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TRAILER LIFE

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

2013

AWARD WINNER

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Contents







YOU CAN LEARN A LOT FROM A SUBMARINE.

LOOKING AT SOMETHING THAT APPEARS TO BE WORKING PERFECTLY THEN DEMANDING TO MAKE IT BETTER REQUIRES A VERY UNIQUE MIND-SET. IT IS PRECISELY THIS KIND OF THINKING THAT WENT INTO THE BED OF THE ALL-NEW SIERRA. FOR YEARS, A STAMPED-STEEL BED WAS THE STANDARD, AND STILL IS WHEN IT COMES TO ALL THE OTHER GUYS. HOWEVER, AT GMC WE DECIDED TO USE A ROLLED-STEEL PROCESS FOR THE SAME REASON SUBMARINE HULLS DO: STRONGER, LIGHTER AND MORE DURABLE STEEL. YOU SEE, OUR ROLL-FORMING PROCESS ALLOWS THE USE OF HIGHER-STRENGTH STEEL VERSUS A TRADITIONAL STAMPED DESIGN. THIS ADAMANT DESIRE TO FIX THE UNBROKEN MAKES IT EASY TO SEE WHY THE ALL-NEW SIERRA IS MORE THAN JUST A TRUCK. IT'S INCREDIBLE THINKING IN THE FORM OF A TRUCK.

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LIFE



User Guide

Contents





14



34



48

FEATURES

14 On a Mission in San Antonio

There's more to this Texas city than the Alamo, with its historic buildings, a wild-life ranch, caverns, and the restaurant-and-shop-lined River Walk that winds under bridges

22 Arizona's Great Abyss

The Grand Canyon, one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, is a colorful landscape of beautifully preserved ancient rocks layered in history

29 Florida's Scenic Gem

De Leon Springs State Park, built around a natural sulfur spring, is a Shangri-La for bird-watchers, hikers, kayakers and pancake connoisseurs!

34 Made in the Shade

Awning in need of repair? Dometic replacement parts and a couple of hours of labor will put the fun back into patio time

38 Reclaiming the Throne

Thetford's Aqua Magic Residence looks like a full-size porcelain bowl, but is made of lightweight composite materials and uses a robust flushing mechanism

42 Lance Camper 1172

This well-recognized builder offers its biggest camper with two slides and plenty of room for adventures off the beaten path

48 Unique Trailers

These may not be mainstream, but this collection of fun lightweights can be towed by almost any vehicle, offer protection from the elements and are easy to store

54 Salem T23FBS

Forest River's lightweight conventional cottage has an efficient floorplan that works as a practical getaway for couples

59 2013 Readers' Choice Awards

Twenty-seven favorites from an array of RV products and services

Kolb Studio, constructed in 1904, is perched on the edge of the Grand Canyon. Page 22



DEPARTMENTS

5 Driver's Seat

Picking the Winners

6 Letters

Readers respond loud and clear

8 Around the Bend

News, events, places and trends

12 RV Action Line

Trailer Life is your referee

67 New Products

Goodies to improve the RV lifestyle

68 Performance Corner

Tech, accessories and news

72 Hands On

iBall Wireless Camera

73 RV Clinic

Answers from the *Trailer Life* tech team

79 10-Minute Tech

Now why didn't I think of that?

82 America's Outback

A Lesson in Ethanol



Genesis Supreme RV Diablo toy haulers are built for the rugged lifestyle. Page 10

On the cover: Testing the Lance 1172 dual-slide camper in the shadow of California's Eastern Sierra. Photo by Donya Carlson



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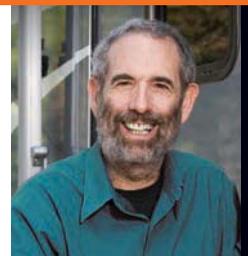
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Picking the Winners

Readers voted for the best of the best and the winners are...

Social networking has changed the paradigm when it comes to customer reviews. What used to be reserved for live chat sessions where owners could discuss their experiences with products and services has moved to higher — and more efficient — levels of expression. The digital world has made it possible to glean useful information from others before making personal buying decisions. That's the concept behind the Readers' Choice Awards introduced to our readership last year.

We asked readers to vote for their favorite tow vehicles, trailers, products, places and things as they relate to the RV lifestyle. Right out of the gate the voting was brisk and we compiled valuable information that was shared with the readers for the first time in the January 2013 issue. The Readers' Choice Awards are now an annual event and the latest winners have been announced in this issue (see page 59).

Probably the most important decision RV enthusiasts will make is buying the right trailer and tow vehicle. That's not an easy process, unless you're a repeat buyer and already have favorite brands. The RV industry is on fire these days; trucks and SUVs are better than ever. New products are being developed rapidly in a changing RV environment, and social networking makes it possible to keep others in the loop when it comes to how they work and if they perform as designed. Customer reviews are very powerful.

People are not shy about posting comments on website forums and from the huge response to our Readers' Choice Awards program, dissemination of information through social media has made it possible to collect comments and publish ratings from people who are using their RVs in real-life situations. If your current RV, tow vehicle or accessory is awarded Readers' Choice gold, silver or bronze status, the chances are pretty good it's going to perform to your expectations or even better. That's the beauty of social media, but there's another benefit of experiential information sharing. Manufacturers are always on the hot seat and respond with continual product and service improvements.

Earning a coveted Readers' Choice Award is a big deal for any manufacturer, supplier or vendor. Companies that won this year will certainly continue to offer products and services in an effort to stay on top; those who didn't will likely work harder to grab an award next year. It's a win-win for everyone.

Congratulations to all the winners and thank you to all the readers who made this happen. 🎉

– Bob Livingston, publisher

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QUARTZSITE SHOW

Since 1984, the month of January has been synonymous with the Quartzsite Sports, Vacation & RV Show. Held each year in Quartzsite, Arizona, the show has grown from 3.5 acres to a 20-acre facility with free parking. Attendance is also free. This year's program runs January 18-26.



Good Things Come in Small Packages

I agree with Carel Edgerly in the October 2013 *Letters* column: Please review more small trailers such as Trillium, Casita, Scamp and Aliners for all of us who are looking for a small RV.

Andrea Perry, Ocean City, New Jersey

Andrea, turn to page 50 to read about the Aliner Expedition in the Unique Trailers article in this issue. Ed.

Carel Edgerly (*Letters*, October) has a good point. I would also like to read more articles on small campers in the "less-than-3,000-pound" class. We like to start with small units and then work our way up.

Charles Bishop, Mabelvale, Arkansas

We're also looking for a lightweight trailer bigger than the Casita we have — possibly one with a maximum of 24 feet. We would love to see *Trailer Life* cover some of these, like the Palomino Puma.

Nadine Smith, Via email

Better Fuel Economy

In October 2013's *Letters* column, Tim Swallow asked questions about my tow vehicle and mileage, and I've got a reply for him. I drive a 2002 Ford F-350 Super Duty Extended Cab 7.3-liter diesel with automatic transmission and overdrive, 3.73 rear end, with a towing capacity of 13,600 pounds. I don't have a tuner but I do have a Banks Power "Big Hoss" level three chip, which provides some additional power. I'm not sure how much it contributes to the gas mileage, as it was getting 17.1 off the showroom floor and the chip only boosted it to 17.3. Many folks said that as the Ford's diesel engine breaks in, the mileage will improve, but at 131,000 miles it has pretty much stayed the same. I always drive in overdrive with cruise control whenever possible; it's turning 1,700 RPM at 60 MPH. I drive 60-65

Topped Off

I enjoyed Kristopher Bunker's round-up of truck bed covers, *Box Tops*, in the November 2013 issue. I discovered a product that is ideal for me. The Softopper combines the coverage of a cap without the inconveniences associated with a hard top. It is quickly folded forward like a boat bimini or removed entirely using two split rings. The back and sides can be rolled up to access the bed. The fit is tight and withstands interstate speeds without flapping. I love mine and would not go back to a tonneau.

**Wright Ellis
Richmond, Virginia**



MPH on the highway and 50-55 MPH in mountains (towing); 60-70 MPH solo. My 26-foot travel trailer has a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 7,500 pounds and we usually have a couple of bicycles, a boat, firewood, etc. So, fully loaded it's only at two-thirds of the towing capacity — maybe this is why the mileage is good.

This brings me back to my original letter where I advocated diesel over gas. If you are going to spend \$40K-plus on a new half-ton gas truck and only get 10 MPH towing, then I think you're better off purchasing a diesel for similar money where you get more towing capacity and (in my case, at least) better towing fuel economy.

Ernie Carlson, Zigzag, Oregon

More Windows

We attended an RV show earlier this year since we are ready to purchase a larger unit for our family. We looked at all the units but did not find the current trend in layouts to be very desirable for our requirements. We have a 2012 Kodiak 220BHKS unit that has large windows on each side. This allows us to take in the views

as well as watch the kids. There is a lot of light and the unit is bright and cheery. I think this is very important in a trailer.

Just about all the newer units have the table/sofa on one side and the kitchen/bathroom on the other. The kitchen/bathroom side usually has only a small window by the kitchen sink making the unit dark, even during the day while looking in the dealer lots. A couple units did not have any windows in the main area on this side. There was one unit, which had a plan that might have worked, but the table bench seat width would not even accommodate an adult and 10-year-old, and the construction was not very good.

I am wondering why the current trend is to have one side lacking windows. The main point of traveling to destinations is to enjoy the great views of the location whether inside or outside of the unit.

We even created a floorplan and submitted it to several manufacturers (Dutchmen, Keystone, Forest River and one other) hoping this might change the current trend!

John Mierzurak, Via email ✉

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User Guide

Contents





PHOTOS BY RICHARD AND VICKY NASH

Camping in Vintage Style

Restoring retro trailers went from a hobby to a business for this couple in Colorado

article **Mary Zalmanek**

When Richard and Vicky Nash married, it was a match made in trailer heaven. Richard is a custom homebuilder and classic car buff. Vicky is passionate about midcentury travel collectibles. When she read about a group of women who painted murals on vintage travel trailers, she convinced Richard that it would be fun to rebuild one. They found a hail-damaged 1970 Shasta hunting trailer with camouflage curtains and transformed it into a fully functional, attention-grabbing trailer. They were hooked.

The search was on for their next project. They preferred earlier models, "canned hams" with iconic silver wings. They purchased a 1962 Shasta Airflyte for \$100, complete with a dilapidated interior, split seams,

a leaking roof and damaged siding. Richard stripped the trailer down to the frame, salvaging or replacing what he could and using original parts as templates for the rest. The original wings on the exterior accent the new paint job. Vicky sewed curtains and cushions, and decorated the interior with a soda fountain theme. Nine months and \$10,000 later, "Candy," whose red-and-white colors are reminiscent of peppermint candies, was nearly complete. All she needed was a matching tow vehicle. Richard found a rusty 1961 Ford Galaxie Sunliner convertible in need of just about everything, starting with an engine

and transmission overhaul. Sundance and Candy are now hits at classic car shows.

Vicky's whimsical suggestion has grown into a successful business. Retro Trailer Design in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, renovates rescued 1950s-'60s-era campers and customizes trailers to private owners' specifications for recreational or commercial use. Customers can expect complete restorations in four to five months at a price between \$25,000 and \$40,000.

Retro Trailer Design 970-945-1329,
www.retrotrailerdesign.com

Masterful restoration by Richard and Vicky Nash transformed this dilapidated duo into Candy and Sundance, darlings of vintage trailer shows.



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Diablo Toy Hauler

Genesis Supreme RV, founded two years ago, is based in Perris, California, with an executive team headed up by three RV industry veterans. Genesis builds travel trailers, toy haulers and Ford E-350-based Class B van campers. At the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association's (RVIA) 61st Annual California RV Show in Pomona last October, Genesis unveiled a special-edition Diablo, one of 12 toy haulers (nine travel trailers and three fifth-wheels). All Diablos have electric drop-down beds (with other sleeping arrangements based on floorplans),

a 102-inch-wide body, fiberglass laminated aluminum-framed walls, crown molding and coffered ceilings. Standard in the kitchen is a convection microwave oven, a Euro-



pean-style sink and cabinetry in color choices of dark wood (mocha java) and light wood (brandy maple).

The company claims that the plush furniture has sturdy fabric, great for the toy-hauling crowd, and it's available in four décor choices. Also standard is a patio awning, tinted windows, AM/FM/CD stereo with outside speakers and an exterior shower. The lav has a tub with surround enclosure.

Overall trailer lengths range from 22 feet 9 inches to 32 feet 1 inch. Options include a solar-panel system, premium sound and interior/exterior XL décor package upgrade. The Diablo is built for the rugged lifestyle, with MSRPs ranging from \$19,700 to \$30,000 for the travel trailers, and \$34,965 to \$42,000 for the fifth-wheels. 951-657-3500, www.genessupremerv.com

NEWSWIRE

CAMPGROUND DISCOUNT



Carefree RV Resorts Extends Program for Veterans

In November 2013, Carefree RV Resorts announced the continuation of its discount offer to active and veteran military servicemen and women and their families at 40 parks in Florida, Texas, New Jersey, North Carolina and California for another year.

"At Carefree RV Resorts we value all of our customers, but it is with great pride that we get to continue to extend our 50 percent discount to the active and veteran servicemen and women who protect our country's democracy and keep us safe," said Carefree RV Resort's Vice President of Operations, Mike Rosenhagen, who is also a retired U.S. Army Major. www.carefreervresorts.com

MEDIA



The Profit Slated for a Second Season

CNBC has ordered a second season and eight new episodes of the reality series, "The Profit." The TV series features Marcus Lemonis, Chairman and CEO of Camping World Inc. and Good Sam Enterprises LLC, who saves struggling businesses while investing his own cash in the process. Season two is scheduled to premiere January 21 at 10 p.m.

"The Profit is deeply rooted in entrepreneurship, a hallmark of CNBC Prime," said CNBC President and CEO Mark Hoffman. "The Profit quickly proved to not only entertain viewers but Marcus Lemonis became a go-to for America's small business owners looking for expert advice."

CAMPING REPORT



38 Million Americans Camped in 2012

According to a new study released by The Outdoor Foundation and sponsored by The Coleman Co., 13 percent of Americans over the age of 6 participated in camping during 2012. The data is based on an online survey of more than 42,000 Americans. Some of the findings include: 74 percent of participants camped in a public campground; the average camper went on 5.8 camping trips; participants traveled a mean of 200.7 miles away from home to camp; 44 percent of campers plan their trips at least one month in advance; 78 percent of adult participants camp with friends; and hiking is the most popular activity to participate in while camping.

Ford's Living Roof

Ford's Dearborn, Michigan, truck plant, home of the F-150, has the largest living roof in North America. Created in 2003, the rooftop is made from drought-resistant sedum and spans 10.4 acres.

It sustains an ecosystem with more than 35 insect, bird and spider species,

and 11 plant species. It is fertilized and weeded once a year and never needs mowing. Ford claims that it looks for ways to be greener in the production of its vehicles, including with the EcoBoost engine, by using sustainable materials such as rice hulls, soybeans and recycled cotton. The living roof reduces heating and cooling demands of the facility by 5 percent, lowers the amount of heat entering the Dearborn plant by 70 percent and is part of an innovative storm-water management system that costs less than two-thirds of a conventional treatment system, according to the company. Ford claims that the roof lasts about twice as long as a conventional roof.



New Campground in Death Valley National Park

Furnace Creek Resort in Death Valley National Park has added 26 full-hookup RV sites and created the new 35-site Fiddlers' Campground adjacent to its golf course. Located at The Ranch at Furnace Creek, both facilities are within easy reach of the Borax Museum and visitor center. All resort amenities are available to guests staying in the RV sites, including the Ranch's spring-fed swimming pool, shower facility, laundry, WiFi, tennis, shuffleboard, volleyball, Bocce ball and basketball court.

The existing campground across the street from the golf course at Furnace Creek Ranch has added 26 new full-hookup sites ranging in length from 40 to 50 feet. Most of these new sites have shade trees. The rate is \$37 per night. At the new Fiddlers' Campground, right next to the golf course, are 35 dry camping sites that are up to 50 feet long, and feature community barbecue pits and picnic tables. The rate is \$25 per night. Campground reservations can be made by calling 800-236-7916.

Furnace Creek is centrally located in Death Valley National Park, California. To the south is Badwater Basin at 282 feet below sea level, Artist's Drive and a variety of geologic formations. To the north are sand dunes, wagon wheel trails, Ubehebe Crater and Scotty's Castle.

For more information, call 760-786-2345, or visit www.furnacecreekresort.com



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Bubble Trouble

After the first long-haul trip in their toy hauler resulted in multiple tire issues, two readers asked *RV Action Line* for help. They wrote:

» We purchased a Heartland Cyclone 3800 toy hauler in mid-September 2012. I was working at the time and did not use the rig much until May of this year when I retired. In May, we took a trip to Washington, D.C., and lost three tires on the trip home. Two tires developed bubbles on the sidewall and one blew out, which caused severe damage to the rig. The tires were Power King Towmax ST235/80R16 load range E, 10 ply. We had only put approximately 6,000 miles on these tires.

I contacted Heartland, which claims no responsibility for the damage to my rig, and Dynamic Tire Corp., which is also claiming no responsibility. Dynamic stated the first bubble was caused by a road hazard, yet they reimbursed me \$100 for the second bubble. They are willing to reimburse me \$125 for the tire that blew out if I sign a release. I maintained 80 pounds in each tire and had a tire-pressure monitor installed. After the blowout, I had the rig weighed and the weight was 12,980 pounds — the rig is rated for 18,000 pounds.

We believe Heartland and Dynamic Tire Corp. have some responsibility for the \$1,633 for the six new tires and the cost to repair the damage to our rig.

Jim and Mary Lou Van Atta, Missouri City, Texas

RV Action Line contacted both Heartland and Dynamic Tire Corp. on the Van Attas' behalf. We received the following responses from both companies:

HEARTLAND RESPONDS:

This letter is a response to Jim Van Atta's letter received on August 23, 2013.

The Van Attas purchased a 2013 Cyclone 3800 on September 21, 2012, from Explore USA. Heartland RV provides a one-year warranty against manufacturing defects to the original purchaser.

Tire failures can be caused by a number of different occurrences, none of which are caused by the manufacturing of the RV. The tires are well within the weight rating of the trailer and have a successful proven track record on our units.

