



# sweet wheels

By Amy Brown

**K**rissy Widuck grew up in Alliance with an obsession for ice cream trucks and a dream of starting her own business. After 15 years of bartending experience and a growing passion for the hospitality industry, Widuck set out to make her dream a reality.

Widuck began researching and drew inspiration from Australian wedding blogs that featured companies operating their businesses out of renovated vintage campers. The trend had yet to fully take off in the U.S., and Widuck seized the opportunity to create the first mobile business of its kind in the Midwest. After a \$400 eBay transaction from an owner in Northeast Ohio, Widuck was the proud owner of a 1969 Scotty Camper.

"It needed a lot of work," Widuck recalled. "My husband and father-in-law tore it all the way down, and we were only able to salvage the wheel wells and the door."

Thanks to Widuck's sense of style and love of everything vintage, she transformed the interior with dark wood, white and copper finishes, and cage lighting to complement its clean

lines and simple elegance.

Although the original business plan was to sell snow cone cocktails using organic specialty syrups, the concept eventually evolved into a mobile bar-for-hire. The term "sweet water," the unofficial definition of a snow cone, played a part in inspiring the name of Widuck's company.

Widuck's Sweet Water Caravan calls Canton home. The camper resides in 75-degree heated storage year-round to protect it from Northeast Ohio's ever-changing weather patterns. Widuck and the beloved camper travel to national parks, backyards, barns and warehouses in neighboring cities like Cleveland, Bath, Hudson, Wooster, Cuyahoga Falls and Rittman. Basically, any event within a 60-70 mile radius is fair game.

Here's how it works. Widuck meets with her clients to discuss their event theme and décor, gives her recommendation on beverage quantities the client should purchase, and provides a list of more than 100 signature cocktails to choose from – Something Blue, A Perfect Pear or The French Kiss, to name a few.

"I love doing things with unique garnishes," said Widuck. "I use mint from my own garden and whatever fresh produce is in season."

The client is responsible for stocking the camper, and the Sweet Water Caravan team provides two bartenders and optional special touches like candles, printed menus, drink signage

and yard games for event guests.

Widuck loves working alongside other small business owners providing their services to the Northeast Ohio community. During her first summer in business, Widuck joined a local caterer and photographer duo to serve wedding guests tucked neatly in a backyard in Cleveland's



Krissy Widuck purchased the 1969 Scotty Camper for \$400 on eBay. Today, business is booming and Widuck is already taking reservations for 2018. Photos courtesy of Sweet Water Caravan.

Tremont neighborhood. The reception was intimate and set against a classic Cleveland backdrop.

"The backyard faced the city skyline," said Widuck. "And at the end of the night, the Indians were lighting off fireworks right behind the caravan."

Widuck admits she often tears up when newlyweds come inside the camper for a photo-op. "We do 50 weddings a year, and being able to be part of people's special day is so rewarding to me."

In addition to the wedding circuit, Sweet Water Caravan is available for rehearsal dinners, birthday parties, backyard get-togethers, clambakes, bonfires, small business grand openings, as well as indoor events with an alternate bar set-up.

Although Sweet Water Caravan is just shy of its second birthday, business is booming from word-of-mouth referrals and Instagram. Widuck is taking reservations for 2018 and suggests making reservations a year in advance. To her, the services she provides are more than just serving drinks at parties.

"We want to be sure everything goes off without a hitch," Widuck said. "No pun intended."



The original plan was to sell cocktails in the form of snow cones, or "sweet water." The unofficial definition played a part in inspiring the name of the company.

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