10,000

A custom home-builder by trade, Richard knows construction. So the demolition began and every inch was stripped down to the frame. The original parts became a template to painstakingly rebuild nearly every piece from the ground up. We salvaged much of the trim, hardware, and glass. Beautiful ash wood, coated with 5 gallons of amber shellac, became the interior walls, ceiling and cabinetry. Shiny new aluminum cut to exact dimensions adorn the roof and side panels. The coveted original wings proudly fly on the back.

A trip to the paint shop highlighted the famous Z pattern in red, silver and white. A soda fountain theme carries through the interior. Coordinating fabric for cushions and curtains were stitched together using a 1960s model sewing machine. Formica countertops and tables feature a boomerang pattern that complements the black-and-white checkerboard floor. Nine months (and \$10,000 in materials) later, Candy made her debut.

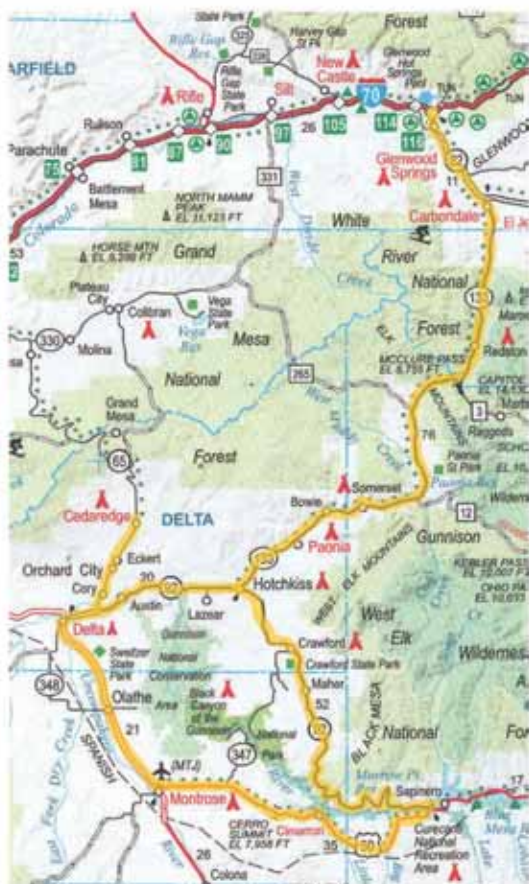
What Richard envisioned now was a matching tow vehicle. So he found a rusty 1961 Ford Galaxie Sunliner convertible behind a barn and also a twin "parts car." Imagine my "delight" to have not one, but two junk cars in the driveway! This full restoration included an engine and transmission overhaul, brakes, shocks, black-and-white upholstery, fresh chrome, soft top, a matching paint job in Ford Candy Apple Red, and a hitch with electronic brake control. Named Sundance, the ensemble was now complete.



© AAA/Tom Hess

'60s style

The distinctive fin and taillight of Richard Nash's restored 1961 Ford Galaxie Sunliner. He's also a fan of sixties Mustangs.



West Elk Loop scenic byway

Often asked, "Do you actually camp in this?" we say, "Yes, Candy is fully functional for the great outdoors." But this particular model has no bathroom or hot water. The cooling system consists of open windows and an outdated fan. Although the original advertisements claimed this floor plan "sleeps five comfortably," the compact size is pretty tight quarters for two 21st century adults.

Driving a 1961 convertible is also challenging. We sorely miss modern conveniences, like power

steering. This solid-metal car measures 17.5 feet long, a foot longer than the Shasta, so let's not even talk about gas mileage. And who needs air conditioning with the top down? Except when the window cranks malfunction. Good weather is always appreciated because the windshield wipers only make a 6-inch swipe.

EnCompass invited us to take Candy and Sundance on a retro road trip, but with our lack of camping experience, and the ensemble's limitations, we couldn't be too ambitious. We needed a plan.

In the end, we chose the West Elk Loop Scenic Byway, which includes one of the prettiest stretches of road anywhere. A section of CO-133 along the Crystal River near Hays Creek Falls is literally my favorite scenic drive in the state. The elevation made Richard slightly nervous, especially the climb over McClure Pass, elev. 8,763 feet. We took a deep breath and floored it, maxing out at 35 mph. We reached the summit, and then cruised downhill with ease. Whew!

Highlights of the day included fresh fruit, handmade chocolate and small-batch spirits.

We sampled **Big B's** juices and ciders at **Delicious Orchards Farm Market** in Hotchkiss. From there, we took 133 to 92, then north on 65. At **Drost's Chocolates** in Eckert, handmade confections have been dipped since 1959. But the real treat is the collection of 120 antique cash registers, valued at between \$200–\$5,000 each.