The main cause of tire failure is overheating, which can be caused if towed above 65 mpg, the PSI is too low or too high or the weight on the tires is above the GVWR at any time during travel. Any of these occurrences can and will cause the inside of the tire to heat up, causing irre-

versible damage to all of the tires.

Tire failures are not considered a manufacturing defect and this should all be processed through the Van Attas' insurance company.

James Fenner
Customer Service Manager
Heartland Recreational Vehicles, LLC
Elkhart, Indiana

DYNAMIC TIRE CORP. RESPONDS:

We have received your letter dated August 14, 2013, and appreciate *RV Action Line's* empathy toward its valued readers. The team at Dynamic Tire Corp. (DTC) would like to reassure *RV Action Line* that we have conducted our due diligence in reviewing the claim from Mr. Jim Van Atta. This review includes a thorough analysis of the tire submitted for inspection, product warranty records, as well as industry feedback.

As a distributor of Power King tires, DTC has limited control of where and/or how the trailer tires are used. Each product line is tested to industry standard specifications to ensure that the products we distribute meet and exceed the requirements of the intended operating conditions.

The tire was received for inspection in a "run flat" condition. This means that the tire in question has gone flat and the driver continued to run on the tire until it was completely shredded. It is important to note that when a tire is run to destruction it is almost impossible to determine cause of failure.

We explained the above in our letter dated July 19, 2013, to Mr. Van Atta and offered the dollar value of the tire as a goodwill gesture.

DTC Claim Review Committee
Brampton, Ontario, Canada

TAKE ACTION » *RV Action Line* is a forum for the resolution of conflicts between consumers and RV dealers and manufacturers, accessories suppliers and service providers. After exhausting all other resources without success, please send a typed letter to *RV Action Line*, 2750 Park View Court, Suite 240, Oxnard, California 93036. Include copies of appropriate bills and correspondence as well as a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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Contents

ON A MISSION IN

SAN ANTONIO

article and photos by Donna Ikenberry

There's more to this Texas city than the Alamo, with its historic buildings, a wildlife ranch, caverns, and the restaurant- and shop-lined River Walk that winds under bridges

Mission Concepción, located in San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, is a beautiful stone church that was dedicated in 1755. Standing much as it did more than two centuries ago, it is the oldest unrestored stone church in America.

San Antonio. Mention the city and you'll probably think of the Alamo and four other 18th-century missions found in the first civilian settlement in Texas. Originally called San Antonio de Béxar and founded in 1718, when I think of San Antonio I think of even more. I think of the River Walk, the Witte Museum, the San Antonio Botanical Garden, the San Antonio Zoo and much more. I think of a fun city to explore!

Recently my husband, Mike, and I spent eight days in San Antonio. Mike is retired from the Army so we stayed at the Joint Base San Antonio RV Park at Fort Sam Houston. When we were in the city we found lots of construction going on and were only too happy to drop our travel trailer and explore the city in our pickup. The RV park, located northeast of downtown, was a great place to camp. For those without a military identification, I would suggest staying at the San Antonio KOA, located 5 miles east of downtown, or Travelers World RV Resort, located 3 miles south of downtown. Both campgrounds have trees and access to hiking and biking paths as well as city buses to take you downtown and other places.



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User Guide

Contents



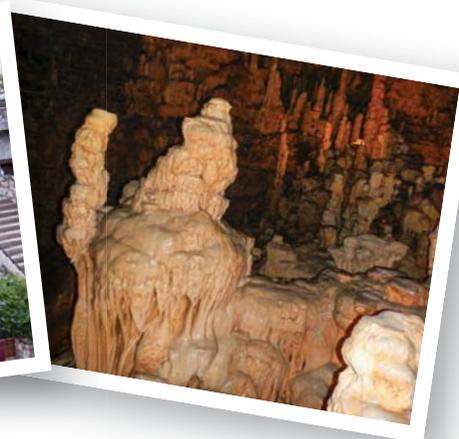
Visit San Antonio and you'll have to see the Alamo. The Alamo (originally called Mission San Antonio de Valero) was established in 1718 as the city's first mission. It served as a way station between east Texas and Mexico and was the site of the famous Battle of the Alamo. On March 6, 1836, Mexican General Santa Anna's army killed the Alamo's 189 defenders, including David (aka Davy) Crockett. View artifacts and walk the hallowed grounds before moseying along the River Walk.

Now 8 miles long, the downtown portion of the River Walk is the most popular with numerous hotels, fine restaurants and even small waterfalls. The River Walk, named Paseo del Río in Spanish, is operated by the Paseo del Río Association. Patrolled 24 hours a day by officers on boats, bicycles and on foot, the San Antonio River is born a few miles north of downtown and eventually flows 240 miles through five Texas counties. It joins the Guadalupe River and flows all the way to the Gulf of Mexico at San Antonio Bay. We walked along the river, where we could access both sides via quaint bridges, but another way to see the river is via taxis and narrated tours that highlight the main river bend area.

As we walked through downtown, we saw plenty of historic buildings. One of the best ways to learn more about the downtown region, including La Villita, a historic arts village, is to walk the Texas Star Trail, a 2.6-mile walking trail. En route are many sites, including San Fernando Cathedral. Founded in 1731, it is the oldest cathedral sanctuary in the United States.

Besides walking around town, there's trolley and bus transportation. If you're 62 or older be sure to go to the VIA Metropolitan Transit Information Office to get your Reduced Fare ID. Once you have the photo ID, prime-time trolley rides are only 25 cents each with free trolley rides on weekends and half-fare bus rides any time.

The four missions to the south are part of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. A bike trail is under construction that leads 10 miles south past Mission Concepción, Mission



(Above left) Walking and river boat tours are the most popular way to explore the River Walk, named Paseo del Río in Spanish, with its fine restaurants, numerous hotels and small waterfalls. The River Walk is operated by the Paseo del Río Association. **(Above right)** Wonderful, colorful cave formation at Natural Bridge Cavern, located about 30 miles northeast of downtown San Antonio.

San José, Mission San Juan Capistrano and Mission Espada. In the years to come, the family friendly off-road multiuse path will be suitable for all experience levels. If you'd rather drive, signs point the way.

The park and missions are open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily except Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. The southernmost mission, Mission Espada, was founded in 1690 as San Francisco de los Tejas, and is the oldest of the East Texas missions. It was moved to the San Antonio River in 1731 and renamed San Francisco de la Espada. As mentioned, Mission San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo) was the first mission on the San Antonio River, founded in 1718. Two other missions — Mission San Juan and Mission

Concepción — were also moved from East Texas. Mission San José was built in 1720 and is the largest of the Texas missions.

Mike was at an EOD Convention the day I visited the San Antonio Zoo, located in Brackenridge Park. The zoo is ranked as one of the best in the nation and is in a lovely 56-acre setting with plenty of trees for shade on hot Texas days. The zoo, open every day of the year, is home to 750 species. Though I spent plenty of time exploring the zoo, I could spend hours just watching the hippos. The day I visited, the handsome pair stood bobbing in the water, their massive heads separated from my much smaller head by a thick pane of glass. It was a sight to behold as I made a self portrait, just the hippos and me.

(Below) The San Antonio KOA is located about 5 miles east of downtown San Antonio. The campground offers 40 acres of pecan trees as well as hiking and biking paths, and city buses offer transportation to downtown and other places.



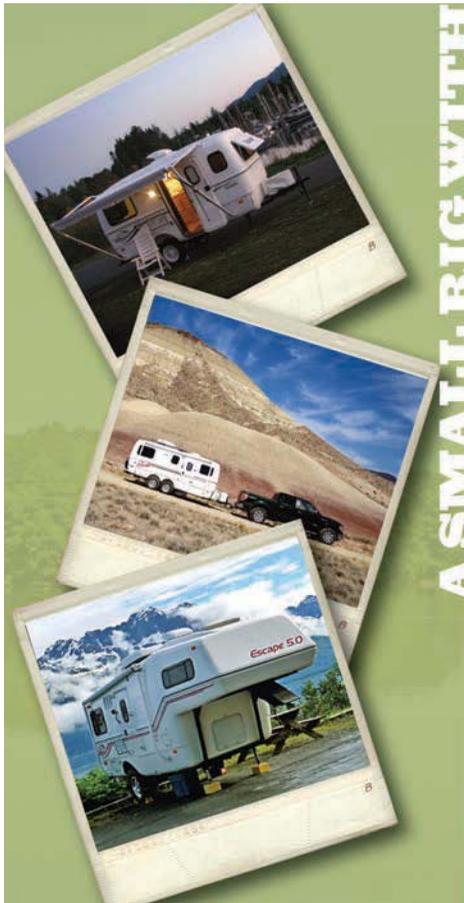


The zoo is a great place for folks to learn about wild animals and have fun at the same time. Be sure to hook up with the keepers for special talks and feedings. Two zoo helpers showed a group of children Miss Rita, a 20-year-old three-banded armadillo from Brazil. In

addition, the zoo is a good place to look for native animals. A 10-year-old yellow-crowned night heron was hanging around the zoo; she'd been partially hand-raised by keepers. Visit in the spring and you'll see a huge rookery of herons, a messy, but interesting delight.

Adjacent to the zoo, on Broadway, is the Witte Museum, a good place to learn about the natural history of Texas, as well as South Texas heritage. Located on the banks of the San Antonio River, the permanent collection offers historic photographs and artifacts, as well as dinosaur bones, cave drawings and more. In the newest facility, we learned about the history of San Antonio and South Texas by viewing artifacts such as brands and spurs, firearms and historical clothing. We also learned about real-life stories of Tejano

AT THE BOTANICAL GARDENS WE FELT AS THOUGH WE WERE IN ANOTHER WORLD, NOT VISITING A PLACE IN THE SEVENTH-LARGEST CITY IN THE COUNTRY!



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(Opposite page, from left) The Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, located about 10 miles south of San Antonio, offers up many interesting creatures, including this roseate skimmer. Wildebeest mom and calf at the Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch, located northeast of downtown San Antonio and next door to Natural Bridge Cavern. At Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch, we drove through several times to feed animals like this Damaraland zebra, which seemed to laugh at the thought of food being served from our pickup.

freighters, cowboys, vaqueros, Native Americans, Spanish settlers, farmers and ranchers, and women and children who grew up on the land.

After spending time indoors, we headed over to the San Antonio Botanical Gardens, which is about 1 mile to the east/southeast. We felt as though we were in another world, not visting a place in the seventh-largest city in the country! Located off Funston, the gardens are accessible to everyone; in fact, wheelchairs are available on

a first-come first-served basis. Enjoy walking? If you do, you'll enjoy the gardens where you can search for native birds as well as view formal and display gardens, a Japanese garden, desert plants and cactus, as well as three distinct regions of native Texas including the East Texas Piney Woods, Hill Country and South Texas habitats.

Mike and I enjoy searching for birds, so one morning we headed to the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center (MLAC), about 10 miles south of downtown off Interstate 410. We saw countless American white pelicans as we walked what used to be a series of old sewage ponds, and while we could still detect a slight stinky odor, the birds didn't seem to mind. In addition to pelicans we saw a vermilion flycatcher, a gorgeous red

(Right) The Saint Joseph Catholic Church is located on East Commerce Street in downtown San Antonio. The Rivercenter Mall was built around the parish because the church refused to sell to the land developer.





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bird, plus avocets, black-necked stilts and a crested caracara. On the Native Plant Trail we learned about South Texas trees and shrubs and looked for rattlesnakes, though we didn't see any. The MLAC is open Saturday through Monday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Outside of town, but not too far away, are attractions worthy of visits. To the east is the Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch, a safe haven for countless animals. Entering through the gates, we received a bag of food for the animals encountered along the 4-mile drive. We had fun feeding ostrich, antelope and even zebras. The zebras have learned to open their mouths so visitors can toss feed pellets in. Watch out for the ostriches. One surprised my husband by grabbing his glasses right off his face and tossing them on the ground. Fortunately his \$400 prescription glasses survived!

Located right next door to the Wildlife Ranch is the Natural Bridge

Caverns. Though not affiliated, I would recommend a visit to both places. On the way to the Discovery Aquifer Tour we passed below the Natural Bridge, an amazingly thin piece of rock. Next, we entered the doors protecting the caverns and were impressed by what we saw. The trail into and out of the cave is paved, but it's steep and slippery so rubber-soled shoes are recommended. The cave is not a cold cave, it's 70 degrees inside with high humidity so it'll seem even warmer. I thought the inside temperature perfect — not too hot and not too cold!

If you want to get out in the woods for some mountain biking or hiking check out Government Canyon State Natural Area in the South Texas Plains Region. Located inside the San Antonio city limits, Government Canyon is one of the nation's largest urban preserves with rolling prairie and rugged canyonlands. The oasis protects thousands of

acres of karst for the Edwards Aquifer, the primary source of water for millions of people in central Texas. Like all Texas parks, there's a day-use fee. The park is open Friday through Monday, with camping allowed only on Friday and Saturday nights.

San Antonio has even more to offer. If you like attractions like SeaWorld and Six Flags then check them out. In nearby New Braunfels is Schlitterbahn, a waterpark (open April through September) and resort on 65 acres. If you like quaint towns, antiquing and wine tasting, a trip to Fredericksburg, about 70 miles north of San Antonio, is well worth it. 🗨️

IF YOU GO

Government Canyon State Natural Area

www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/government-canyon

Joint Base San Antonio RV Park at Fort Sam Houston (military ID required)

210-221-5502, www.militarycampgrounds.us/texas/188-fort-sam-houston-army-rv-park

Mitchell Lake Audubon Center

<http://mitchelllake.audubon.org>

Natural Bridge Caverns

201-651-6101
www.naturalbridgecaverns.com

Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch

830-438-7400
www.wildliferanchtexas.com

San Antonio Botanical Garden

210-207-3250, www.sabot.org

San Antonio KOA

800-562-7783, www.koa.com/campgrounds/san-antonio

San Antonio Visitor Information

800-447-3372
<http://visitsanantonio.com>

Travelers World RV Resort

210-532-8310
www.travelersworldrvresort.com

VIA Information Office (reduced trolley and bus fare rates for 62 and older)

210-362-2020, www.viainfo.net

Witte Museum

210-357-1900, <http://wittemuseum.org>

Mission San José is an interesting place to explore. Built in 1720, the mission is the largest in Texas and is located in San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.



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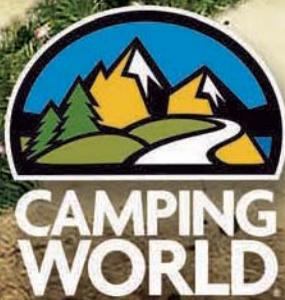
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Contents





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ARIZONA'S GREAT ABYSS

The Grand Canyon, one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, is a colorful landscape of beautifully preserved ancient rocks layered in history



(Top) An elk wanders into our campground at sunset. (Above) Hopi dancers leap in their intricate costumes at El Tovar.

On each of our previous visits to the Grand Canyon — there have been half a dozen over the years — our first glimpse into the mighty abyss was always either in broad daylight or at sunset. No matter the time of day, it seems, the canyon presents a spectacular light show, the colors of the massive bluffs changing almost imperceptibly as you watch. This time we decided to see what wonders sunrise might bring.

There are stretches along the South Rim, our destination, that visitors aren't allowed to drive in their cars, but a shuttle bus service — the best bargain in the park — is available for free (all you need is a park entrance permit). There are four different color-coded routes, and the buses can be boarded at a variety of locations. It's a terrific system, not only for visitors' convenience, but also in that it reduces air pollution by taking nearly half a million vehicles off park roads (according to park literature).

In the summer, most of the buses begin their daily trips at 4:15 a.m., except those on the "purple" route, which runs along South Entrance Road and Arizona Highway 64 to Tusayan, a mile south of the park entrance. Grand Canyon Camper Village and RV Campground where we stayed is there, as are the Grand Canyon Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau, the IMAX Theater and gift shop, and a string of hotels and shops. The first bus leaves Tusayan at 8 a.m., which we made use of on other occasions.

This time, we drove in the pre-dawn to Grand Canyon Visitor Center to catch an "orange" shuttle that would take us, along with a handful of others, the few miles to South Kaibab Trailhead (where one man got off, planning to hike the trail barefooted) and on to 7,262-foot-high Yaki Point, the highest elevation in the park and the shuttle route's eastern end, where we would watch the sun come up. Yaki Point's location, where it stretches far out into the canyon, makes it one of the most sublime places imaginable to be at daybreak.

By now the sky at the horizon had paled to dull gray, though the canyon below us was still hidden, shrouded in blackness. But sunrise happens quickly, first as a bit of bright orange appearing beneath a long swath of gray cloud over the purple hills. The sky, soon gold at the horizon, fades to yellow higher up and pale blue overhead — and suddenly the stair-step bluffs, terraces, pedestals and other stone elements of the canyon begin to take shape. Far below, we could just make out the zigzag fingernail-scratch that is South Kaibab Trail.





Visitors at sunrise are nearly surrounded by the abyss at 7,262-foot-high Yaki Point, a narrow promontory jutting over the canyon.



ARIZONA'S GREAT ABYSS

Then the sun popped above the cloud in a burst of fiery yellow, its rosy-gold rays splayed against distant bluffs like spokes, and a vibrant pink spread along the horizon. The dome of sky washed to even paler blue as the sun advanced, and as light poured into the canyon, indigo-blue "smoke" lightened to turquoise. Then, as if a series of electric switches was being turned on, the mighty bluffs were illuminated one-by-one to the canyon floor. Stone — in shades of camel-tan, bronze or ash-gray in midday — is cloaked in richer hues of purple, burgundy, rose and gold in the early morning. (We came back later that day for comparison.)

The canyon is, of course, the main reason some 4.5 million visitors come here from all over the world every year (park literature is available in Japanese, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Chinese and Korean, as well as English). The park offers other attractions, including Hopi House, El Tovar Hotel, Kolb Studio, Desert View Watchtower, a geology museum at Yavapai Observation Station, Tusayan Museum and Verkamp's Visitor Center. There are trails, lodges, campgrounds, restaurants and visitor centers and, of course, the famous mule rides.

Hopi House, designed by renowned Southwest architect Mary Colter, was built to resemble an ancient Indian pueblo. The imposing structure, built



Mule riders, including the author, setting out for the South Rim's Abyss Overlook.

largely by Hopi workmen using native wood and stone, was made a National Historic Landmark in 1987.

