

**Bert Neely**

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My first chat with Raoul was by phone as back in '97 I was the global rep of New Zealand and Raoul was attending our NZ van nationals in '97 and we had many chats, he wore his jacket covered in van club patches and had long hair to his butt, he enjoyed our way of vanning in the deep south pacific and returned home to Patti and his 2 sons. We made friends and arranged my journey to attend the American Truckin' nationals, the 25th Truckin' nationals in La Plata, Maryland and I started my criss cross journey of America with vanners starting with my stay with Raoul, viewing Denver by day and travelling and living out of his Chevy van, no AC to use a bin full of ice with towels to chill down, big cups of mellow dew to keep awake, visit interesting places alike the ST Louis arch, a wall mart, truck stops of our 3 day road trip to the nationals in July of '97 and after the event Raoul wanted me to travel back to Colorado but as I'd pre planned my journey I gave this magic vanner a big man hug and brought home the 2 issues of his van books of vanning and we kept in contact by phone and later by email and since his passing I've phoned patti to also say my respects of his loss, a neat guy with a huge heart, a sadly missed vanning mate.

Kind regards,

Guy Partridge of New Zealand.