Later we learned that Cedaredge tap water is some of the purest in the state, so **Colorado Gold Distillery** uses it along with Colorado-grown grains to blend small batches of premium corn whiskey, bourbon, brandy, gin and vodka.

Upon arrival at **Aspen Trails Campground**, we immediately encountered 500 clean, sober and burly motorcycle enthusiasts who had a soft-spot for Candy and Sundance. Some wanted snapshots!

For dinner, we drove up the Grand Mesa to **Roscoe's** at Thunder Mountain Lodge, recom-

Dressing the part

The retro accessories in our restored Shasta capture the interest of many patrons. I have hunted for mid-century treasures in thrift stores, consignment shops, antique emporiums, and garage sales since I was a kid. So my collection adorns the inside. One of my favorite props is a pair of red kid-sized cowboy

boots. But warm wool blankets are essential. While shopping in Defiance Thrift Store (2412 S. Glen Ave., 970-945-0234) in Glenwood Springs, I recently found an old red camp blanket with bold black stripes for only \$3. When traveling around in our '60s getup, we try to dress the part. Think *American Graffiti*.

Richard dons black-and-white Chuck Taylor high-top sneakers and a coordinating bowling shirt. I tie a red bandana around my neck and sport white Keds tennis shoes. Defiance Thrift Store had a men's shirt with a vintage luggage sticker pattern that was too cool to pass up. —Vicky Nash

Candy is a popular entry in the Glenwood Springs Classic Car Show, winning Ladies' Choice and People's Choice Awards consecutively.



mended for barbeque ribs with a side of twangy country western music. The **Twisted Sisters Grub Box** make a wicked-good blueberry pie, too.

Along the way, our trailer battery died. Then we discovered we had the wrong type of plug for the electrical hookup. And we forgot the drinking water hose. What's a vacation without trips to the hardware store?

Day two started in Cedaredge at the **Pioneer Town Museum** with an interesting trio of wooden silos built in 1916. After that, we sampled a scoop of peach ice cream at the old fashioned soda fountain at **Cedaredge Floral and Country Market**.

The countryside in this region is perfect for grape growing. **Stoney Mesa Winery** has one of the oldest Riesling vineyards around and has attained coveted awards for 22 years.

Just down State Highway 65 and onto State Highway 92 are the Delta murals depicting colorful produce labels, Ute Indian culture, and the apple industry. But the best roadside attraction is the **Tru Vu Drive In**, a giant outdoor movie screen and car window speakers.

Off to Montrose on U.S. 50 for a stay at **Cedar Creek RV Park**. While most bring their own equipment, there is a 1964 Winnebago named Little Darlin' available for rent. Six more whimsical wagons will be added.

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park is a must-see. The sign to East Portal reads, "Warning: Extreme Grades and Sharp Curves Ahead." This did not deter us. Not until white smoke began billowing out from the brakes! After a lengthy cooling-off period, we were back on the road again.

At dusk we pulled into **The Star Drive-In** in Montrose for the double feature. The ticket seller makes change using \$2 bills. Stocked with popcorn and Junior Mints, we didn't leave until 1:30 a.m.

Continuing east on U.S. 50, we reunited with the Scenic Byway. Of course this involved a slow curvy climb. Annoyed drivers passed us but suddenly realized how adorable we were! At the rest area, people were attracted to the retro combo like a magnet. One gentleman praised our restoration efforts by saying, "This is rolling art."



Vicky Nash displays soda fountain memorabilia creating a roadside diner feel on the interior.

The last campsite, **Crawford State Park**, overlooked the reservoir. The Delta County Fair was underway in Hotchkiss, so we checked out some horsemanship skills. Even the local Lion's Club used a long, long trailer to sell carnival favorites.

A splurge was dining at the luxurious **Smith Fork Ranch** near Crawford. Once a rundown ghost property, the main lodge and cabins now look like an elite 1930s wilderness retreat. The chef prepares menus based upon the daily harvest from the on-site organic garden. That evening's fare was pheasant à la plancha, chanterelles, pancetta, ricotta fritters, and peach sabayon.

The last leg of the tour was all about the **Garvin Mesa Wine Loop** in Paonia. At every stop, admirers swooned over Candy and Sundance. The artists at Azura Cellars and Gallery, the Gewürztraminer specialists at Stone Cottage Cellars, shoppers at Orchard Valley Farms Market and Black Bridge Winery all wanted a closer look.

Now that we are devoted trailer junkies, we search for castaway mid-century relics along roadsides. It is true that you can never own just one. A 1968 Serro Scotty Sportsman and a 1961 Shasta found their way into our fleet. And there is this cute little 1958 Santa Fe behind a barn in Yampa. 📍

Vicky Nash (resorttrends.com) specializes in tourism communication services for destination marketing organizations, resorts, attractions and hotels.