The Harvey Company, which operated first-rate hotels and restaurants along the Santa Fe Railroad beginning in 1876, opened Hopi House in 1905 as a gallery and to sell Native American arts and crafts. Navajo rugs and basketry, and gorgeous silver, coral and turquoise jewelry made by Navajo and Hopi artisans are available, as are T-shirts and other souvenir items. In a courtyard outside, ornately costumed Hopi dancers perform at various times.

El Tovar is across the road at the edge of the canyon. New in 1905 and named for Spanish explorer Pedro de Tovar (who led the first expedition to Hopi Indian country 365 years earlier),

the rustically elegant 100-room structure includes a sumptuous hotel, dining room (dinner reservations required; call 928-638-2631, ext. 6432) and gift shop that sells fine Native American jewelry and much more. Originally run by the Harvey Company, El Tovar once had greenhouses for growing fruit and vegetables, a steam generator to power electric lights and even its own dairy.

Nearby Kolb Studio, also on the National Register of Historic Places, was built by brothers Ellsworth and Emery Kolb, photographers and river rafters who came to live at the canyon in 1902, 17 years before it was made a national park. They were the first to document a boat trip down the Colorado with a movie camera. The (continued on page 27)



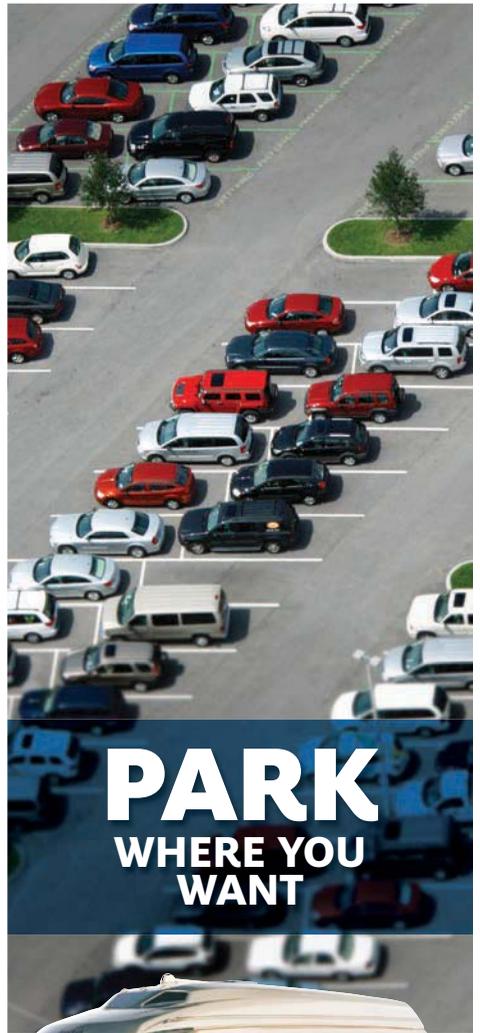
Rustic Kolb Studio, perched at the edge, a mile above the Colorado River.



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User Guide

Contents



ARIZONA'S GREAT ABYSS

(continued from page 24) former studio is home to exhibits and an extensive bookstore.

Yavapai Point and Geology Museum are a short drive west of Mather Point, one of the most popular sites for viewing the canyon. The museum, dedicated in 1928, displays a floor-to-ceiling model of the canyon's stone layers, a three-dimensional relief map and other exhibits that interpret the geologic forces that created the "magnificent abyss" and examine its human history. Best, however, is the panoramic view through the windows.

Cylindrical Desert View Watchtower about 25 miles east of Grand Canyon Village, was also designed by Mary Colter and was built in 1932 by Hopi artisans. Murals by Hopi artist Fred Kabotie are featured on the second level of the 70-foot tower; there's also a gift shop. Desert View Visitor Center is nearby, as is a trading post and market. Three miles west is Tusayan Ruins, the crumbling remains of a pueblo built around 1185 A.D., excavated in 1930 but, uncharacteristically for the time, never restored. A museum here interprets 12th-century human life at the Canyon.

As anyone who has been to Grand Canyon knows, trying to describe it is virtually impossible. Words, even pictures, don't do it justice. More difficult still is trying to fathom the amount of time that has passed since the canyon began to take shape. Park rangers offer various programs at several locations on this subject and many others.

Among them are "Grand Canyon Ecology" dealing with the canyon's "life zones;" "History Talk" about the people



IF YOU GO

Grand Canyon Camper Village and RV Campground, Highway 64 near the South Rim Park Entrance, Tusayan, Arizona, is open year-round. The campground has picnic tables, coin-operated laundry facilities, propane sales, and ice and firewood are available. RV sites have 20-, 30- and 50-amp hookups; no generator use is allowed on the property.
928-638-2887, www.grandcanyoncampervillage.com

Grand Canyon National Park
928-638-7888, www.nps.gov/grca

Mule Rides

Mule rides are offered daily year-round. For information or advance reservations call 888-297-2757 or 303-297-2757 or visit www.grandcanyonlodges.com. For same or next day reservations call 928-638-2631.

who, over the centuries have called the canyon home; "Critter Chat" about the canyon's wildlife (250 species of birds, 70 species of mammals, 25 species of reptiles and five species of amphibians); and "Geology Walk" about the canyon's amazing story. There are also several ranger-led hikes and bicycle tours. As we've found to be typical of the national parks, the programs are all first-rate.

"Geology Walk," a half-mile walk along the rim observing how the canyon came to be, is especially interesting. A ranger explains how, about 70 million years ago, a large part of what would become the southwestern United States began to rise. Colliding tectonic plates pushed the Colorado Plateau from near sea level to more than 10,000 feet high.

About 6 million years ago, water flowing over the plateau carrying sand, gravel and rocks began grinding down through the stony layers, and the erosion continues today. While from the rim, the relentlessly scouring Colorado River may appear a slim thread, it actually averages about 300 feet wide and 100 feet deep.

Despite the many millennia of grinding, which wears away a paper-thin slice annually, the bottom of the canyon below the South Rim is still 2,450 feet above sea level. At 277 miles long and 1 mile deep, the Grand Canyon ranges in width from 8 to 16 miles, and spans a total of 1,904 square miles. It was established as a forest reserve in 1893, and made a national monument by President Theodore Roosevelt 15 years later. Then in 1919, three years after the National Park Service was

(Above left) Steam engine #4960 backs off the main line of the Grand Canyon Railway in Williams. The line runs daily 65-mile trips to the canyon with diesel and steam engines. (Left) Bright Angel Trail drops steeply into the canyon.



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formed, Congress declared it Grand Canyon National Park.

A highlight of our visit was the three-hour, 4-mile Abyss Overlook Mule Ride (offered daily, year-round). Two dozen or so riders gathered at noon at the Mule Barn (which assistant livery manager Steve Byrd says will be made into a museum after a new barn is built at Kaibab Trailhead). There we were given lengthy instructions and assigned our mules (mine was a sweet round molly named Jezebel, age 17).

Keeping the mules "nose-to-tail" as much as possible (for the animals' safety, as a mountain lion might be lurking, Byrd had said), we walked and trotted along streambeds, through piney woods, and up and down hills to Abyss Overlook. There we took a 20-minute break to admire the canyon, draped in purple haze in mid-afternoon.

Another not-to-be-missed attraction here is "Grand Canyon: The Movie" at the IMAX Theater. The film (which claims to be the most-watched IMAX movie of all time) depicts the discovery and history of the Canyon — said by Theodore Roosevelt to be "one of the great sights every American should see" — and the adventure that's possible here.

Despite the large number of mammals and birds that call the Grand Canyon home, we had seen only a few (several ordinary rock squirrels and an unusual Abert's squirrel with outsized feathery ears, and one or two raptors we thought might be condors but couldn't be sure). But on the last evening of our visit we were treated to a fine surprise.

Near sunset, as the Western sky blazed with purple clouds outlined in fuchsia, a magnificent bull elk sporting an eight-point rack sashayed down from the woods into the campground to nose among the picnic tables and munch grass. Minutes later another bull — this one a 10-pointer — arrived, soon to be joined by a third — none of them fazed by the multitude of campers who emerged from their RVs, cameras in hand. The beautiful beasts continued their moseying and dining until long after the sun was gone. We can't imagine a more perfect finale for a visit to this incredible place. 📷

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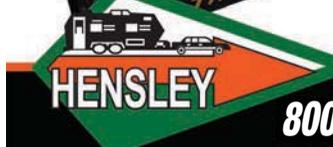


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FLORIDA'S SCENIC GEM

De Leon Springs State Park, built around a natural sulfur spring, is a Shangri-La for bird-watchers, hikers, kayakers and pancake connoisseurs!



Full of surprises, Florida is a favorite among RVers who like to scratch beneath the surface for hidden gems that many guidebooks miss. One of those is De Leon Springs State Park, 6 miles north of DeLand — where you can kick off a visit by cooking up your own pancake breakfast or lunch at The Old Spanish Sugar Mill Restaurant.

Local folklore has it that explorer

Juan Ponce de León discovered the Fountain of Youth here and that the Spanish built a sugar mill at the site in 1570. Truth is, there's no evidence to support either legend.

The reality is that Native Americans resided around the park's large spring for thousands of years. Two dugout canoes (5,000 and 6,000 years old) recovered from the spring are among the oldest ever found in America.

Recorded history dates back to 1779 when British traders encountered Seminole Indians living at the spring. Local planters came along in the 1820s, forcing out the Seminoles and building the first sugar mill on the site about 1830. It was burned to the ground during the Second Seminole War (1835-1842) and rebuilt. Then it was torched again by Union troops during the Civil War in 1864 — and once more rebuilt.



De Leon Spring pumps out some 15 million gallons of water a day — enough to fill 23 Olympic swimming pools.

FLORIDA'S SCENIC GEM

By the 1880s the spring had become a winter resort where tourists were promised "a fountain of youth impregnated with a deliciously healthy combination of soda and sulphur." A hotel, dancing pavilion and casino were added in the 1920s and the Clyde Beatty Circus began wintering at the site. In the mid-'50s the resort was further developed as an attraction, adding gardens, a jungle cruise and a water circus featuring a water-skiing elephant. The State of Florida purchased the property in 1982 and it became De Leon Springs State Park.

Today, the mill is home to The Old Spanish Sugar Mill Restaurant, where folks line up daily from 9 a.m. (8 a.m. on weekends) to 4 p.m. to cook pancakes made from hearty stone-ground flour right at their tables — or to select more run-of-the-mill (pun intended) dishes such as sandwiches and salads for lunch.



(Above) Prepping your own pancakes at The Old Spanish Sugar Mill Restaurant is a fun (and filling) way to begin a visit to De Leon Springs State Park. **(Below)** Visitors are welcome to take a dip in the tranquil 72-degree waters of De Leon Spring.





(Above left) Orange City RV Resort offers luxury-level sites just a short distance from De Leon Springs State Park. **(Above right)** Twice burned and rebuilt, the Old Spanish Sugar Mill at De Leon Spring originated in the 1830s.

The restaurant is owned and ably operated by Park Concessionaire Patty Schwarze, whose father Peter — a fifth-generation grist miller — bought and rebuilt the structure to open it as a restaurant in 1961. The unique eatery serves as many as 400 patrons a day, frequently reaching that mark on busy weekends. Should you plan a weekend visit hoping to produce some pancakes, you'd best be there to join the queue well before 8 a.m.

Once satiated, you can undertake a variety of calorie-reducing activities. Many visitors go for a swim in the tranquil spring, which pumps out some 15 million gallons of water a day, flowing from an underwater cavern at a constant year-round temperature of 72 degrees. Hikers can stride out on a number of developed trails. A half-mile paved nature trail, which is wheelchair accessible, passes through a flood plain hammock dotted with hardwood, pine and bald cypress trees — including one notable specimen named "Old Methuselah" that is more than 500 years old. The Wild Persimmon Hiking Trail, a 4-mile loop, will lead you through several of the 600-acre park's 11 distinct natural communities. A portion of the Florida National Scenic Trail also winds through the park. A visitor center next to the spring features exhibits on the nature, history and culture of the area.

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While hiking, keep your eye out for deer and wild turkey, and for small mounds and scattered deposits of white or gray snail shells. They serve as evidence of centuries of occupation by Native American groups who either lived around or visited the spring, where they'd gather and cook the snails, discarding piles of shells.

Canoes, kayaks and paddleboats can be rented at the park concession (or you can bring your own), providing easy access along the spring run (Spring Garden Creek) to 21,574 acres of lakes, creeks and marshes that form the Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge and adjacent Lake George Wildlife Management Area. Both preserves offer prime bird watching. The bird checklist here tabulates more than 125 species that may be viewed year-round. Notable

You can camp, hire a fishing guide or rent a pontoon boat at Highland Park Fish Camp, near De Leon Springs State Park. The campground offers sites with full hookups and is on 30 acres.

among them are herons, egrets, ibises, spoonbills, storks, osprey and a long list of ducks, geese and other waterfowl. Otters are regularly sighted and manatees make their way into the creek during the winter months. Florida black bears are sometimes spotted along the water's edge here as well. It's the alligators, however, that will really grab your attention. There are many of them — some more than 10 feet in length.

Fishing is another popular recreational pursuit, drawing anglers to cast for bass and bream along Spring Garden Creek. A Florida freshwater fishing license is required, except for kids under the age of 16 and resident seniors over the age of 65.

The best way to take in the wildlife and other natural aspects of the park and downstream refuges is with one of Captain Frank Wiltse's Fountain of Youth Eco/History Tours aboard the 28-passenger pontoon boat MV/Acuera. No worries with Captain Frank at the helm — he's a former submariner who has piloted everything from Navy research ships to tugboats. During the 14 years he's conducted these 50-minute tours, he's gained a wealth of knowledge about the area's complex eco-systems and he can spot a basking 'gator at 100 yards that you'd swear was a tree stump.

Unfortunately, there's no camping at De Leon Springs State Park but RVers can choose from a couple of nearby campgrounds that are as exceptional as they are different. Should you wish to remain off the beaten path to enjoy a back-to-nature "Old Florida" camping experience, and especially if you're an angler, you'll want to

THE MANY ALLIGATORS WILL REALLY GRAB YOUR ATTENTION – SOME ARE MORE THAN 10 FEET IN LENGTH

steer directly to Highland Park Fish Camp, just off Grand Avenue, about 5 miles southwest of De Leon Springs. As the name implies, it is primarily a fish camp, ideally situated on the backwaters of the St. Johns River bordering Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge.

Owned and operated by the Rawlins family for more than 50 years, the rustic old camp features a marina, bait/tackle shop, rental cabins and an RV campground. There's nothing fancy about the latter but it offers full hook-ups and is favorably priced at \$27 per night. A tip: rent one of HP's easy-to-navigate pontoon boats for some great bass fishing, bird watching or simply to explore the magical, almost primeval environment surrounding the camp.

If roughing it isn't your thing and you're seeking maximum comfort and modern amenities, Orange City RV Resort will be more to your liking. This well-manicured mega-park is easily reached from De Leon Springs by

following Highway 17/92 south through Deland to Graves Avenue, where you'll turn east to find the resort — just before crossing Interstate 4 — in the 2300 block of East Graves in Orange City.

In spite of the fact that it's situated right in the middle of everything — 20 minutes from Daytona Beach and the Speedway; 45 minutes from Disney's Magic Kingdom and Universal Studios — Orange City RV Resort exudes a countrylike atmosphere with plenty of shade trees and green space. A long list of amenities includes a large heated pool/spa, beauty salon, picnic pavilion, miniature golf, shuffleboard and bocci ball courts, billiards, a spacious clubhouse hosting a variety of regularly scheduled events and activities, laundry, cable and free wireless hot spots. In short, more than just a campground, it is a resort in every sense of the word. Rates for a standard site range seasonally from \$34 to \$40 per night, based on two-person occupancy. Weekly rates are from \$238 to \$274. 📞

IF YOU GO

De Leon Springs State Park is open 8 a.m. to sunset 365 days a year. Current admission fees are \$8 per vehicle (2-8 persons) and \$4 per single-occupancy vehicle. Pedestrians, bicyclists and extra passengers pay \$2.

Captain Frank Wiltse's Fountain of Youth Eco/History Tours

Departures four times daily — at 10 and 11 a.m. and 12 and 1 p.m. — are priced at \$14 per seat; 4 and under are free. Reservations are recommended, especially on weekends. 386-837-5537, www.foytours.net

Florida State Parks

850-245-2157
www.floridastateparks.org

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MADE IN THE SHADE

Awning in need of repair? Dometic replacement parts and a couple of hours of labor will put the fun back into patio time

When it comes to life outdoors, a patio awning is a necessity. Whether it's to keep you comfortable in the hot summer sun, or dry during an autumn rain, a patio awning is an exterior feature that few of us can live without. Along with putting down

your RV's leveling jacks and plugging in, deploying the awning is part of a ceremony that means you've arrived, and are ready to enjoy all the things RVing has to offer.

So when the awning stops working, it's easy to see how the RV experience

just isn't the same. It's a little like cookies without milk, or peanut butter without jelly — you can still enjoy, but it's certainly not as good as it could be. Happily, if the awning is damaged or has called it quits altogether, there are a variety of replacement options available from the awning manufacturers. For example, Dometic USA offers awnings in both manual and power configurations, and they can be ordered in a wide selection of fabrics, sizes and colors to suit most trailers and motorhomes.

We recently observed a Dometic WeatherPro power awning as it was repaired on a 2005 Winnebago Itasca. Purchased used only months ago, the coach was in very good condition, save for the original power awning that



was hurtin' for certain. It would deploy partially, but then had to be pulled out the rest of the way by hand — and even then, it didn't look quite right. Clearly, the previous owner had struck something while the awning was deployed or partially deployed, bending the awning arms and a bracket. Perhaps because of the resulting lack of use, age or both, the awning material had also begun to mildew and rot, rendering it practically useless.

Installing a new replacement awning isn't terribly difficult, but it does require a few friends, a couple of ladders and a healthy dose of caution. After all, even a small patio awning is a large, heavy and cumbersome piece of equipment that is under spring tension, and must be handled with extreme care to prevent injury. If in doubt, always contact a local RV dealer or RV outlet such as Camping World to have the awning installed for you.

