

NEW! Fifth-Wheel Hitch Buyer's Guide

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SEPTEMBER 2012

BUNKHOUSE BONANZA

WINNEBAGO
ONE 32BH
SLEEPS 10!

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Contents





From roads high to roads low, Chevy Runs Deep



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LIFE



User Guide

Contents





24



40



56

FEATURES

20 The Scenic Route: Pacific Coast Scenic Byway

Discover a bounty of fun amid Oregon's gorgeous ocean views

24 Driving Colonial South Carolina

Tour three restored 18th century homes with rich American history

29 Celestron World of Nature Contest Winners

Check out the prize-winning photos!

30 Elkhart Lake

This serene Wisconsin town packs a variety of activities for any lifestyle

36 Fly Ball

Winnebago's new 32BH travel trailer is a hit in the RV marketplace

40 A No-Compromise RV

Space Craft offers consumers endless customization in travel trailers

44 5th and Go Forth

What you need to know when selecting a fifth-wheel hitch

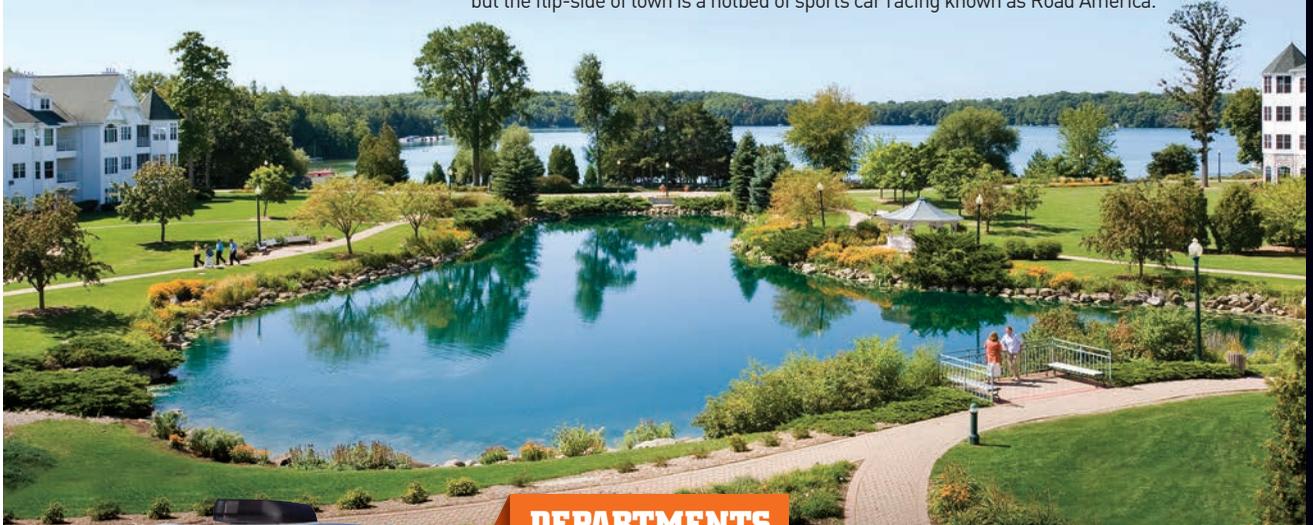
50 Truck Bed Toppers

Save fuel economy and protect your assets with a truck bed cover

56 Dialing up Power

Maximize your truck's performance with Bully Dog's GT Gauge Tuner and Rapid Flow Cold Air Intake

Below: Elkhart Lake offers quaint and charming scenes perfect for a quiet get-away, but the flip-side of town is a hotbed of sports car racing known as Road America.



DEPARTMENTS

5 Driver's Seat

News from the Editor

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

16 Outdoorsman

Bird watching places and tools

64 New Products

Goodies to improve the RV lifestyle

65 Performance Corner

Tech, accessories and news

67 Hands On

Portable battery charging

69 RV Clinic

Answers from the *Trailer Life* tech team

94 10-Minute Tech

Now why didn't I think of that?

