

## Mobile Beauty Salon Serves Brides And Folks With Medical Issues

Imagine a beauty salon that comes to you. What better way to eliminate some of the stress on a wedding day – or to bring cheer to a cancer patient who can't leave the house.

The "Always Love Yourself Mobile Salon" is housed in a 37-ft. 2005 Gulf Stream RV. Hairdresser Alyce Tipton was inspired to create it when she went through chemo, radiation and multiple surgeries for breast cancer. She had owned and worked in hair salons and worked with many clients who had cancer, but until she went through it herself, she didn't really understand what it was like.

"I didn't even feel like leaving the house," Tipton explains. "So the girls came to my house, and it was wonderful."

A dream that Tipton feels "the Lord planted on my heart" prompted her to spend her recovery time designing and planning her mobile salon.

She purchased a so-called "toy hauler", because it had living quarters for six in the front and empty space in the back designed for hauling cars, ATV's, or other "toys". She had the RV equipped with a handicapped lift for clients to enter in the big back door and hired a plumber to install a handicapped sink.

In 2005, equipped with chairs, massage table and other supplies for all basic salon services, she started visiting people with medical needs and the elderly.

"I was regularly scheduled to visit nursing homes once a month. Staff brought them out in their wheelchair, and the residents liked to ride on the lift gate," Tipton says.

She also served many people with

cancer. Sometimes family members booked the RV salon as a gift for a post chemo celebration.

Tipton charges the cost of services plus mileage. To help cover her overhead, she created a wedding package. Brides appreciate having a salon come right to their home. Tipton offers everything from hair and makeup to facials and spa manicures and pedicures.

Fees start at \$75 to do the bride's hair and \$1/mile over 15 mile round trips. She also adds a gratuity and requires a 55 percent deposit.

From her Connecticut base, Tipton has traveled as far as Rhode Island and New York. Now, she operates the salon part time in North Carolina where she and her husband built their retirement home. Since she plans to retire, she has the RV for sale (\$70,000 with 18,000 miles).

Tipton notes that the idea would work for a variety of businesses such as dog grooming and even for people offering services such as accounting. Besides using it for business, she and her husband also used the RV for personal hunting trips – temporarily replacing furniture with 4-wheelers.

"The RV salon did what it was supposed to do. A lot of people were touched and healed through it," Tipton says, adding that thinking about it and designing it helped her survive a long year of recovery.

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Alyce Tipton's mobile beauty salon is housed in a 2005 Gulf Stream 37-ft. RV.



Salon services include everything from hair and makeup to facials, spa manicures and pedicures.

## "Glamping" Catches On As A Rural Getaway

Glamping is a trend sweeping across the country – and the world – for people who like to camp, but are willing to spend some cash to make the experience comfortable. The name comes from combining the word "camping" with "glamour".

You still sit around a campfire under the stars and enjoy nature. But your wall tent will already be pitched with a real bed and real linens with amenities like running water, electricity, a refrigerator and gas barbecue for cooking.

"In the past people often wanted to stay out here but there was really no place to stay," says Ali Boyle, who owns Destiny Ridge Vineyards and Alexandria Nicole Wine Cellars in Prosser, Wash., with her husband Steve. With vineyards overlooking the Columbia River, the Boyles have an ideal glamping site located near the water and power sources at their winery. Wine club members were first to try the glamping experience – coming for wine tasting, bringing their own food, and staying the night in a wall tent with all the amenities. Cost is \$150/night or \$127/night for wine club members.

People who like to camp love it, Boyle says, but she warns that it's not for everyone. It's still camping, and people who don't camp sometimes don't appreciate hearing coyotes howl or train horns blasting in the distance. Also cell phones don't work, and there is no Wi-Fi.

People who choose glamping appreciate the outdoors and often bring canoes,

horses and bikes to explore the river and trails and enjoy the night sky without city lights.

"It's kind of a massage for the soul," Boyle says. "People come out here and uncharge."

The Boyles have three tent sites and an RV site (\$50/night) and added a septic and restroom/shower facility this spring.

Glamping has paid off for the Boyles, and they say it's an idea other rural producers could use to diversify. Consumers like visiting rural areas to see how their food (or drink) is produced, they note.

To get started, they suggest researching on the internet to see how others do it. Check into permits and zoning that might be required. Also, consider the cost of getting electricity and water to the sites. After that it's personal preference how simple or fancy to go. The Boyles built a deck and purchased wall tents. Furnishings include a queen size bed with sheets and a down duvet cover, Persian rug, mini fridge, gas barbecue and other small appliances. Outside, a deck, barbecue grill and gas-lit fire pit provide a private place to enjoy food and wine while looking at the vineyard and Columbia River.

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**"Glampers" stay the night in a wall tent with a bed and linens and amenities such as running water, electricity, a refrigerator and gas barbecue for cooking.**



"Glamping" combines the word "camping" with "glamour". It's for people who like to camp, but will spend some cash to make the experience more comfortable.