While this awning is being installed on a motorhome, the installation process is similar on a trailer. It's a simple matter of ordering the correct size (the WeatherPro is available in lengths ranging from 10-21 feet) and installing it according to the manufacturer's instructions. Within a couple of hours, you'll have it made in the shade.



1) The front awning arm was actually bent slightly to the left, which prevented the awning from deploying correctly or completely. **2)** The first step to replacing the old awning was to get the arms away from the coach so the mounting bolts could be accessed.



3) With the rear awning arm pulled out, it was easy to see that it was bent, too. Obviously, the former owner had struck something with the awning deployed or partially deployed, which caused the damage. **4)** Once damaged, the awning arm was making contact with the mounting bracket on the coach every time the awning was deployed/stowed. Clearly, the awning had been used in its damaged state for a long time.



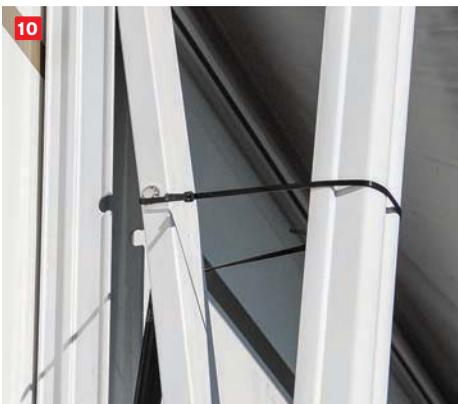
5) With the awning arms away from the coach, the mounting screws could be accessed and removed with a cordless drill. **6)** Beneath this plastic bracket are more screws that secure the awning arm to the coach, so these must be removed as well.



7) The remaining two screws under the plastic bracket are removed. **8)** Upon inspection of the roof brackets, more significant damage was discovered. You can see that the bracket itself was badly bent, and the resulting roof damage had been repaired rather poorly with automotive-grade silicone.



9



10

9) Since new roof brackets did not come in the kit (they're normally not required) the awning arm was removed from the bracket, and then the bracket carefully bent back into shape for re-use. The roof was properly repaired before the new awning was bolted into place.

10) Before the awning assembly is removed, the arms are secured with nylon ties to prevent the springs from pushing the arms out. This is an important step; if the arms are not secured, they could cause injury during removal.



11



12

11) The old awning material was mildewed and showed signs of rot, so rather than attempting to save it, it was cut away from the roof rail.

12) With the bolts removed and helpers holding the awning arms at each end, the entire assembly could be removed from the coach.

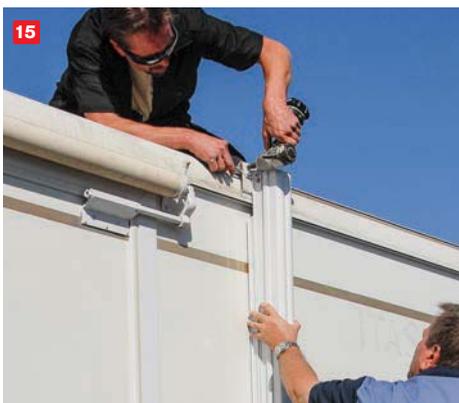


13



14

13) Rather than removing the new awning assembly from its plastic wrap, a useful tip is to just cut the top of the wrap, so the awning does not get dirty on the ground awaiting install. 14) This small cotter pin prevents the assembly from unintentionally deploying, so it is important to leave it in place until the awning is mounted and ready for use.



15



16

15) The awning is lifted into place, and then secured to the roof brackets first. 16) The material at the end of the awning is fed into the roof rail, and the awning tube carefully slid into place. This takes some patience, as the material can snag and rip if not carefully fed into the roof rail.

17) The power cord for the awning motor is plugged in first, as it is located behind the arm and can't be accessed once the arms are bolted into place. 18) The top mounting bolts are installed next.



19) The bottom mounting screws are installed in a reverse order of the removal, and once everything is secured, the nylon ties are cut and the previously mentioned cotter pin removed. 20) The new awning functions perfectly, and looks fantastic.



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While there are many choices when considering a replacement toilet, Thetford steps up to the plate offering an entire lineup of new toilets, varying in style and features. The Residence is intended to mimic the much-loved traits of a typical residential toilet while focusing on what's important for the average RVer. Of the many features of the Residence, probably the most important is the premium lightweight construction complete with matching, comfortable full-size seat and cover. The new Thetford Residence is made of

Living in your preferred castle on wheels likely empowers a sensation of royalty as if you're the king or queen, comfortably embedded in your personalized kingdom. In this particular scenario, there lies another type of seat, quite private and often referred to as a throne of sorts. Of course, I'm describing the toilet seat.

Nearly every RV in production today

offers full plumbing, including all the necessary sanitary provisions. However, the toilets provided by the factory aren't always up to par with individual expectations or quality. Whether your current model doesn't flush well or sits at an unusual height for your comfort, or you've always wanted porcelain but didn't want to make the additional investment (or are weight conscious), Thetford has a new practical option, the



(1) First step is to remove the shroud around the base of the old toilet (if so equipped) to expose the water connection and the nuts that hold the toilet in place. (2) In this case the water line to the toilet was fairly easy to remove. Space may be restricted, so be prepared to work by feel, if necessary. Although water pressure should have been relieved, have towels ready to soak up any leaking water.



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User Guide

Contents



Reclaiming the Throne

composite materials and weighs only 9½ pounds. If you don't tap on it, you'll think it's a porcelain toilet.

The other factors when choosing a toilet are the flushing design and mechanism. To help improve flow of the flush, a system was integrated that provides 100 percent bowl coverage, using enough water pressure to surround the entire inner perimeter and wash down the contents completely with every flush. This type of system assures a clean bowl, which is an issue with toilets with lazy water distribution. Backing up the upgraded rinsing system is a huge ball valve, which aids greatly in efficiency, providing a clean wipe with each opening and closing. Also adding to the list of beneficial features is the improvement in seat height. The Residence sits at an ADA compliant 18 inches at the seat, allowing for more legroom and overall comfort. The taller height may not seem to offer much compared to other toilet models, but let me be the first to tell you that this small boost makes all the difference in the world when dealing with tight bathroom quarters. For those who have an existing toilet on a built-up platform, the low profile model is 14 inches high.

The installation of the Aqua Magic Residence is really quite straightforward and can usually be handled by the casual owner/installer. It requires 9½ inches from the back wall to the center of the



(3) Nuts that hold the toilet snug to the floor flange are removed with a wrench or socket; they should not be too tight. **(4)** Configuration in back of Residence is quite different from the original toilet. New water line may have to be used to make the connection. **(5)** Thetford supplies a nipple for connecting a spray nozzle to the toilet. Hose and nozzle can also be ordered with the toilet. **(6)** Original hose and spray nozzle was removed from the old toilet and reused on the Residence.

closet flange and the toilet is a tad wider than 15 inches and almost 20 inches long. Most bathrooms will have enough space, but if the area was designed around a basic plastic toilet with a top-mounted, hand-operated flush handle, careful measurements are in order.

Begin by grabbing a simple ratchet

set with a few extensions. Most likely the nuts are going to be either 7/16 or 1/2 inch. Now is a good time to make sure the water system is off and the pressure is relieved. Even so, be prepared to soak up any residual water. Remove the two mounting nuts from the toilet flange. Some toilet models might require the

(7) Thetford Aqua Magic Residence meets ADA requirements for toilet seat height of 18 inches, which is considerably taller than the original toilet. **(8)** Nipple in back of new toilet is cut with a knife so that the hose from the retained spray nozzle can be installed.





(9) Hose from the old spray nozzle is installed on the nipple of the new toilet using a simple hose clamp. Obviously, this step is done before installing the toilet. **(10)** Old flange seal is lifted from the floor. Plan on a little clean up here, and wear protective gloves. **(11)** T-bolts are slid into appropriate slots in the old closet flange. Chances are good that the slots will line up with the new toilet.

removal of a shroud to expose these nuts. Next, remove the water line and sprayer hose off the wall clip, if so equipped. The old toilet can be lifted off the old closet flange seal with little effort. Expect a little cleanup at the floor before proceeding with the installation. Locate the new T-bolts and place them in the appropriate slots in the closet flange mounted to the floor. If your bathroom is fully carpeted, set the toilet over the T-bolts, trace the outline and cut the carpet to reveal the floor. Next, you'll put the new closet flange seal onto the toilet, making sure that the lip side is facing down, and reset the toilet over the T-bolts using body weight to press it to the floor. While sitting on the toilet, use the appropriate ratchet and socket combo to tighten the nuts until the new Residence is stable, which may

require an assistant depending on your dexterity. If an assistant is not available, the nuts can be snugged evenly using care not to overtighten.

The next step is to reattach the water line, which may need to be cut or modified to reach properly. We took the opportunity to reuse the sprayer that was connected to the old toilet. This was done by simply cutting the appropriate nipple on the water valve and securing the hose using a clamp before mounting the new toilet. The Residence can also be ordered with an optional hand spray already attached. The water can now be turned back on and the line/fittings double-checked for any leaks.

So, how did it work? In a word, "amazing!" There is no comparison to the toilet that came with the trailer. The existing toilet developed valve issues

shortly after putting it into service and barely spewed droplets of water to flush the contents. The Residence is comfortable to sit on and uses a foot pedal for flushing. The pedal is also used to add water to the bowl before using. Not only did the taller seat height improve use in the very tight space allocated for the toilet in the test trailer, but the jet-stream-like water flow allowed the contents to move through the open valve with virtually no staining on the bowl, minimizing cleanup. The Thetford Aqua Magic Residence is a great choice for owners looking for a competitively priced, standard-size toilet replacement for any RV. The toilet is available in white and bone colors and retails for \$229, but better pricing can be found on the Internet and at Camping World.

www.thetford.com 📱

(12) New closet flange seal is positioned on the Residence, making sure that the lip side is facing down. **(13)** The seal will stay in place as the toilet is turned over for mounting on the closet flange bolts. Nuts are tightened to compress toilet onto seal, but do not over torque. Nut caps are used to finish off the install. **(14)** Toilet in this location was a tight fit, but additional height improved usability. Toilet requires 9½ inches clearance from back wall to the center of closet flange.



Lance Camper 1172

This well-recognized builder offers its biggest camper with two slides and plenty of room for adventures off the beaten path

Lance Camper will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2015 and over the course of those five decades, the company has become a recognized leader in the manufacturing of pickup campers that are contemporary and well built. At the top of its versatile model lineup, the 1172 provides the most interior space thanks to two slideouts and an amazing number of amenities within its 11-foot 11-inch box length. Since truck campers are a great way to explore the roads less traveled, we decided to venture out for 10 days and test Lance's flagship camper.

The 4,144-pound (wet weight) test camper was placed on a Ford F-450 Super Duty diesel, which made an ideal combo for our "let's take this road and see where we end up" itinerary. With our crew of five people and one dog, we utilized every inch of space in the camper, yet we felt like there was still

lots of room for storage and to move around. The rear slide with reclining couch pops out almost 2 feet, while the streetside slide with dinette extends 2 feet 4 inches.

During daylight hours, the inside of the Lance stayed bright, thanks to the galley's three large windows, as well as

a smaller kitchen window. Also shedding extra light was the optional Fan-Tastic powered roof vent (\$215) in the galley. The bedroom has windows on either side and there's a large skylight/escape hatch over the bed. At night, LED lighting throughout the interior keeps it bright. When it's time to sleep, the day/night shades do an admirable job of blocking out light.

The galley's gloss-finished hardwood framed cabinets with raised panels and the leaf-motif Rain Forest/solid pattern on the cushions (three decors available) give an overall classy and homey feel. The vinyl floor, which looks like tile, is the same that's used in all





Floorplan is open and bright and offers good walking around space. The streetside dinette slideout seats four comfortably. The kitchen, with hardwood framed cabinets and raised panels, has enough room to cook without feeling crowded.

Lance models. The light-colored flooring with a multi-pattern is a nice contrast to the darker cabinets, plus it did a good job hiding dirt, despite the fact that five people and a dog did their best to track in mud whenever possible.

The steps in and out of the entry door are steep; an interior handrail adds an element of safety. The bottom

interior step had excellent nonskid grip (now standard), which we discovered when coming in out of the rain. In our opinion, the swing-out entry-assist handle (\$41) is a must-have. On that same wall are light switches and a holding pocket for the remote to operate the slideouts and jacks — it's the perfect place, and all within reach. The

drawback to this floorplan is that you have to open the rear slide to get into the camper, then you have access only to the incline sofa and back pantry (a good place to pack snacks you want to get to more easily). Likewise, if you need to get to the refrigerator or to the bathroom, you'll need to open the other slide because when it's closed, the di-



nette is almost flush with the kitchen. The upside to this arrangement was that boxes stored under the dinette stayed firmly in place, as did blankets and pillows stacked on the couch, while underway.

In the L-shaped kitchen, there's enough floor space to move from the sink to the three-burner range and oven without feeling crowded. The stove's backsplash and tinted splash guard keep stovetop schmutz contained, plus grease and grime off the stairwell and handrail below. A countertop extension flips up/folds down and adds needed space to the laminate countertop. It has a raised lip on its edge — great for preventing liquids from dripping onto the floor — and it's conveniently located next to the sink with a pullout faucet so veggies/food can be rinsed off and transferred to a close-by work surface. There's even enough room for a person to squeeze by between the dinette and countertop extension.

There's ample cabinet and smooth-rolling drawer space for storing food and kitchen items. An optional slide-out rack (\$254) in the pantry is very convenient, but we learned not to fill it to the brim with heavy canned items because the rack came off during driving (easily put back on the track). Also, you'll have to watch your step when going into the pantry, as it's located by the second stair in the entryway. Over the sink is a deep cabinet with adjustable shelves. During transit, cups and coffee rolled off the top shelf and into the right corner. Smaller people will have trouble retrieving items that roll into the cabinet's far recesses. On this same cabinet, facing the dinette and at eye level, is the systems monitor panel showing fluid levels and controls for the (optional) built-in LP-gas generator and solar panel.

Across the way, and convenient for serving food from the kitchen, is the step-up dinette that seats four comfortably, and moves out on a slide with the refrigerator. There is lots of room at the table for four place settings, plus food, and also plenty of elbowroom for lively card games of Speed. Below the seating are large rollout storage drawers — the



(Top) Queen bed is comfortable, and lots of storage space and a mirrored wardrobe are all within easy reach. The large skylight/escape hatch is three-way height adjustable. **(Above)** The couch (with foot rests) is in the rear slideout. For 2014, Lance has replaced this sofa with a jack-knife sofa/bed. Pantry on left is deep and has lots of space to store food.

one adjacent to the refrigerator passes through to the outside. The dinette folds down to make a bed that's just a bit more than 5 feet in length — too short for two 6-foot teenage boys to sleep, but fine for children.

The rear sofa has 21-inch seat cushions that are cushy and firm, as are the 17-inch-high back cushions. The sofa has dual footrest extensions; however, since the backrest is fixed, you end up sitting upright with legs extended — or trying to slouch down to get situated. The jury is still out on how comfortable this really was, but shorter people found the footrests the most comfortable. I preferred to sit length-

wise on the sofa and scoot my back up to the wall, which gave me a view out the big window. Also, the footrest closest to the door blocks foot traffic into and out of the camper, and it did take some effort to push them back down. Lance has replaced that sofa with a 68-inch jack-knife counterpart that sleeps one ... assuming that person is 5 feet 8 inches or less or doesn't mind sleeping with his/her feet hanging off. Updated cabinet hardware is also on the short list of changes.

For a decidedly more comfortable place to stretch out and get a good night's sleep, head toward the front and step up into the 60-by-80-inch

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User Guide

Contents





With the Lance's dual slides deployed, there's lots of room inside. To use the ladder, which stores flush against the exterior, two pins are removed and the ladder is pulled away from the camper.

pillow-top queen bed over the truck cab. Bed-to-ceiling space offered enough headroom for my 6-foot-4-inch husband to sit up without grazing the ceiling. The escape hatch/skylight with three-way height adjustability is 34 inches from the top of the mattress. It's well located so that you could lift yourself out in an emergency. One evening, the 16-by-23-inch-wide escape hatch became a safari hatch when three deer wandered into our campsite and I watched them undetected from my rooftop observation point.

There's a good amount of storage on either side of the bed, including cabinets on the streetside, a mirrored wardrobe for hanging clothes on the

curbside and cubbies flush with the bed. One of the cubbies, which Lance calls a hamper, is 19 inches wide by 38 inches long. It's shallow enough that all the contents in it were on display, and was a storage area for everything we readily wanted to get to including magazines, camera equipment, DVDs, water bottles and a flashlight. An interior light would be welcome (hence the flashlight) because when the cubby door is tilted open, it blocks the window, cutting off outside light. In the evening, one of the super-bright LED reading lights directed a mini spotlight onto the pages of my book.

The mirrored wardrobe makes the already good-sized cabover area ap-

SPECIFICATIONS

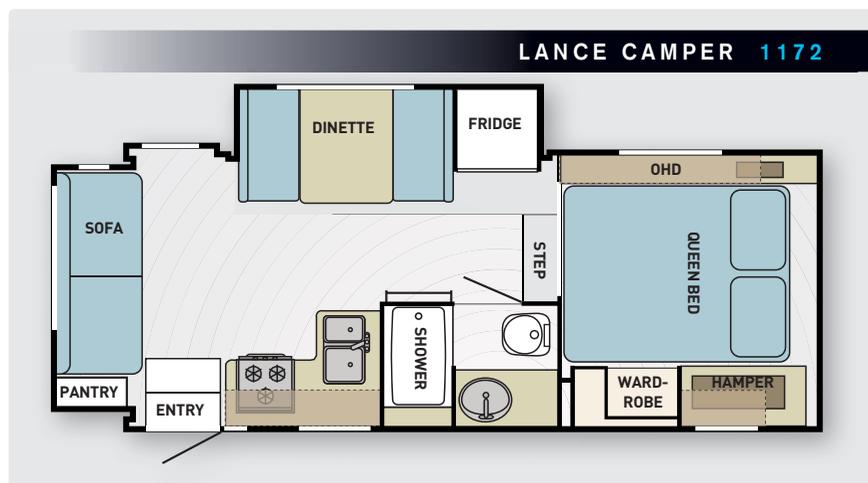
Box Length	11' 11"
Exterior Width	8' 0"
Exterior Height	9' 5"
Interior Width	10' 2 $\frac{1}{16}$ "
Interior Height	6' 8"
Cabover Height	3' 8"
Construction	Aluminum framed wall, floor, bed and ceiling; Azdel lightweight, ecofriendly substrates; block foam insulation; laminated insulated floor; one-piece TPO roof
Freshwater Cap.	42 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	35 / 35 gal.
LP-gas Cap.	14 gal.
Water Heater Cap.	6 gal.
Refrigerator	6 cu. ft.
Furnace	20,000 Btu
Air Conditioner	11,000 Btu
Converter	45 amp
Battery (2)	12-volt
Weight (freshwater, water heater, LP-gas full; no cargo)	4,144 lbs.
Base MSRP	\$38,069
As-Tested MSRP	\$51,615
Basic Warranty	1 year/ 2-year structural

Lance Camper Manufacturing

661-949-3322, www.lancecamper.com
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pear even larger. The bonus of the mirrored door is that it allows one person to primp if the bathroom (and mirror) is occupied by your spouse. One little complaint here — the small valance at the top of the wardrobe door, adhered by double-stick tape, kept coming off.