97 America's Outback

A western movie star's legacy shines



 Jayco's new Seismic toy-hauler is functional and spacious.

On the cover: The new Winnebago One 32BH travel trailer being towed with a 2012 Ram 2500 turbodiesel Mega Cab 4x4. Photo by Rich Cox Photography



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Campground Camaraderie

Share the gift we've been given

Some time ago I was attending an outdoor writers conference. The keynote speaker was a hunter, angler, naturalist and historian. Moreover, he was an RVer and an outdoor enthusiast.

He commented that, for all outdoor enthusiasts, the experience is essentially the same, whether you are exploring in a tent, travel trailer or motorhome. We all share the musty, sweet smell of the damp forest floor at dawn; the sunlight dancing off the leaves from tree to tree; the melody of a bird's song; the crackling of firewood spit by the fire. We all share those experiences, regardless of our mode of abode or whether we are there to hike, hunt, fish, bike, swim, paddle or shoot pictures.

These words came back to me earlier this summer while sharing my campfire. Some were in a camping trailer much like mine, one in a motorhome, another few in travel trailers of assorted sizes, and two were tent campers. We all shared good conversation, food, drink and laughter. When it came time for all to turn in, the nice couple in the tent bid farewell and went toward the west. Once they were out of earshot, one of the others in the group offered up a comment not exactly complimentary of the tent campers or their accommodations. As the unanswered question hung and then faded into the still night air, he too retired for the night, but not before that same person tossed a now empty glass bottle into the fire pit.

The couple had a nice tent, it was a new, high-tech design with lightweight aircraft-quality aluminum poles, bathtub style floors, high/low venting, a full-length rain fly; it probably weighed 20 ounces, cost them half a week's pay and will last a decade if they take care of it. I would never deny anyone equal access — tent campers, hunters, anglers, off-roaders, RVers or tree huggers — who are responsibly pursuing his or her pleasure in the outdoors. And at that moment I didn't feel any great animosity toward the littering bottle thrower, either. What did bother me was the all too apparent hypocrisy of the moment.

The experiences we remember, that bring us all back again, that we come to the outdoors to experience; are essentially the same. They are the same for the tent camper and the RVer. We should freely share the outdoors and those experiences with others who visit responsibly, and should do so without prejudice. 🗨️

– Stuart Bourdon, editor-in-chief

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INSIDE: Readers On The Road

» Want to see your favorite travel photos published in *Trailer Life*? Here's how! We want pictures of you and your rig in the most amazing places you've been, with the story behind it, as well as your name, address, phone number and email, and you just might end up in a new section. Send to: info@trailerlife.com or Readers On The Road, *Trailer Life*, 3300 Fernbrook Lane N. #200, Minneapolis, MN 55447.



Wandering History Buffs

When we go out with our travel trailer, we like to visit historic and scenic sites, and your articles on Michigan's unsung scenery really was a hit with us. I also like the technical articles. After having our lightweight 23-foot travel trailer pounded (and sometimes damaged) by rough roads, we are looking for ways to upgrade the suspension on the next trailer we plan to buy.

Raymond Waugh, Volcano, Calif.



Jeff's Favorite Stuff

Thank you for an always-interesting magazine! We've been subscribers since 1997 when we bought our first travel trailer and have enjoyed the magazine ever since. Some of my favorites include the RV tests, travel articles and the special articles like the ones in the current issue on Wally Byam, and tires.

Always interesting, well written and informative. Well done!

Jeff Livingston (No relation to Bob) York Springs, Pa.

