

INSPECTION STATION

Book, DVD, and Product Reviews

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Beam n Read LED 3 Hands-Free Travel & Reading Light

ASF LIGHTWARE SOLUTIONS

LED light source; battery-powered power source
3.25 × 3.88 × 0.88; 2.08 ounces
Black; \$19.95

Skepticism may describe your feelings as you open the box containing the Beam n Read. Billed as a reading light, it sits around the neck on an adjustable strap. Surprisingly, the task light performs better than expected.

Compact in size, the Beam n Read is a useful travel tool. The light frees both hands, casts a reasonably wide beam, and can be positioned for comfort. These conveniences make reading a historical map or guidebook on the go much easier. The model comes with two filters: The red one snaps on to dim the light to avoid blinding the car driver, while the yellow one diffuses and warms the LED light.

The light can also be placed on a flat surface. In this position it can illuminate virtually any task you might undertake, from checking the car's oil to changing a tire. The unit is charged by four AA batteries. In a pinch, it may also be powered by USB.

The reviewer used the light to find a set of car keys a toddler had pitched under a car seat—and that kind of versatility can really keep you beaming.

—LYNN MILLER

The Camper Book: A Celebration of a Moveable American Dream

By Dave Hoekstra

CHICAGO REVIEW PRESS

Paperback; 8.2 × 0.4 × 8.2 inches
240 pages; \$24.99

At first glance, *The Camper Book* might resemble an attempt to glamorize the recreational vehicle lifestyle. The author's main mission, however, is to better comprehend why Americans find on-the-road culture so appealing.

Award-winning journalist Dave Hoekstra hits the road in a customized camper to discover why people from different walks of life are fascinated with RV living. Traveling to parks and campsites, he listens to people's stories. Some are downsizing their lives and want simplicity; others love the freedom to roam as they please. From doctors to musicians, missionaries, athletes, politicians, lawyers, and children, each person's tale contributes to a better understanding of this piece of America's restless personality.

There are some who deeply feel their national identity through experiences and adventures that happen along the road: those rough-and-tough trips; fighting capitalism with minimalism; camping and exploring; and, of course, driving along Route 66. Taking a philosophical approach, Hoekstra strives to unravel the meaning behind this form of Americanism and the importance of location

and history as it relates to RV culture.

Enhanced by Jon Sall's photographs, *The Camper Book* is an excellent read that shines a light on the RV camping lifestyle, asks big-picture questions, gives historical accounts of American towns, and gets to know the people along the way.

—BRYCE MILLS

The Route 66 Photo Road Trip: How to Eat, Stay, Play, and Shoot Like a Pro

By Rick and Susan Sammon

THE COUNTRYMAN PRESS

Flexibound, 6.3 × 0.7 × 8.2
224 pages; \$19.95

There are pictures, and then there are photographs. Susan and Rick Sammon know how to excel at creating the latter. Their book is a hall-of-fame collection of fantastic photos of sights along The Mother Road—but moreover, it's a how-to guide that makes even those of us who are photographically challenged think we have a chance to capture great images, too.

Starting in New Mexico and moving through Arizona (with a side trip to the Techatticup Mine in Nevada), the authors take a journey through a hallowed ground of roadside Americana, showcasing the fantastic sights along the way while teaching techniques to capture that amazing shot. So rather than a mere sightseer's guide, it's a book designed to help the traveler photograph the iconic and the ordinary along a scenic stretch of what is arguably the most famous road in America.

In simple terms—and with their expert photos to offer proof—the couple teaches how best to use both regular cameras and smartphones. One simple suggestion applies to everybody: Don't take “headshots,” but instead capture what the authors call “environment portraits”—widening the photo to include a