An AM/FM/DVD/iPod-compatible stereo (with interior and exterior speakers that can be set for specific zones) is housed above the bed. The outdoor speakers work very well for those who like to take the party outdoors. The optional 24-inch TV (\$595), set flush in an open cabinet on the wall between the lav and kitchen, is on a swing-out arm. The TV can be swiveled around for viewing from pretty much anywhere in the camper, whether you're sitting on the back sofa, at the dinette or lying in bed — or even from the bathroom, if you so desire.



Sunlight pours into the dry bath thanks to a power roof vent and a skylight in the shower that serves double-duty by providing extra headroom that allowed a 6-foot 4-incher plenty of space to stand upright. The shower pan is 19¼ by 21 inches, and there's also a seat. An expanding shower curtain rod (bends at two points to swing in or out) adds elbowroom, plus it placed the shower curtain out far enough that it didn't stick to our bodies. A removable clothes rod in the shower sets up in a second for drip-drying bathing suits, towels, etc. The bathroom's laminate countertop is roomy and there's generous storage with a large pullout drawer, some space inside the vanity and a good-sized medicine cabinet. With 16 inches of floor space between the shower and toilet, standing room is a little tight. While facing the mirror, left-handers should watch out to not whack an elbow on the medicine cabinet when brushing their teeth or shaving. The same goes for leaning forward to towel dry your hair when stepping from the shower, a lesson learned the one and only time!

It rained and hailed on us several times. We'd left the vents open about halfway and the skylight/escape hatch over the bed open on the first setting when we took off for a hike. Upon entering the camper later after a sudden downpour, we expected at least a puddle, but we're happy to report there was no soaked bed! Speaking of inclement weather, the standard 1172 is not considered four-season. However, the 4 Season All Weather Package with dual-pane windows and other options can be ordered to enhance insulation. The holding tanks and plumbing already have the benefit of heat circulation provided by ducting surrounding the water and sanitation components.

Outside, a large storage area in the back has doors that swing wide to allow easy access. The downside is that if the rear slide is open (and it would be if you want to get inside the camper), you'll need to crawl under the slide to reach that area. In fact, the same is true for the streetside slide, when connecting to shorepower. We recommend

hooking to power (if available) before deploying the slide, otherwise you'll be scrambling around underneath it. Also on this side are an exterior shower, storage compartments and the dump valves. Housed on the curbside (where the entry door is located) are compartments for the two 7-gallon LP-gas cylinders and access to the furnace and hot-water tank service doors. An 11-foot awning is optional (\$529).

There was little to complain about after taking the Lance 1172 on our adventure trip to California's Eastern Sierra. It certainly lived up to our expectations, together with the Ford F-450, taking us off the beaten path to out-of-the-way campsites up to almost 8,000 feet in elevation. It provided comfortable seating for five people, an efficient kitchen and enough room for our family and a large dog to sprawl out. 🐕

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UNIQUE TRAILERS

These may not be mainstream, but this collection of fun lightweights can be towed by almost any vehicle, offer protection from the elements and are easy to store

article by **Bob Ashley**



Trailers like the SylvanSport GO are proof that good things can come in small packages.

Recreational vehicles come in all shapes and sizes. The evidence is the number of travel trailers and pop-up-type towables and automotive tents that are unique to their particular markets.

Chief among these RVs are the venerable teardrop trailers built by Pleasant Valley Teardrop Trailers and distributed by Little Guy Worldwide out of Massillon, Ohio. Teardrops, around for more than 70 years, are easy to tow, provide comfortable sleeping quarters and are usually equipped with simple outdoor kitchens.

But there also is the SylvanSport GO, a pop-up that can be configured for sleeping or to haul various toys, such as four-wheelers or kayaks. Along those same lines are imported James Baroud hard-top rooftop tents — pop-ups sans wheels — that can be mounted on almost any vehicle, including a Mini Cooper.

And if you're semi-handy using a screwdriver, it's not difficult to assemble your own travel trailer — like the Tail Feather from Teal International, a startup kit manufacturer based in Colorado. "The largest segment of our market is retired RVers," said Teal President Larry Drake. "A lot of them have had motorhomes or large camping trailers and are looking for something that is small and can be pulled by their cars."

Better yet, when you're done using the Tail Feather, you can take it apart and store it in the garage.

Here's a closer look at a few of these RVs that can only be classified as unique.

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205/75R14 - 6PR

215/75R15 - 6PR

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205/75R15 - 8PR

225/75R15 - 8PR

225/75R15 - 10PR

235/80R16^{*} - 10PR

^{*}3 ply sidewall construction

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User Guide

Contents



Aliner Expedition »

► Aliner, based in Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania, says its camping customers want to be setup in 30 seconds and then go for a hike. Forget TVs and generators; true outdoor enthusiasts will like the company's hard-sided trailers with closed heights from 56 to 62 inches. Six floorplans are available ranging from 12 feet 8 inches to 18 feet. The 18-foot Expedition is the largest, with an 11-gallon freshwater tank, a dry weight of 1,800 pounds and a gross vehicle weight rating of 3,000 pounds. Aliners feature the VersaDine Five-Way Dinette that seats four for comfortable dining, is a storage area when the trailer is being towed and folds down to a 40-by-80-inch bed. A wet bath or toilet in place of a storage cabinet (Expedition model only) is optional. An outside shower is standard on all models except the Scout. MSRPs range from \$17,600 to \$25,500.



Aliner claims its hard-wall camping trailers can be set up in as little as 30 seconds.

i Aliner 724-423-7440, www.aliner.com

James Baroud Discovery Evolution Rooftop Tent »

► James Baroud hard-top rooftop tents, imported from Portugal by automotive upfitter OK 4WD of Stewartville, New Jersey, provide the advantages of a pop-up camper without having to pull a trailer. The tent assembly, which weighs less than 120 pounds, fits on any vehicle that is equipped with a roof rack. "Basically, anywhere the vehicle can go, the tent is going to go, too," said OK 4WD President Jim Oosdyk. Assembled with canvas side walls and a fiberglass-fortified polyester shell that collapses when on the road, James Baroud tents are waterproof and can withstand winds of more than 70 mph, according to the manufacturer. In the travel mode, the James Baroud is only about 13 inches high and provides about 6 inches of clearance between the bed and rooftop to store sleeping bags, clothes and pillows. MSRPs from \$2,495.95.



No trailer? No problem. The James Baroud rooftop tent goes anywhere your car can go.

i OK 4WD 908-454-6973, www.ok4wd.com

« Livin' Lite Recreational Vehicles Quicksilver



The Livin' Lite Quicksilver is available in a 6-foot, Jeep-branded and trail-rated model.

► Tent campers looking to move up to a folding camping trailer may want to scope out the all-aluminum pop-up by Livin' Lite Recreational Vehicles. In box lengths of 6 feet to 10 feet that open up to double those lengths when in camping mode, the 10-foot Quicksilver's dry weight is around 1,000 pounds and can be towed by almost any vehicle with an engine. The Quicksilver interior features aluminum cabinets along with a collapsible, convertible dinette that can be used indoors and outside, and is prepped for TVs, heaters or other electronic devices. For Jeep aficionados, there's also a 6-foot Jeep-branded, trail-rated Quicksilver built with official Jeep fenders, bumpers, tires and taillights. Quicksilver base MSRP: \$5,000.



Livin' Lite Recreational Vehicles 574-862-2228, www.livinlite.com

« Pleasant Valley Travel Trailers Silver Shadow



Nostalgic looks and modern features are hallmarks of Pleasant Valley teardrop trailers.

► If Pleasant Valley Travel Trailers in Massillon, Ohio, hasn't perfected the venerable teardrop trailer, it's come close with 14 floorplans in widths of 4, 5 and 6 feet. Included are all-birch cabinets, a stove, a refrigerator and air conditioning. The retro Silver Shadow, in 8- and 10-foot lengths with a high-gloss Alufiber exterior, harkens back to the 1930s when RVing was in its infancy. Pleasant Valley teardrops, with the exception of the Silver Shadow, feature fiberglass side walls and all are equipped with a rubber torsion suspension, custom graphics and aluminum stone guards. Solid wood cabinets come in most models. Outdoor galleys are available in all but one floorplan and include outdoor lighting and a dedicated space to prepare meals. MSRPs range from \$3,995 to \$10,355.



Pleasant Valley Travel Trailers 877-545-4897, www.golittleguy.com



Unique Trailers

SylvanSport GO »

► If the Swiss Army knife manufacturer made an RV, it might look like the multipurpose SylvanSport GO, which in its various configurations can be a pop-up camper, a toy hauler or a utility trailer. "Instead of a traditional RV we created outdoor gear that happens to have wheels on it," said Kyle Mundt, director of marketing and new product development for the Brevard, North Carolina-based company. Most recently, SylvanSport has outfitted the 13-foot GO with the Goal Zero: GO 400 Solar Power Kit, a compact, custom-designed system that lights up the trailer and powers electronics, fans and small appliances. It can also be used as a solar power system for base camps, cabins and as a backup for unexpected outages. MSRP: \$8,500.



Ideal for active lifestyles, the SylvanSport GO can haul bikes, boats and even motorcycles.

i SylvanSport 828-883-4292, www.sylvansport.com

T@B Teardrop Trailers »

► The European-designed T@B travel trailer (distributed by Little Guy Worldwide, Massillon, Ohio) is a diminutive 16-foot wonder with five floorplans that feature small indoor kitchens or rear outdoor galleys with sink/stove combinations and small refrigerators. The S-model floorplan even has a wet bath with shower. Since being acquired from Dutchmen Manufacturing in 2011, the T@B has been redesigned with an aluminum superstructure and white or silver EuroMax aluminum skin, trimmed in a choice of muted or bright colors including black, red, blue, yellow, orange or white. Interior features include hardwood birch cabinets, dual-pane windows, indoor/outdoor tables, hinged two-burner stoves, LED lighting and a 12-volt DC to 120-volt AC inverter with multiple outlets. Base MSRP: \$14,500.



Fresh and fun, T@B Teardrop Trailers are available in multiple colors and floorplans.

i T@B Teardrop Trailers 877-545-4897, <http://tab-rv.com>

« Tail Feather Camper by Teal International



A screwdriver is all it takes to assemble the Tail Feather kit by Teal International.

► If you've got a couple of hours and you're a do-it-yourselfer, you can build your own RV with Teal International's Tail Feather travel trailer kit. Each polyethylene piece — floor, side walls, roof, etc. — weighs less than 40 pounds, and when assembled comes in at less than 1,000 pounds dry weight. The Tail Feather fits on a 5-by-8-foot trailer, and when assembled, is 6 feet wide and 7½ feet long with 6 feet 2 inches of headroom. It comes with a double bed and four-person dinette. "It's designed to be assembled by one person with a screwdriver," said Larry Drake, president of the Loveland, Colorado, manufacturer. Included removable cabinets are made of canvas, and windows can be moved around. With a base retail price of \$7,995, extra panels can be added to make it 10 feet long. 📄

i Teal International Corp. 970-744-3624, www.tealcamper.com



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Conventional Cottage

An efficient floorplan makes the lightweight Forest River Salem T23FBS a practical getaway for couples

As a long-time woodworking enthusiast, I find my favorite tools are well built and do one thing really well. The same is true of the Salem T23FBS by Forest River. It's simple, straightforward and relatively small, but the efficient and open floorplan does everything most couples would want for weekend getaways.

Forest River builds the Salem in three locations — California, Oregon and Indiana — specific to weather conditions. The test trailer was built in Dallas, Oregon, which happens to be

very close to Salem, the Oregon capital. According to Ron Mullet, Salem product general manager, "Our Oregon plant produces Sailems for the Northwest United States and Western Canada.

This Salem plant focuses on producing RVs that are smaller, lighter and better equipped to handle the colder temps."

The Forest River plant building Salem RVs in Indiana produces a wide array of sizes (18 feet to 42 feet) and the California plant builds Sailems that can handle the heat and feature bigger freshwater tanks for travel to areas with a limited freshwater supply.

Three things give the Salem T23FBS

Towing the Salem T23FBS was easy-going, due in part to its light weight of 5,561 pounds and the use of a Husky Center Line hitch system.



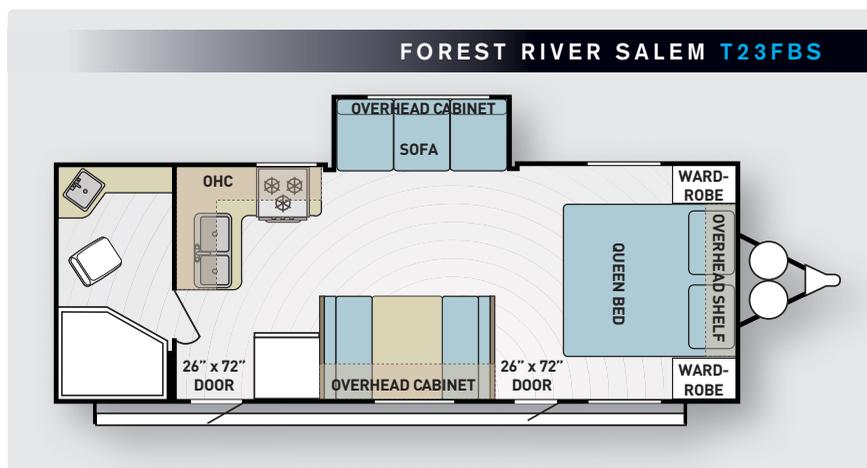
a big interior feel. First, there is only one partition at the bathroom, which covers the width of the rear the trailer. Second, a mid-unit sofa slide-out opens up the floor space from side to side. Finally, there is a wide opening into the bedroom. If you leave the bedroom curtain drawn back, it "opens" up the floorplan and you can spend a lot of time in this trailer and feel you have plenty of room to breathe.

The aluminum exterior siding is a clue to the affordability of this efficient travel trailer, while bold graphics and a smart untextured front skin give it a contemporary appeal. Good ground clearance necessitates double steps at each of the two entry doors. Foldaway handles are optional; the test unit had one installed at the rear door.

The primary entry door is located at the rear of the trailer just ahead of the bathroom. The entry is tucked away in a fashion that doesn't take a bite out of the floor space and provides



(Top) The Salem T23FBS's large master bedroom features two wardrobe closets with mirrored doors for hanging clothes and an open shelf above the head of the bed. The stock mattress was not the most comfortable, but there is plenty of room to upgrade. (Above) The galley's L-shaped design provides decent counterspace in the corner between the range and the sink. The combination of range hood and microwave make this kitchen area very functional for weekend outings.



easy access to the bathroom, refrigerator and galley without interrupting those relaxing in the living area.

The bathroom is very spacious for a trailer this size. Placed at the rear of the trailer, it features a roomy corner shower, which is helped by the optional skylight for extra headroom. Should the need arise, this bathroom can even be used by two people at once without feeling cramped.

The fixtures are basic but the large vanity cabinet has plenty of counter-space, under-sink storage and three drawers. Smart little details, such as orienting the toilet at an angle, accentuate the large feel of the bathroom.

The kitchen counter is arranged in an L-shape with the sink wisely placed at one end, making it easily accessible and providing more counterspace in the corner.

At first glance, this unit seems to be shy of cabinet space, but once you start stocking your kitchen supplies and food, you find there is much more



(Above left) The 24-inch-deep slideout houses the sofa; access is good even when the slideout is in the transit mode. The dinette features seating for four, a large window and a big storage drawer under the rear bench seats. **(Above right)** A surprisingly roomy bathroom features plenty of vanity drawer space and countertop area.



storage available than expected because of the deep corners and large wall cabinets above the sofa and above the dinette.

Cooking equipment includes a three-burner Suburban gas range with room for a full-size cookie sheet in the oven and efficient spacing between the three burners on the cooktop surface. Over the range is an exhaust fan with a

cook lamp. Higher yet is the High Pointe microwave oven. A large Dometic refrigerator operates on AC and LP gas.

The look and texture of the vinyl floor does a good job of emulating wood plank. Its colors are a good fit for trailers and the material is easy to clean. The upholstery, wall finish and countertops coordinate well for a contemporary feel with a practical color combination and pattern for family use.

The master bedroom area is roomy and symmetric with a hanging closet on both sides. A large shelf bridges the area above the head of the bed. Access to the front storage area can be gained by lifting the bed or from outside.

The stock mattress was wanting in both comfort and size, but there is room to upgrade to a queen-size mattress if you are so inclined.

One great feature of the master area is an additional exterior door, which allows an early riser to escape without disturbing sleepy heads in the aft area.

The Winegard TV antenna operates from the master area and can be adjusted from there as well. It is connected to an outlet in the entertainment area, which is above the dinette. In addition to TV hookups, it includes a Jensen stereo unit with radio, CD and MP3 auxiliary jack. Pairs of speakers are located in the dinette, in the galley and outdoors under the awning.

Air conditioning is provided by a Dometic Duo-Therm roof-mounted unit, with ceiling duct outlets in the galley, the bathroom and the bedroom, and a direct

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outlet over the dinette and sofa areas.

There are cost and weight saving characteristics you would expect for a travel trailer in this price range, including a shower curtain rather than an enclosure, laminate countertops and light-duty window blinds. However, the design, decor and craftsmanship give this trailer a high-quality look and feel.