Home State Blues

There are abundant lakes and campgrounds in our home state of Kentucky and we have a 40-foot fifth-wheel toy-hauler and take our motorcycle with us. The problem is we can't find a campsite that accommodates us unless we reserve it six months in advance. A former coworker would get up at midnight six months in advance to reserve certain spots! It's difficult for us to make reservations that far in advance because we want to plan to take our grandchildren on many of our trips

Seeking Better Directions

I enjoy reading *Trailer Life*. Articles such as the tire guide in the July issue helped answer many of my questions. I hope you can help me now with one about GPS units. On my last excursion to Pennsylvania, I often relied on my ION GPS for directions. Many times it would direct me to narrow streets in the city. Towing a fifth-wheel behind me, I was not always pleased with these directions. I later found that if I ignored its early instructions and let it recalculate that a more suitable road would become available. I have tried to program it to ignore small roads but could not find a setting. I did set the vehicle type to be a bus but it did not change anything, it still directed to small roads. Do other RVers have this problem? If so what is a solution? My uncle is a long-haul trucker and suggested getting a GPS at a Flying J or Pilot service station. He says those are specific to truckers and do not direct to small roads. Is that my only solution? – **Don Vaillancourt, Via email**



YOU SOUGHT, WE FOUND:

» Here are a few GPS units that are designed for RVers like yourself, Don. The Magellan RoadMate Pro 9165T has a 7-inch high-resolution WVGA screen, customizable routes based on vehicle length, width, weight and height. The RoadMate Pro 9165T also includes a *Trailer Life* directory and Bluetooth connection to use as hands-free speakerphone. MSRP: \$399.99. Magellan; 800-707-9971, www.magellangps.com. The Rand McNally TripMaker RVND 5510 GPS has a loudspeaker, 5-inch color screen and includes propane, height and weight restrictions and turn preference for 11 different RV types. MSRP: \$269.99. Rand McNally; 800-333-0136, www.randmcnally.com.

and my husband is on-call some weekends. So instead of staying within our home state we have to drive several hours out of state to go RVing. Some friends jokingly say, "you need to get a smaller camper." Why? I would say 80 percent of the campsites are too small. How do people that have larger fifth-wheels and Class A's deal with it? I get so upset when trying to reserve something, even with a handicapped placard.

Our favorite place is Land Between the Lakes in western Kentucky. Rough River Lake is about an hour away, but the state park there never has any large spots open. We have tried Dale Hollow Lake and Lake Cumberland — no sites available. So we continue to go out of state.
Geraldine Hager, Vine Grove, Ky.

Correction

In a product spotlight covering the Maxxis M8008 ST Radial tire on Page 59 of the August 2012 issue of *Trailer Life* magazine, an MSRP price was inadvertently published. If you'd like more information about these tires, call 1-800-4-MAXXIS or visit the Maxxis website at www.maxxistires.com. We regret any inconvenience this may have caused. 🗨️

FACEBOOK POLL

Holiday weekends at campgrounds are ...

55% Too crowded, and best avoided

29% Fun! The more the merrier

16% Challenging — open sites are few and far between

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User Guide

Contents





Iron Valentines

Tennessee's Fort Donelson was pivotal in the Civil War

Today, Fort Donelson National Battlefield in western Tennessee, high above the Cumberland River, is a quiet world of stately oaks, stone monuments and nearly 3 miles of grassy ridges — the remains of the earthworks thrown up by Confederate troops and slaves during the first year of the Civil War.

Nine months into the war, the South seemed invincible, as the North had yet to win a major victory. Attempts to crack the Confederate western defense line had largely failed. But reconnaissance in January 1862 convinced Union commanders that the line might be broken at Forts Henry and Donelson, which guarded the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers.

Poorly positioned Fort Henry fell quickly. The remaining nearly 2,500 men escaped east to Fort Donelson, where the Confederates had the high ground. An attack on Donelson by the joint forces of Flag Of-

ficer Andrew Foote and relatively obscure brigadier general Ulysses S. Grant, was planned for February.

It came on a frigid February 14, as Grant's 15,000 troops nearly encircled the fort and Foote's ironclad and timber-clad gunboats began lobbing iron valentines from the river. Two days later, Confederate Brigadier General Simon Buckner asked for terms of surrender. Grant replied that only unconditional surrender was acceptable, earning himself the nickname "Unconditional Surrender" Grant, a promotion to major general and eventually a promotion to commander of all Union armies.