Options on the test unit included decor wall border (\$87), stabilizer jacks (\$261), spare tire and carrier (\$261); skylight over tub (\$130), heated enclosed holding tanks (\$348) and a second entry door (\$420).

Ideal for a couple with occasional guests, the Salem T23FBS offers a nice open feel, comfortable living quarters and good sight lines on a highly maneuverable conventional platform that won't break the bank. Built for the Northwest with extra insulation and tanks that are both enclosed and heated, this Forest River product is ideal for weekend get-aways and can easily be called into service for more extended trips. 🗨️

SPECIFICATIONS

Exterior Length	26' 7"	Battery	2-12 volt (dealer supplied)
Exterior Width	8' 0"	Tires	ST205/75 R15/LRC
Exterior Height	10' 5"	Suspension	Leaf spring
Interior Width	7' 9"	Weight (freshwater, water heater, LP-gas full; no cargo)	5,561 lbs.
Interior Height	6' 8"	Hitch Weight	585 lbs.
Construction	Laminated floor over steel beam frame, wood stud wall construction with aluminum siding and one-piece EPDM roof membrane.	Axle Weight	4,976 lbs.
Freshwater Cap.	50 gal.	GVWR	7,415 lbs.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	37 / 37 gal.	GAWR (2)	3,500 lbs.
LP-gas Cap.	15 gal.	Cargo Carrying Cap.	1,854 lbs.
Water Heater Cap.	6 gal.	Base MSRP	\$23,005
Refrigerator	6 cu. ft.	As-Tested MSRP	\$24,871
Furnace	25,000 Btu	Basic Warranty	1 year
Air Conditioner	13,500 Btu		
Converter	30 amp		

Salem Northwest, a division of Forest River

574-389-4600, www.forestriverinc.com

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Contents

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Jan. 3-5	New Mexico RV & Travel Show	Albuquerque Convention Center
Jan. 8-11	Colorado RV Adventure Travel Show	Colorado Convention Center
Jan. 10-12	Washington Camping RV Expo	Dulles Expo Center
Jan. 10-12	North Carolina RV & Camping Show	Greensboro Coliseum Complex
Jan. 16-19	Mid-America RV Show	Bartle Hall - Kansas City
Jan. 17-19	New Jersey RV & Camping Show	New Jersey Expo Center
Feb. 6-9	Minneapolis/St. Paul RV, Vacation & Camping Show	Minneapolis Convention Center
Feb. 7-9	Richmond Camping RV Expo	Richmond International Raceway Complex
Feb. 14-16	Richmond Boat Show	Richmond International Raceway Complex
Feb. 14-16	Atlantic City RV & Camping Show	Atlantic City Convention Center
Feb. 20-23	Kansas Sports, Boat & Travel Show	Kansas Pavilions, Wichita KS
Feb. 21-23	North Carolina RV & Camping Show	Charlotte Convention Center
Feb. 27-March 2	Colorado RV, Sports, Boat & Travel Show	National Western Complex
Feb. 28-March 2	South Carolina RV & Camping Show	TD Convention Center
Feb. 28-March 2	Rhode Island RV & Camping Show & Sale	Rhode Island Convention Center
March 7-9	National Capital Boat Show	Dulles Expo Center
March 14-16	Virginia RV Camping Show	Hampton Roads Convention Center
April 11-13	El Paso RV Show	El Paso Convention & Performing Arts Center
May 22-25	Salt Lake City RV & Travel Show	Salt Palace Convention Center


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Contents



2013 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Twenty-seven favorites from an array of RV products and services

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

2013

Rvers are a savvy bunch. To travel the country in a truck and trailer, whether for a week, a year or a lifetime takes more than just a map and agenda. It requires knowledge of both the tow rig and your home on wheels; of tires, plumbing and suspension, weight ratings and accessories. It's knowing about the friendliest overnight accommodations, the best places to shop and the most beautiful things to see. Because when it comes right down to it, a truck and trailer are more than two vehicles connected via a hitch — they're a physical representation of a lifestyle that is best enjoyed with others who share the RV passion.

So, it stands to reason then, when you want to know who offers the best of the best, you ask a fellow RVer. After all, there's a great likelihood that he/she has already seen it, done it, conquered it, photographed it, lived it — and is more than happy to pass his/her experiences on to you. That's why we asked *Trailer Life* readers to vote for their favorite stuff in this, the 2013 Readers' Choice Awards. We created a category for just about every aspect of RVing (27 in all) and asked our readers to choose from more than 100 brands, products and services. After more than three months of voting, the results are in ... and here are the favorites.

AWNING



GOLD Carefree of Colorado

Carefree of Colorado manufactures a variety of patio awnings for travel trailers, fifth-wheels, motorhomes, tent trailers and truck campers. 303-469-3324, www.carefreeofcolorado.com

SILVER A&E Blind and Awning

800-777-1221, www.aeblind.com

BRONZE Awnings by Zip Dee

800-338-2378, www.awningsbyzipdee.com

CAMPGROUND/RESORT



GOLD Pechanga RV Resort, Temecula, California

Located near Temecula wine country in Southern California, Pechanga Resort's 168 sites offer full hookups and other amenities. 877-997-8386, www.pechanga.com

SILVER Disney's Fort Wilderness Resort & Campground — Orlando, Florida

407-939-5277, www.disneyworldcamping.com

BRONZE Ocean Lakes Family Campground, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

843-238-5532, www.oceanlakes.com

CASINO/RV RESORT



GOLD Pechanga Resort and Casino, Temecula, California

A 200,000-square-foot gaming floor makes this California's largest casino. And you can set up camp at the adjacent Pechanga RV Resort. 951-693-1819, www.pechanga.com

SILVER Seven Feathers Casino Resort, Canyonville, Oregon

800-548-8461, www.sevenfeathers.com

BRONZE Jackson Rancheria Casino Resort, Jackson, California

800-822-9466, www.jacksoncasino.com



ENGINE OIL



GOLD Amsoil

AMSOIL introduced its first American Petroleum Institute (API) approved synthetic motor oil in 1972.
 800-956-5695, www.amsoil.com

SILVER Shell Rotella

800-237-8645, www.shell.com/rotella

BRONZE Mobil 1

800-662-4525, www.mobiloil.com

FIFTH-WHEEL HITCH



GOLD Reese

Reese builds a number of hitches to handle any fifth-wheel trailer.
 800-632-3290, www.reeseprod.com

SILVER B&W Trailer Hitches

800-248-6564, www.turnoverball.com

BRONZE PullRite

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FIFTH-WHEEL TRAILER



GOLD Keystone

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SILVER Forest River

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BRONZE Heartland

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GOLD Jayco

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SILVER (TIE) Forest River

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SILVER Starcraft RV

800-945-4787, www.starcraftrv.com

BRONZE Chalet

541-791-4610, www.chaletrv.com

FUEL ADDITIVE



GOLD Lucas Oil Products

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 800-342-2512, www.lucasoil.com

SILVER (TIE) Amsoil

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SILVER Sea Foam

952-938-4811, www.seafoamsales.com

BRONZE STP

www.stp.com

FUEL STATION



GOLD Pilot Flying J

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 877-866-7378, www.pilotflyingj.com

SILVER Love's Travel Stops

800-388-0983, www.loves.com

BRONZE Shell

888-467-4355, www.shell.us

PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING PRODUCT



GOLD Banks Power

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 800-601-8072, www.bankspower.com

SILVER Edge Products

888-360-3343, www.edgeproducts.com

BRONZE Bully Dog

877-285-5936, www.bullydog.com

PORTABLE GENERATOR



GOLD Honda

A manufacturer of long-lasting and quiet portable generators, Honda's power stations are offered in a range of output levels. 770-497-6400, www.powerequipment.honda.com

SILVER Yamaha

800-962-7926, www.yamaha-motor.com

BRONZE Cummins Onan

800-888-6626, <http://power.cummins.com>

REFRIGERATOR



GOLD Dometic

Dometic is synonymous with RV refrigerators for every type of RV. But the company also offers many other RV appliances, treatments and accessories. 800-544-4881, www.dometic.com

SILVER Norcold

800-543-1219, www.norcold.com

BRONZE Atwood

800-546-8759, www.atwoodmobile.com

RV CLEANER



GOLD Protect All

Products include polishes, washes, wheel and tire cleaner, rubber roof treatments, slideout lubricants and black-streak removers. 800-322-4491, www.protectall.com

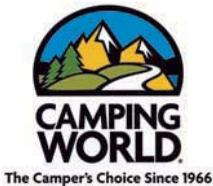
SILVER Thetford

800-543-1219, www.thetford.com

BRONZE Camco

800-334-2004, www.camco.net

RV RETAILER



GOLD Camping World

Camping World is the nation's largest retailer of RV supplies, accessories, as well as new and used RVs, with more than 75 stores coast-to-coast. 888-626-7576, www.campingworld.com

SILVER Local Dealer

BRONZE Walmart

www.walmart.com

RV TOILET



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SILVER Dometic/SeaLand Toilet Systems

800-544-4881, www.dometic.com

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GOLD Winegard

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SILVER DISH Tailgater by King Controls

www.dish.com/technology/tv-outdoors

BRONZE King Controls

952-922-6889, www.kingcontrols.com

SATELLITE PROVIDER



GOLD DIRECTV

Beaming its first digital satellite transmission in 1994, DIRECTV has more than 20 million subscribers, many who tune-in from their RVs. 888-777-2454, www.directv.com

SILVER Dish Network

800-823-4929, www.dish.com

(continued on page 64)



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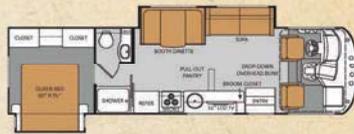


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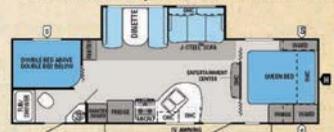
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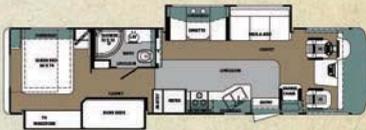


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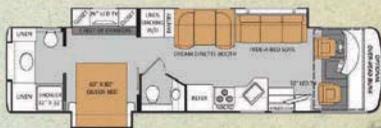


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Your Price
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Thor Palazzo 36.1

300HP Cummins Diesel!
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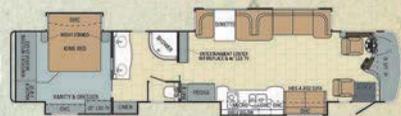
Entegra Cornerstone 45J



MSRP

\$599,454 Your Price
Savings **\$449,995**
\$149,459

600HP Cummins Diesel!
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31FS



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BRONZE Colorado

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SILVER Goodyear

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BRONZE Toyo

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TRAVEL TRAILER



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SILVER Forest River

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BRONZE Jayco

574-825-5861, www.jayco.com

TRAVEL TRAILER COVER



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SILVER CoverQuest

888-726-9300, www.coverquest.com

BRONZE Calmark

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TRAVEL TRAILER HITCH



GOLD Equal-i-zer

Focused on building products that reduce sway, Equal-i-zer builds four-point sway/weight-distribution products that help make RV travel easier and safer. 800-478-5578, www.equalizerhitch.com

SILVER Reese

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BRONZE Hensley Mfg.

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TRUCK CAMPER

GOLD Lance

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SILVER Northwood Manufacturing

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LIFE



User Guide

Contents





Up and Away

Safety chains that drag are not only annoying, they can become weakened over time and can catch on rocks, roots, etc., when driving off pavement. The Chain-Up from Fastway Towing Products is a simple solution that keeps the chains out of harm's way. Simply slip the Chain-Up over the hitch ball, thread the chains through and adjust them to hang evenly, then couple up the trailer. Two different models are available: one for use with a fixed ball mount, and the other for use with a weight-distributing hitch ball mount. The Fastway Chain-Up is available on the company's website and at Camping World stores.

MSRP: \$8.95-\$9.95

877-523 9103, www.fastwaytrailer.com

Circle 130 on Reader Service Card



Koool the Itch

Insect bites are an unfortunate part of outdoor life, and even with repellent, they can still happen. BeK000L's new medicated Itch Relief Patch offers fast relief from insect and poison ivy itches while preventing people from scratching. Unlike messy creams and gels that easily wipe off on clothes and don't protect the infected area, these Itch Relief Patches are great for kids who tend to further irritate the infected area by scratching. Plus, the patches stay in place for hours during outdoor activity, according to the company. The small, clear patch's active ingredients are lidocaine and menthol, so they're safe, too. Available at national retail centers.

MSRP: \$4.99 (box of 18 patches)

800-432-8629, www.bek000l.com

Circle 131 on Reader Service Card



Path to HDTV

Winegard has collaborated with DISH Network to develop and introduce the Winegard Pathway X2 Portable Satellite HDTV antenna, designed exclusively for receiving DISH HDTV programming. According to the company, the system automatically points to DISH satellites, allowing users to set up and watch TV in less than 15 minutes. You can also watch different HD channels on two TVs simultaneously. The Pathway X2 comes with an easy-grip carrying handle, a security eyelet molded into the base and 25 feet of coax cable. It's available through Camping World Supercenters and RV dealerships nationwide.

MSRP: \$449;

bundle with DISH ViP Receiver, \$499

866-609-9374, www.winegard.com

Circle 132 on Reader Service Card

Mighty Light

With all the choices of LED flashlights these days, it's hard to find a standout among them — but the HP7R rechargeable from Coast has some pretty unique features. First, the exclusive new Flex Charge Dual Power Rechargeable System uses AC, DC or USB power sources and also includes an alkaline battery pack.

Patented Pure Beam focusing optics produce a consistent, bright light across the entire beam. On the HP7R, that means up to 201 lumens, and a beam distance rating of up to 1,003 feet. According to the company, run time on the "high" setting is 7 hours and 45 minutes on lithium batteries, two hours on standard alkaline batteries.

MSRP: \$147.49

877-704-4545, www.coastportland.com

Circle 133 on Reader Service Card



EBC Brakes

Towing heavy trailers places extreme demands on brake systems. Additional stress factors such as mountain driving and engine modifications (which increase horsepower) can easily push stock brakes beyond their design limits. Overstressed brakes can result in dangerously long stopping distances, and they may overheat and fade, or even fail completely at the worst possible time.

Brakes are arguably the most important safety system on a highway vehicle. I became a fan of heavy-duty brakes on tow vehicles after the wire controlling the electric brakes on my trailer failed. Of course, it was while descending Colorado's 11,158-foot Eisenhower Pass on Interstate 70 West, the highest point on America's interstate highway system. My tow vehicle brakes soon faded away, and it cost me an engine, as I had to downshift into second gear at faster than 75 mph to control speed — and almost cost my hide, too!

EBC Brakes recently introduced a new line of Extra Duty brake pads designed for light trucks and SUVs that are subjected to heavy-duty use, such as towing. The pads reportedly offer better stopping power, longer life and quiet operation. EBC has used new eco-friendly technology to develop the brake pads, which offer unusually high friction levels, yet still have good manners for street use, including effective braking from cold when the brakes are first

applied, according to the company. The race pedigree of the material used also ensures strong stopping power up to temperatures exceeding 1,400 degrees F. That's hotter than the maximum experienced in heavy braking, towing or downhill descents. Winter testing in Ohio on a fleet of five popular light trucks proved their cold braking performance in the worst wet and cold conditions, where many performance brakes have problems.

EBC reports that its new carbon-granule based friction material is also extremely rotor friendly, minimizes dust and is noiseless. Vee grooves in the pads vent and remove dirt, dust and debris, while cooling the central hot areas of the pads more efficiently. They're designed to deliver more brake "grip" than stock and most aftermarket pads, at a lower cost than original parts, with longer life, according to EBC.

Each pad set is supplied with NUCAP brand caliper-piston insert insulator shims, and backings feature NUCAP's NRS bonding technology, for five times

the bond strength of conventional pads. The shims go on the pistons, instead of the backs of the brake pads; a totally new design exclusive to these pads.

EBC's Extra Duty pads have been officially rated by the Automotive Manufacturers Equipment Compliance Agency (AMECA) test-center as the first truck pads in the aftermarket with a "grippy" GG friction grade rating. Normally, pads have an F or E rating, which is one or two grades lower, but these new high-friction pads from EBC have met Vehicle Equipment Safety Commission (VESC) V3 brake standards, GG status (GG is the second-highest friction coefficient, both hot and cold) as tested by independent USA laboratories and certified by AMECA.

EBC Extra Duty pads feature a patented break-in surface coating for faster seating, and are built on NUCAP NRS backing plates, which bond up to five times stronger than conventional pads. The pads are also supplied with Nuloc noise silencers that easily fit into the pistons during pad installation.

EBC also offers a wide variety of brake pad types and rotors for most popular vehicles. Its sport rotors feature slots that draw cool air into the braking contact area and reduce temperatures, helping to prevent brake fade. The slotted rotors tend to remain flat, maintain parallel pad wear and avoid the "record grooves" common with non-slotted rotors, according to the company. This improves pad contact and braking throughout the life of the rotor and pads. The design of the slotted rotors does result in some noise; if this concerns drivers, they can select the quieter USR Ultimax series, or EBC plain rotors.

EBC products are available through Pep Boys, 4Wheel Parts, Summit Racing, O'Reilly Auto Parts and other automotive stores. EBC Brakes, 702-826-2400, www.ebcbrakes.com.



EBC brake pads with NUCAP insulator shims, a totally new design, go on the caliper piston instead of the back of the brake pad.



Lingenfelter Signature Edition Supercharged Trucks

Lingenfelter Performance Engineering recently released its Signature Edition supercharged Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra pickups. Truck enthusiasts can choose a 5.3-liter or 6.2-liter V-8 engine, and a Magnuson TVS 1900 Supercharger or an Edelbrock E Force TVS 2300 intercooled supercharger system. Both systems offer 100-plus horsepower increases while preserving drivability and reliability, according to the company, and include a three-year/36,000-mile Lingenfelter

warranty on the engine and supercharger.

The Magnuson TVS 1900 Supercharged package features an Eaton four-lobe 160-degree twist high helix rotor design, aluminum intake manifold and fuel rails. It includes an air-to-water intercooler inside the intake manifold and a water-to-air supercharger heat exchanger. The Edelbrock E Force TVS 2300 intercooled system is based on an OEM Eaton supercharger unit for excellent drivability and highway mileage. Lingenfelter reports that factory tow ratings are not affected. Customers also can direct customization of the vehicle to suit their personal tastes. Lingenfelter Performance Engineering, 260-724-2552, www.lingenfelter.com.