As a result of the battle, the South was forced to give up much of Kentucky and Tennessee, and the rivers and railroads in the area became vital supply lines for the Federals.

Fort Donelson was made a national battlefield in March 1928. Today

it also includes a visitor center open daily, and a self-guided driving tour with placards at nearly a dozen sites: the Confederate Monument, Fort Donelson, River Batteries with eight 32-pounder cannons and one 10-inch Columbiad, Union Camp and National Cemetery just east among others.

For more information, contact Fort Donelson National Battlefield, P.O. Box 434, Dover, TN, 37058, 931-232-5706; www.nps.gov/fodo. — Pamela Selbert

WHY NO CIVIL WAR REENACTMENTS?

As the National Park Service commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Civil War through 2015, park visitors can take part in hundreds of educational events. One thing you won't see at any National Park, though, is a battle reenactment. NPS doesn't allow them for three reasons: resource protection, visitor safety and respect for those who fought and died on America's battlefields.



Ulysses "Unconditional Surrender" Grant

On February 16, 1862, Confederate General Simon B. Buckner surrendered Fort Donelson to Ulysses Grant. Several years later, Buckner would serve as the Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. In 1885, he served as pallbearer to his old friend Ulysses Grant, who was the 18th president of the United States from 1869 to 1877. -National Park Service



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User Guide

Contents



Seismic Fifth-Wheel Hauler

Need space for your toys, without sacrificing living space? Jayco's all-new Seismic toy-hauler fifth-wheel offers upscale amenities, residential-style furniture and plenty of space with a spacious rear cargo garage that can convert into a bunkroom, patio deck or dining space. Up front is a unique, contoured front cap, and its appearance

can be customized with three paint schemes. Inside, a deluxe kitchen includes toe-kick lighting, high-end vinyl flooring, pendant lighting and high-gloss kitchen countertops with an under-mounted stainless-steel sink. The master bedroom comes standard

with a 60-by-80-inch mattress with a 2-inch topline pad, additional air-conditioning ducts, a 22-inch LCD HDTV and a walk-in closet. The Seismic's MSRP ranges from a base of \$71,250 to \$79,100, depending on model. Jayco: 574-825-5861, www.jayco.com.

No More Mud

Keep mud off your trailer — and protect against damage from road debris flying off your truck tires — with the XD Universal Fit Mud Flap. It can be used with all hitches. The Universal Fit Mud Flap can be easily removed when not in use, and quickly reinstalled by inserting a single pin. Pivoting arms give owners 17 inches of adjustment to perfectly position the flaps. Price is \$259.99 (2-inch receiver), \$269.99 (2.5-inch receiver). For more information contact 888-310-6037 or www.inventivehitches.com.



Atlanta Arts Festival

Heading to the Southeast? If so, stop in on the Atlanta Arts Festival taking place September 15-16 in Piedmont Park located next door to the Atlanta Botanical Garden. The Festival will feature fine arts and crafts from throughout the region. It was recently ranked 16 out of 200 art shows in the country. The nearest RV park, the Atlanta Marietta RV Resort Park, is less than 30 minutes north off I-75. 770-941-9660, www.atlantaartsfestival.com.



PHOTO BY TONY BENNER

NEWSWIRE

FUNDING



Taxing Time

As California struggles with chronic budget deficits, efforts are underway to keep the state's 66 parks open as funding dries up. Voters in Tuolumne County rejected adding a 10 percent tax to private campgrounds, RV parks and houseboats. It was designed to fund its fairgrounds and the Railtown 1897 State Historic Park.

INDUSTRY



Booming Rentals

The RV rental industry is having its best year ever, according to Allstar Coaches, thanks partly to soaring airfare prices. Even with fuel prices declining, the cost of air travel continues to rise, reaching levels travelers haven't seen since the Airline Deregulation Act in 1978. Allstar, a luxury RV rental outfit, reported its highest volume since 2006.

RETAIL



Winnebago's Largest Retailer

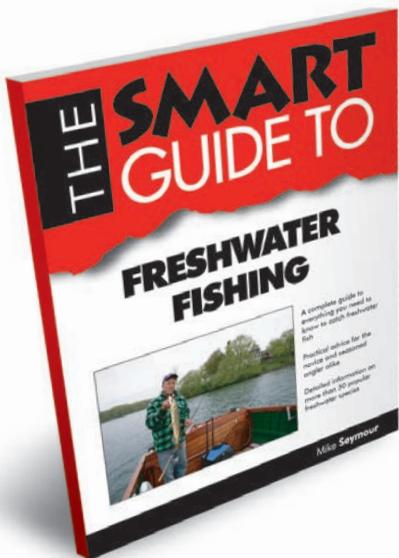
Camping World announced its position as the world's largest Winnebago retailer with more than \$150 million in sales. Camping World is the overall top motorized Winnebago retailer accounting for 25.5 percent of Winnebago's net revenue according to Winnebago's most recent quarterly 10-Q filing.

ECONOMY



Post-Recession Spike

RV shipments continued to trend upward in 2012 despite a jittery economy and elevated fuel prices according to data collected by Recreation Vehicle Industry Association. Shipments to retailers in March reached 28,100 — the best March since 2008. In February, manufacturers shipped 24,600 units, the industry's best two-month period since 2008.



Fishing for Novices

Spread the joy of fishing and move from novice to seasoned expert with *The Smart Guide to Freshwater Fishing* by Mike Seymour, operator of Captain Mike's Fishing Charters on the St. Lawrence River. The book is easy-to-read, focuses on newcomers and teaches budding anglers about equipment, where to go and how, exactly, they can catch fish. Topics include casting, drifting, trolling, setting the hook, landing the fish, fly fishing, ice fishing and even how to prepare and eat your catch. \$18.95, Smart Guide Publications. www.smartguidepublications.com.



Sen. Klobuchar Awarded by Outdoor Community

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar was presented with the 2012 Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award, the recreation community's most prestigious award, at a Great Outdoors Week celebration on June 6. The award is presented to individuals whose personal efforts have substantially contributed to enhancing outdoor experiences across America.

A panel of 100 national recreation community leaders chose Senator Klobuchar to be this year's winner. The award was created in 1989 to honor the life-long efforts of Sheldon Coleman, whose engineering, marketing and advocacy talents made coolers, lanterns and tents bearing his name ubiquitous on America's public lands. Senator Klobuchar is the fifth woman, and the first woman serving in Congress, to receive the honor.

Senator Klobuchar's selection reflects widespread enthusiasm within the recreation community for her efforts supporting recreation. "She has been especially active in supporting recreation programs aided by provisions of the nation's surface transportation program," according to American Recreation Coalition President Derrick Crandall.

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WEB-EXCLUSIVE



► This month's Web Exclusive is a *Trailer Life* interview with Airstream CEO Bob Wheeler, who talks about his expansion plans, new RV technologies and the future of the industry in the United States and abroad.

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► Browse through our RV Links section for additional information about the best campgrounds, services and other info from the Good Sam family.



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<http://www.gsevents.com/rv-shows.cfm>

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Insurance Gap

» My wife and I are Good Sam Members and have been for a few years now. We enjoy the benefits of membership and the great articles in the magazine. I'm writing to you about an issue we have run into with RV Wholesalers (RVW) in Ohio. We bought our 2010 Keystone Passport GT from them, as it was a much better deal than we could find in Massachusetts. During the sale, they explained if we pay \$2,000 for a warranty, and did not use it, we could get that money refunded.

Fast forward to this spring 2012. My wife and I decided to upgrade to a fifth-wheel toy-hauler so we could bring our motorcycle with us on our RVing adventures. We traded in the Passport and put in a cancellation/reimbursement claim through RVW and were told we should see the check come back from the warranty company, Phoenix American. I called the company to see when we should be expecting the check and was told that our warranty was not held with them. When calling back to RVW, I was then told that my warranty was held by Pro Guard, now out of business, and there was nothing I could do to get my reimbursement.