500,000th 6.7-liter Power Stroke V-8 Diesel Built

Ford has announced the completion of its 500,000th 6.7-liter Power Stroke V-8 turbodiesel engine, installed in a



2014 Super Duty F-350 pickup at the Kentucky Truck Plant in Louisville.

The 6.7-liter Power Stroke V-8 diesel engine delivers 400 hp at 2,800 rpm and 800 lb-ft of torque at 1,600 rpm. It's approved for up to B20 biodiesel. Super Duty trucks with the 6.7-liter diesel are rated to tow up to 24,700 pounds in the F-450 pickups, and up to 26,600 pounds in the F-550 chassis cab. 🚚

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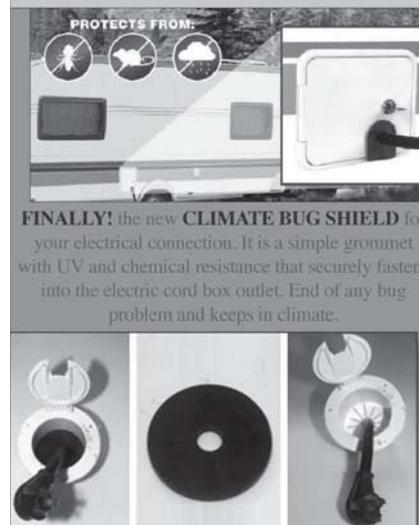
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READER SERVICE

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

RS#	ADVERTISER	PAGE#
102	Amsoil Inc	57
103	B&W Trailer Hitches	69
104	Blue Ox	47
	Camping World.....	19-21
	Classifieds	80-81
105	Cypress Trail	78
126	DISH Network.....	83
107	DRV	65
106	Desert Gardens RV Park	17
	Destinations	63
108	Escape Trailer.....	16
109	GMC Sierra	2-3
	Good Sam RV Loans	66
	Good Sam Extended Service Plan	26
	Good Sam Events	58
	Good Sam Roadside Assistance	39
	Good Sam Travel Assist	45
	Harbor Freight Tools	9
110	Heartland Recreational Vehicles LLC.....	7
112	Hensley Manufacturing Inc.....	28
111	Hensley Manufacturing Inc.....	75
118	iBall Hitch Cam	78
113	KZ Inc.	84
114	Lance Campers	53
115	Maxxis International	49
120	Monochem	74
116	Northwood Mfg.	37
117	NuWa Industries	33
128	Phoenix USA Inc.	31
125	RV One Superstores Inc. ..62-63E RV Marketplace	70-71
119	Roadtrek Motorhomes Inc.....	25
121	Sea Eagle	77
122	Silver Palms RV Resort	13
123	The Minder Research	11
101	Trailair	76
	Trailer Life TV.....	73
124	Transfer Flow Inc.	28
127	Ultra-Fab Products Inc.....	56

EDITORIAL PRODUCT INDEX

RS#	ADVERTISER	PAGE#
130	Fastway Towing Chain-Up.....	67
131	Bekool Itch Relief.....	67
132	Winegard HDTV	67
133	Coast Mighty Light.....	67
134	Forest River Salem	57
135	Lance 1172 Camper.....	46

While every effort is made to maintain accuracy and completeness, last-minute changes may occasionally result in omissions or errors.

Your Third Eye

The iBall Wireless Trailer Hitch Camera takes the stress out of hooking up a trailer unassisted

DIFFICULTY	1 2 3 4 5
TIME TO COMPLETE	5 MINUTES
TOOLS NEEDED	NONE

A plethora of products have been developed over the years created for the sole purpose of taking the frustration out of hitching up unassisted. Many have used alignment systems, some elaborate and some simple, but nothing has reduced the pain of lining up a ball and coupler better than a camera. Most back-up cameras are on the expensive side and require hard wiring, which is not practical for trailering. Portable cameras and monitor systems have been introduced during the last few years, but again, they can be on the pricey side — and not easy to put into temporary service.

Fortunately, wireless technology has made it easy for companies to produce inexpensive camera systems that are compact and simple to use, right out of the box. One such product is the iBall Wireless Trailer Hitch Camera. This device is specifically designed to aid the driver in hitching a trailer or fifth-wheel to a tow vehicle — and requires no special bracket for camera placement. The iBall is comprised of two major components, a wireless camera that uses a 9-volt battery and a 12-volt DC-powered monitor. At the receiving end, the video signals are displayed on a 1½-by-2-inch color screen. The monitor is attached to a flexible metal gooseneck with a cigarette lighter style plug on the other end, which provides power and supports the monitor without other brackets. The gooseneck can be adjusted for best viewing by the driver.

The camera is made of durable, weather-resistant plastic that encases the electronics and seals the components against the elements, including moisture. A small plastic bracket with a magnet attached to the bottom holds the camera snugly to any metal surface that will attract the magnet. Quick-adjusting



Monitor, with a 1½-by-2-inch color screen, plugs into any convenient 12-volt DC power outlet. Attached flexible gooseneck allows adjustment for clear viewing. Camera works best on tailgate of truck when hitching travel trailers, but can be mounted on any metal surface that attracts a magnet. Camera housing is protected from the elements, including water.

knobs are used to get the angle just right.

To say that the iBall is easy to use would be an understatement. Setup is so simple and intuitive that the kit doesn't even include a regular set of instructions — only a guide of what to do if it behaves strangely. Rather than permanently mount the camera, the user locates a desired spot to gain visibility of the hitch ball (such as the tail gate, bumper or the hitch itself) and adjusts the bracket for the correct angle. The monitor is plugged into the power outlet and adjusted for visibility. Both components are turned on and the system is ready for use. We found it best to “stick” the camera to the truck tailgate, which offered the best view of the ball mount and approaching coupler when hitching a travel trailer. The view in the monitor from the wide-angle camera lens can be rotated somewhat with a push of a button; picture quality is pretty decent. Just about the only thing

to really be aware of is the possibility of interference that could be caused by Bluetooth technology, the keyless entry or even a low 9-volt battery.

Overall performance of the iBall was better than initially expected. The wireless transmission, using a 2.4GHz signal, is said to be good up to 100 feet, which is much more than any trailerist needs for hitching. The iBall is quick to set up, simple to use and stores in very little space. It retails for \$149.95, which is much cheaper than repairing damage caused by errant hitch maneuvering — and easier on the nerves. 🚚

iBall Wireless Trailer Hitch Camera
877-298-2055, www.iballhitchcam.com

GO IT ALONE » A wireless camera that uses a 9-volt battery helps a driver hitch a trailer or fifth-wheel to a tow vehicle unassisted.





DISAPPEARING WATER

Q The first two trips in my 2013 Forest River XLR Viper resulted in very little water remaining in the freshwater tank upon arrival.

My dealer's service tech told me to install a shut-off valve on the overflow tube. I could foresee that I would forget to open it when filling, resulting in a ruptured tank. Instead, I installed a PVC tee in the overflow tank outlet. The overflow tube comes off the bottom of the tee, and I added a tube with a homemade breather off the top of the tee and through the frame. The next two trips had some water loss, but seemed minimal. Have you heard of other fixes that may be as good or better?

David Wingfield, Via email

A This is what happens when a manufacturer does a poor job of designing the overflow tube on a freshwater tank, David. Sometimes builders just use an L fitting and a short piece of tubing aimed downward — and in that case, they may as well just leave an open hole in the side of the tank. Every time the water sloshes toward the overflow tube fitting, which is pretty much constantly when driving, some of the water flows out of the tube. The effect is especially bad when a tank is large and flat but very shallow top to bottom.

We had this happen in a very expensive travel trailer we road tested a couple years back. We were puzzled, after filling the tank at home, why we only had about ¼ tank of water left when we arrived at the campground. Later, we observed a trail of water on the pavement while driving, and a crawl under the trailer showed us the answer. The smoke further cleared when a discussion with the trailer's design engineer revealed no one on the design crew went RVing or used the products in a real-world setting. That explained a lot about the rookie plumber mistake.

Ideally, the overflow tubing should route straight up from the tank outlet, perhaps a minimum of 12 inches or so, make a U-turn via fittings, then route straight down and terminate in a filter of some type. This creates something of an inverted P-trap setup. During a slosh, the water needs to run all the way up the tube before it spills out so that drastically reduces the amount of water you'll lose. The filter prevents insects and road dirt from getting into the overflow tube and back into the freshwater tank. — **Jeff Johnston**



LT TIRE SWAP

Q I tow a 2009 Keystone Cougar 35-foot fifth-wheel that has manufacturer-installed 15-inch ST tires with a D-load range rating. The dry weight of the trailer is approximately 9,300 pounds and it has a gross ve-

hicle weight rating of 11,600 pounds, leaving approximately 2,300 pounds for fluids and cargo. I do believe it is within that limit, although probably not with a great deal of room for additional weight. My wife and I are planning cross-country trips starting next year,

THE TECH TEAM



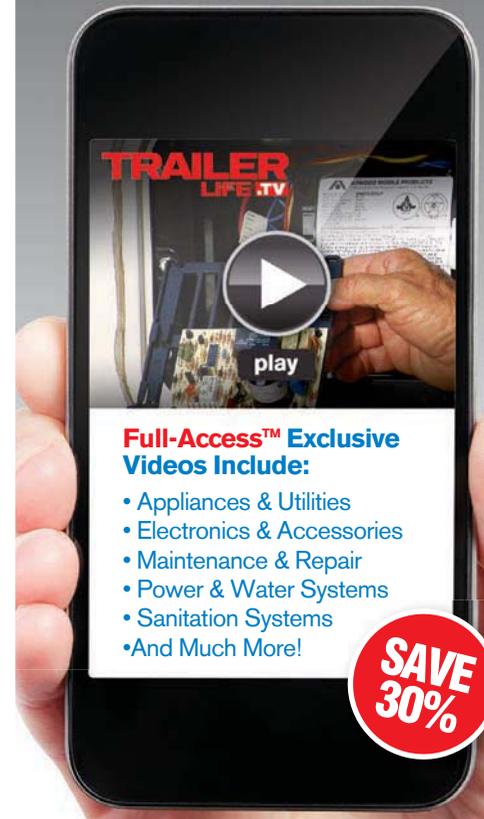
KEN FREUND: Ken is a former ASE Certified Master Technician, service manager and shop owner who has authored numerous books on automotive repair.



JEFF JOHNSTON: Jeff served as technical director of *Trailer Life* for 18 years and has been an RV enthusiast, mechanic and writer since he could hold a wrench.

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which has me wondering about a tire upgrade. Would investing in 16-inch ST tires with an E-rated load range be advisable or beneficial considering the consistency of driving at 65 mph as well as the possibility of nearing the weight limit as we go? Or would simply raising the advised 65-pound maximum tire pressure by 10 pounds as stated in the June 2013 issue of *Trailer Life* be equally safe and sufficient? Due to the

very informative article also in the June edition comparing ST and LT tires, I am reluctant to consider switching to LT tires despite the advice to the contrary from some of my trailering friends.

Thomas Jones, Riverhead, New York

A This LT-versus-ST-tire question will go on forever, Thomas, and there will never likely be a definitive answer. First, you should weigh the

trailer loaded and ready for travel to get an accurate weight figure, as this is the only definitive way to know exactly what your rig weighs. That said, you can almost never go wrong by upgrading to a tire with a higher load rating than those that came on your trailer from the factory, as long as they fit the wheel properly and don't exceed its maximum pressure rating. In fact, if more people would weigh their trailers setup and ready for travel, instead of trusting a guess based on manufacturers' dry-weight figures, and compare those numbers against the tires' load ratings, we'd wager that even more people would go for the upgrades.

Pumping up the tire pressure by a few pounds can work, per the article, but going to a higher-rated tire is a more substantial answer.

The manufacturers' stated reasons for using their special ST tires on trailers are valid. For example, the claimed heavier-duty ST tire sidewalls that can withstand the side stresses placed on a trailer tire when backing are a good point, but I've never heard from a reader that said an LT tire failed during a backing and turning maneuver. It's also true that a properly sized LT tire can work very well on a trailer, and if it were my mine, I would not hesitate to use an LT tire if the brand, size and load rating were right. — J.J.

ELECTRIC OPERATION, SUBURBAN WATER HEATER

Q My Suburban water heater, model SW10DE, works fine on gas. The problem is with the electric portion of the heater. It has burned out at least three elements. The last time this happened, it actually melted the wires at the connection to the element. I always make sure the tank is full, and I open all the faucets to bleed the air out. Your help would greatly be appreciated.

Mark O'Connell, Via email

A Failure to completely immerse the heating element in water is the most common cause of element burnout, Mark, but it seems as if you have that covered. Have your service center check the voltage at the element

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and make sure all of the electrical connections are tight and in good shape. If they aren't right, the resistance in a bad connection can cause overheating or component failure.

You might also want to have the high-temperature-limiting thermostat checked. Your water heater includes a thermostat and high-limit switch assembly, Part No. 232306, that shuts down the electric element if the water temperature exceeds 180 degrees. After cooling, the thermostat can be reset when the water is less than 110 degrees. If the thermostat is defective, it may allow the heating element to overheat and burn out prematurely. — J.J.

SUBURBAN ELECTRIC, PART II

Q We have a 2012 Keystone Laredo fifth-wheel with Suburban DSI gas water heater, which we bought new in September 2011. The water heater worked great until this spring after we took it out of storage. It would not start heating on electricity until we first turned on the gas — then the electric would work. It works great until we turn off the water heater. Then, we have to do the same thing again to get it to start working. Any idea what's going on?

Dave Kempton, Via email

A Your Suburban water heater has two separate thermostats: one for gas and one for electric operation. Because the heater works OK on propane, it seems like the electric thermostat may be defective. It's the same Part No. 232306 as listed for O'Connell's letter above. — J.J.

ANTIFREEZE IN P TRAPS

Q To winterize my trailer, I use an air compressor to blow out all the lines. However, I still need to use something in the P traps. Automotive windshield washer/antifreeze is rated to minus 20 degrees and some to minus 25 degrees and is much less expensive than regular antifreeze or RV antifreeze. It's also usually something that is stocked in the garage. Do you see any problems with using windshield antifreeze in trailer P traps?

Randy Auman, Logan, Utah

A While the automotive windshield washer/antifreeze will work, it's critical that it is not introduced into the freshwater system. To be on the safe side, it's a good practice to only use RV antifreeze in your trailer. That way you can't make a mistake. In reality, you only use a few cups of antifreeze in the P-traps, so cost will not be a big factor. Automotive antifreeze products are highly toxic if consumed. — J.J.

ADD-ON RAIN GUTTERS

Q We own a 36-foot 2013 Palomino Sabre fifth-wheel. I was thinking of installing additional rain gutters on the front and rear of the trailer to control roof watershed and streaking. There is not much crown to the roof and when it rains we cannot see out of the rear window.

Manufacturers make different shapes and material of gutter product. Do you have any direction on the type and installation location for the front and rear of the trailer?

There are some black streaks on the front shell of the trailer that will not go away and I was thinking of using a bleach mixture to remove them. What are your thoughts on that?

I clean the roof every time I wash the trailer (once a month) and seal it with a UV product twice a year. It gets waxed twice a year.

Gene and Merrie Gozner, Via email

A Some type of bleach mixture may remove the streaks but it may also damage the paint or vinyl graphics, Gene, so that's probably the last thing you should try when fighting the black streaks. There are several commercial black-streak removers on the market that should be able to do the job.

As for rain gutters for your Palomino, every RV is going to be a different case, so we can't make any solid recommendations about gutter placement. We very seldom hear from readers about anyone adding extra rain gutters to an RV — in fact, your

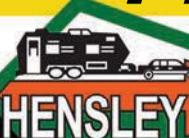
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note is the first — so this is not a common practice, although we're sure it takes place. The best you can do is observe where the runoff is falling during a rainstorm and decide on the best placement. Good luck! — J.J.

MORE TRAILER JACKING

Q In the October 2013 issue, you replied to Bob Hammer's question ("Leveling/Stabilizing Jacks") by telling him to raise up each axle one at a time, then use blocks or jack stands under each axle to support the tires off the ground. I was led to believe that a trailer should never be supported under each axle because the axle tubes may be bent, and that the trailer should be raised and supported by blocks or jack stands on the frame. Which is it?

Frank Walker, Via email

A This matter seems to be surrounded by near-endless confusion and it requires a degree of common sense when applying an

answer. The axle-manufacturer-recommended way to jack up a trailer is by the frame. In this case, you need to lift the trailer significantly farther because you need to take the trailer's weight off the suspension and then allow the individual axle end to "droop" before the tire comes off the ground.

Axle manufacturer recommendations, as with many other types of instructions, are written by lawyers, not by real people who use the products. The lawyers are afraid that an owner will place a jack under the round axle tube to lift the wheel and the jack head will slip off the round axle tube and injure the owner. This is true, it can happen. The jack head can also slip off the bottom of the trailer frame, the flat part of the leaf spring, or anywhere else the jack is used. Extreme care must always be taken when performing a jacking activity.

Now this is where some of the common sense comes in. If a jack is

placed under the round axle tube inboard from the point where the tube is attached to the leaf spring, then yes, you can bend and/or damage the axle because that spot in the axle tube is not designed to support weight. The weight is supported at the point where the axle is fastened to the leaf spring. Likewise, if you jack the axle up by its end, then place blocks of wood inboard of the axle to the leaf spring junction, and lower the axle weight onto the stack of blocks, then you will likely bend and/or damage the axle for the same reason.

Most trailer owners read the instructions, know the rules, and develop their own ways to handle jacking up a trailer. From a safety and liability standpoint, we recommend you stick with the axle manufacturer's instructions available in your owner's manual or the axle manufacturers' website. In that case, lift the trailer frame enough to raise the wheels off the ground. If you opt for an axle lift system, just be aware that the axle inboard of the spring mounts and at the ends are not good or safe spots to support weight. — J.J.

DRIVING IN HIGH WINDS

Q At what wind speed do states post dust-storm warnings for travelers on interstate highways? And, what wind speed does it take to flip a small trailer attached to a tow vehicle? We have an 18-foot Lance 1880 travel trailer, fully loaded at 4,937 pounds, and towed by a Chevy 1500 truck. We try to time our runs across the desert between windstorms just as folks do in the north between snowstorms. When the weatherman on TV says that tomorrow's storm will carry winds of 45 mph we don't know what that means in terms of travel safety. Is there a rule of thumb?

Don and Karen Vik, Hollister, California

A There really can't be a rule of thumb for wind speed that applies widely, because vehicles and drivers react to wind conditions differently. Wind also usually gusts and may vary its direction. Vehicles with a lot of surface area and high centers of

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gravity are at greater risk. The angle that the wind is blowing relative to the vehicle's direction of travel also makes a huge difference. Additionally, roadside terrain can block or funnel and concentrate the winds. Some states post warnings for high-profile vehicles, but allow them if the driver wants to proceed. Some may have a roadblock and turn away tall vehicles, and on others, you might be on your own to check weather reports and decide what to do. A 45-mph wind should be manageable, but much stronger can be hazardous. Ultimately, you'll have to experience various wind conditions and make a safe decision. — Ken Freund

LAUNCH SHUDDER

QI have a 2011 Dodge Ram 2500 two-wheel-drive crew cab, short-bed pickup with the Cummins diesel and 4.10 gear ratio. I bought this used truck 10 months ago. It has a six-speed transmission with 6,000 miles left on the 36,000-mile-bumper-to-bumper warranty. I notice a shudder in first and second gear on level ground with my 13,000-pound fifth-wheel in tow, as I proceed from a stop. It does not happen without a fifth-wheel in tow. Earlier this summer, I drove up a steep incline at a campground in North Carolina with the fifth-wheel in tow and from a dead stop at the bottom. There was very severe shudder and slipping in first and second gear. The Ram dealer in Clayton, Georgia, performed two computer updates having to do with the transmission, but could not find anything wrong with the transmission. No codes were found regarding the problem. The problem continued to plague me for the rest of my trip, and upon returning to Gainesville, I took it to the Ram dealer who couldn't find anything wrong. Of course, there are no steep grades here in Florida. Any advice you can give me will be greatly appreciated, as my warranty expires soon.

Bill Sadler, Gainesville, Florida

ALow-speed shudder is typically called "launch shudder" and it is often due to the operating angles of the driveline U-joints. When there is

a heavy load downward on the back of the truck such as the fifth-wheel weight, the springs compress and change the ride height. This alters driveshaft angularity. Some folks have eliminated or reduced this shudder by shimming the prop-shaft center bearing mount and/or installed shims between the rear axle and springs (which slightly changes the joint angles). These shims are available through driveline shops.

Another factor is spring twist, which changes U-joint angles momentarily. The high torque in lower gears when starting out twists the springs. This can be limited by installing traction bars.

If the transmission is actually slipping excessively at startup, that would be a separate cause for concern. I suggest you (or better yet, a technician familiar with these trucks) lie in a safe place alongside the truck with a view of the driveline. Watch what happens as the truck accelerates away from a

stop. This will help pinpoint the problem. Sometimes air bags can be used to maintain a level ride height and that can cure the problem as well. — KF

CHOPPY RIDE

QI have a 32-foot travel trailer (8,000-pound gross weight, twin axle) and use a 2500 Chevy diesel with an Equalizer hitch. Sway control and weight distribution seem great. However, when driving on old concrete interstates, the wife hates the up and down bounce that is transmitted to our truck from the trailer. Would you suggest a different hitch, or towing assembly, to reduce the bounce?

John Curtis Haverty, Houston, Texas

AThat bounce happens on certain freeways made with concrete segments separated by expansion joints. It affects truck-and-trailer combinations in different ways. Other than avoiding those freeways, there's not much that can be done.

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On a hardware side, you may want to consider installing an A-frame-mounted air-cushioned apparatus such as Shocker Hitch, 877-967-8577, www.shockerhitch.com. This could help somewhat. — K.F.

RUST CONCERNS

Q I own a 2001 Chevy Silverado 2500 extended cab/short-bed pickup truck that I use to tow a 32-foot travel trailer. It has 136,000 miles on it, runs well and uses no oil between changes. This truck has been in upstate New York with its heavy road salt use all of its life. There are no rusted-through areas on the body, but it is showing paint bubbles and rust in spots. Is there a way to verify the frame's integrity? Do I need to be concerned that the salt and corrosion has compromised the underside enough to begin searching for a replacement?

David Lusk, Marathon, New York

A I used to work in the service department of a GM truck dealership in upstate New York, so I know what you're talking about. Rust is a huge problem there. The good news is, I seldom saw a frame on a truck fail due to rust, although I did see a lot of cars with the problem, but most were unibody with thin sheetmetal chassis.

I suggest that you put the truck up on a vehicle hoist where a service technician can carefully inspect the frame. Take a screwdriver and poke at any rust you see on the frame and scrape off any scale to get to the underlying solid metal. Note any areas that look deeply pitted, particularly in areas where a lot of stress occurs, such as suspension and engine mounting points. If any bad spots are noticed, have a body repairperson look at it. Hopefully, the truck had some undercoating wax sprayed on it when new. — K.F. 🚚

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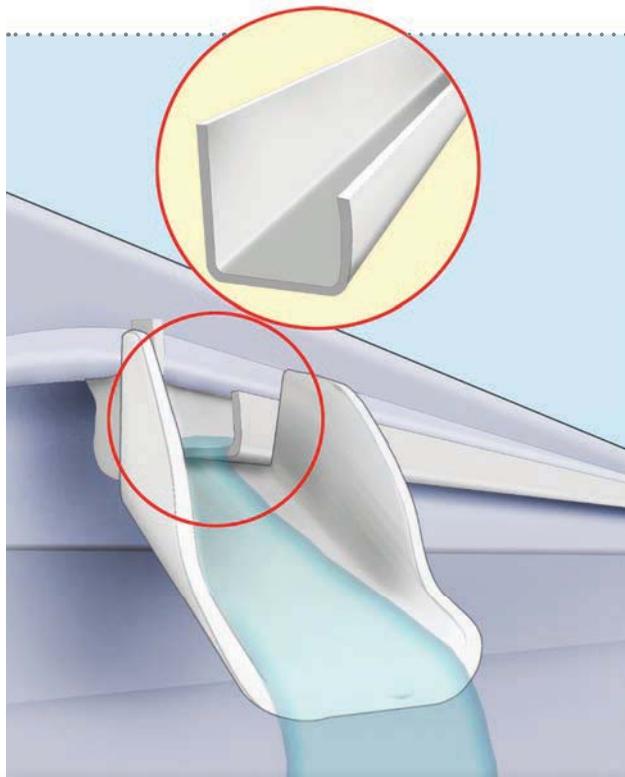
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No-Slip Jack

I have heard horror stories of people jacking up their trailer to fix a flat or other repair, and the jack slips from under the axle. I have come up with a simple and inexpensive remedy to this problem. I use a bottleneck jack that goes under the axle as close to the back side of the brake assembly as possible. I measured the width and height of the axle. I took a 1/2-inch piece of metal, cut and bent it into a U to fit the axle. Next I took a piece of tubing that fits over the piston of the jack, cut it 1 inch wide and welded that to the piece of U plate that I made. I placed the whole unit on the top of the jack. Now I can raise my RV with no worrying that the jack might slip and cause damage or, even worse, injury. Total cost: less than \$25.

Doug Duval, Lunenburg, Massachusetts



Mind in the Gutter

Need gutters for the sides of an RV? Home improvement stores usually carry fairly rigid vinyl/plastic J trim for capping edges of 3/8-inch or 1/2-inch drywall. Purchase enough of the 3/8-inch trim to cover the length of the trailer, plus one length of 1/2-inch J trim to gusset all butt joints from the inside. The trim is in 8-foot lengths at around \$1.50 per length. To create the gutter, simply pull out the vinyl insert trim on the RV and then loosen the mounting screws in the aluminum channel slightly. With a small putty knife, lightly pry out the lower edge of the aluminum insert trim channel, then insert the long leg of the J trim behind this channel and retighten the mounting screws. Cut and shape short pieces of the 1/2-inch J trim to bed-in caulk on the inside of all butt joints. This creates a solid joint. Finish off with a set of Camco extended gutter ends by inserting them behind the gutter at each end and you have the perfect gutter at very little cost.

Paul Fertello, Dayton, Oregon

QUICK FIX

Perfectly Browned Biscuits

My wife was always fussing about the oven in our travel trailer not browning biscuits on the top. She tried lowering the rack and the temperature, but it didn't work. One day at home, when we cooked a pizza on our stone, it browned the pizza perfectly. We wondered if we put a stone in the trailer oven if that would work, so we laid one in the bottom of the oven. The next morning when my wife cooked the biscuits it did a great job. The heat was distributed evenly in the oven. She's happy and I get biscuits all the time now. —**Terry Kirkpatrick, Tyler, Texas** 📧

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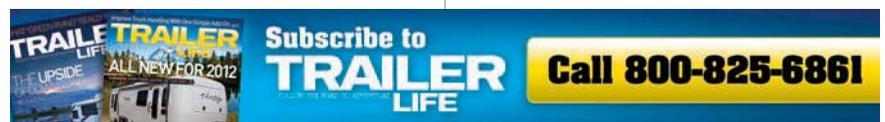
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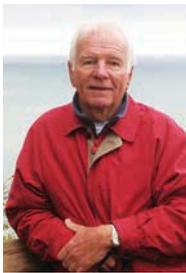
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A Lesson in Ethanol

Corn, the grain from which this colorless liquid is produced, flourishes in the fields of the Midwest



Since we all use ethanol — it's blended with most of the gasoline we buy — we should know something about it. So, when I was in South Dakota recently, I visited an ethanol plant. Here is what I discovered.

Last year in this country we burned 13 billion gallons of ethanol. Brazil was next, consuming 6 billion gallons.

Together with Brazil, we produced about 90 percent of the world's ethanol. So you can see, ethanol is not taking the world by storm as a step toward energy independence, cheaper gas or a form of renewable energy. Since the rest of the world pays much more for gasoline than we do, we might ask why more countries aren't making it.

We see the answer when we drive across South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska — or anywhere in the Midwest: There is no place in the world quite like it. Corn, the grain from which ethanol is made, flourishes in fields that stretch to the horizon. In Brazil they make it from sugar cane. Like our corn, they have plenty of it.

South Dakota ranks sixth nationwide in ethanol production. The largest producer here is POET Biorefining. I visited the POET plant at Chancellor, which is 20 miles southwest of Sioux Falls, South Dakota's largest city. This plant utilizes 35 million bushels of locally grown corn every year, turning out more than 100 million gallons of ethanol.

Dean Frederickson is the general manager of this POET plant. For an hour or so, he was my teacher. My term paper is what you are reading.

With 60 employees, this plant operates around the clock. The corn comes in by truck right out of the field during harvest season. To keep a constant supply all year, Frederickson contracts with local farmers for later delivery.

To describe this operation in the simplest terms: This is a brewery without the bottling plant. But they go beyond the yeast-fermentation process, of course, by applying heat to the corn beer and flashing off the alcohol, ending up with 200-proof grain alcohol, which is ethanol. Then it's moved by rail to refineries where it's mixed with gasoline to make the 5 or 10 percent ethanol blend that we buy at the pump.



(Above) Corn arrives at the POET plant in grain trucks and leaves as ethanol in tanker trucks and rail cars. (Left) General Manager Dean Frederickson holds a sample of crude corn oil, a coproduct in the production of ethanol. This corn oil is one refining step away from becoming biodiesel fuel.

Only the starch from the corn is used to produce the alcohol, leaving the protein and nutrients for other uses, mainly animal feed. Every 56-pound bushel of corn used in the ethanol process yields 18 pounds of distillers grains. This highly nutritious coproduct is dried and shipped to ranchers, dairies and farmers all over the world.

Carbon dioxide is another coproduct. Much of it is used in the soft-drink industry. Carbonation: It's what makes our sodas and soft drinks bubbly.

The beauty of this business is that they are always finding new uses for the coproduct. This plant is now making corn oil that is used in biodiesel fuel. Someday soon, your breakfast muffin might include fiber from a plant like this.

Natural gas is the principal heat source in the ethanol process. Here they are creative: "Our solid-waste-fuel boiler burns tons of wood chips that come from discarded wood pallets," Frederickson said. "It also burns methane gas from the city landfill at Sioux Falls." The result: ethanol that produces 6½ times the energy that is used in its production.

The real energy source being captured here is that of the sun. Each kernel of corn is like a little solar battery: It stores the sun's energy as starch that gets changed into liquid form. Once that's done, we pump it into our vehicles' fuel tanks. And off we go down the road propelled in part by the sun.

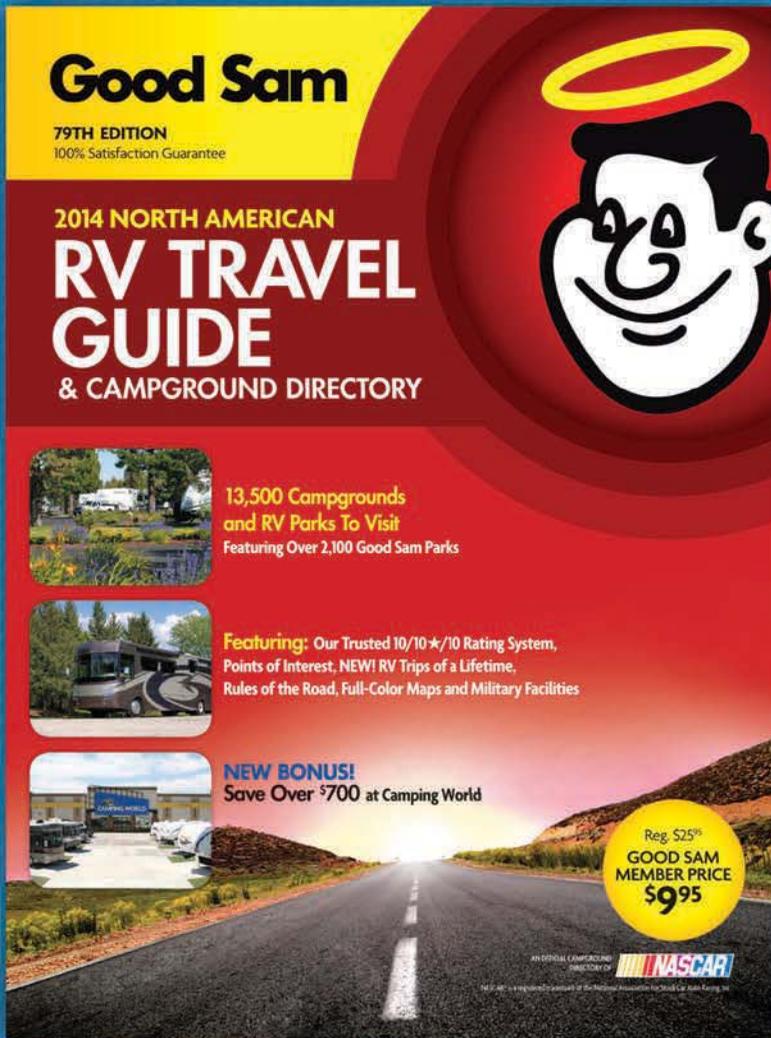
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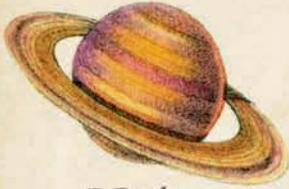


Fig. 1 Saturn



Fig. 3 Asteroid Gaspra



Fig. 5 Mercury



Fig. 7 Jupiter

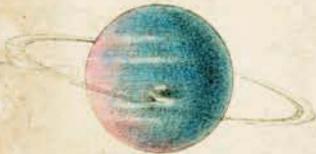


Fig. 2 Neptune

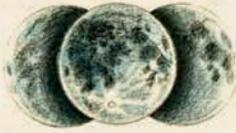


Fig. 4 Phases of the Moon



Fig. 6 Mars

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Great TV on the Road... When You Want It!

No matter where your RV takes you, the Tailgater® Portable Satellite and Pay-As-You-Go programming allows you to take your favorite TV programs along.



#65148 **Club SALE \$349**
Reg. \$379.99



#73912 **Club SALE \$99.95**
Reg. \$109.99

Tailgater by DISH offers:

- Quick and easy setup
- Lightweight and compact to fit any space
- Automatically finds satellites
- HD and SD programming

With the DISH Pay-As-You-Go programming*, you:

- Pay only for the months you use
- No contracts
- No charge to start or stop monthly service
- Service for as little as **\$39.99 per month!**

Call Camping World at 1-888-875-1540 to activate your DISH programming!

*Requires antenna and receiver purchase. Limit one receiver per antenna. All charges, including monthly programming, pay-per-view and equipment upgrades, must be paid in advance; failure to pay by due date will lead to service disconnection within 24 hours. Offer available for new and qualified former customers and subject to terms of applicable Promotional and Residential Customer agreements. State reimbursement charges may apply. Additional restrictions may apply. Offer expires 1/16/14.

dish
AUTHORIZED RETAILER



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DISH Network, Circle 126 on Reader Service Card



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User Guide

Contents



DURANGO

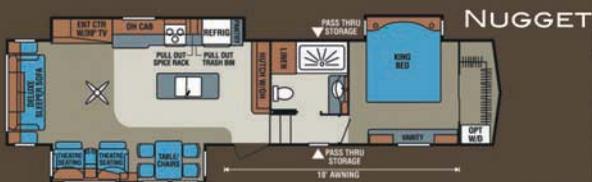
FIFTH WHEELS BY **KZ**
EST. 1972

DURANGO 1500



Roomy and lightweight – the 295CS floor plan in the Durango 1500 series features triple slide-outs to improve livability in a ½ ton towable FW. This floor plan also has an optional kitchen island for added countertop surface and storage area. The double entry door to the bathroom adds convenience to this great floor plan.

GOLDRUSH DURANGO



The GoldRush Fifth Wheel features many standard items such as residential theater seating, two tone interior wood design, LED interior lighting, full body champagne infused high gloss fiberglass exterior, wide body construction, auto leveling system and frameless windows. GoldRush offers the experienced RV buyer a coach that's sure to exceed all expectations.



▶ KZ-RV.COM

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LIFE



User Guide

Contents



TRAILER LIFE

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