The issue I have is that Pro Guard stopped paying out its warranty claims back in 2007, yet RVW still used them to sell us a warranty in 2010. Now they will not stand behind the customer and do what's right. I'm not expecting anything to come of this, but I want to warn people to be very careful when dealing with RVW and don't let them talk you into a contract that they will not honor. I've emailed the owners and have yet to receive a reply.

Sincerely, Sean O'Connell

Editor's Note: The O'Connells sent us an update on their dispute with RV Wholesalers:

» We just want to update you on the outcome of this. RV Wholesalers came through for us, sort of. They are sending half the money on the warranty. We are very grateful and pleased that they decided to stand by us. We have always talked highly of them, and by doing this it confirms to us that they are an up-standing company. We will keep you posted on further developments.

Cathy and Sean O'Connell

Shower Power

Reader Sam Ballard was having difficulty resolving a problem involving a dispute over a warranty issue with an insurance provider. RV Action Line's goal is to serve as a third-party facilitator in promoting amicable resolutions, so a copy of this letter, with copies of all of Ballard's receipts and notes, and a request for resolution was sent to Interstate National Dealer Services.

» In May of 2005, we bought a new Everest 363 fifth-wheel trailer and at the same time purchased a 7-year extended warranty from Start Travel Trailer Service. We bought its Diamond coverage, which is the best package, for \$1,580.

In November of 2011, we noticed a large crack in the bottom of our 3-foot-by-3-foot stand-up shower pan next the drain. Water was leaking out under the pan getting the surrounding floor and carpet wet. I contacted Interstate and requested a shower pan, which I would install myself with help. I was informed that Interstate would only deal with a certified repairman and that person would have to perform all the work.

I contacted a repairman who pointed out smaller cracks in the shower pan around the drain that I had not seen before and called Interstate, but was told that the shower pan was not covered. I then called Interstate with my contract in hand and read from it (continued on pg. 14)



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User Guide

Contents



(continued from pg. 12)

where the shower pan was covered. The customer service representative then agreed and told me to have the repairman call back and that Interstate would take care of the repair.

The repairman called back and told Interstate that the hole in the floor under the pan was too large for the drainpipe going through it and the pipe was centered and touching the edge of the hole but there was no support under the pan around the drain and that was why it cracked. The repairman was again told the shower pan would be covered.

I called Interstate back and was told that the large hole was a manufacturer's defect and they had multiple complaints about it and that I needed to contact Keystone about this. Keystone warranty service told me they knew nothing about this and the warranty on

my trailer expired long ago.

So I contacted the manufacturer of the shower pan, it sent me a replacement for \$115, plus \$57.50 for shipping costs. I paid a carpenter friend \$100 to help me install it and fill in the oversized hole.

I think Interstate should be held accountable for my expenses. What did I pay Interstate for? The most unacceptable part of the entire experience was the way they kept changing their position in order to keep from paying their obligation. Any assistance in the matter would be greatly appreciated.

Samuel and Blanche Ballard, Townsend, Ga.

We recently received this note from Ballard:

» Thank you for contacting Interstate National Dealer Services on my behalf. They turned me down on my insurance claim, but after your communications

with them, they changed their minds and sent me a check for \$272.50 to cover the repair including parts, shipping and labor. My case was closed until you came to my aid. Thank you again, and keep up the good work!

Delam Whammy

» My 2008 Heartland Sundance fifth-wheel began to show delamination on the side right under the refrigerator vent in September, so I contacted my dealer, General RV of Birch Run. The dealer told me that it was a factory issue, so I contacted Heartland, but was told by two separate people that we would have to pay for the repair of the delamination caused by the dripping water because the trailer was out of warranty, and because we had not caulked around the vent like we were supposed to. This seems excessive. Can you help?

Thomas Bouchey, Hillman, Mich.

Here is an excerpt from Heartland Recreational Vehicles, LLC Customer Service correspondence to RV Action Line concerning Bouchey's request:

THE COMPANY RESPONDED

Mr. Bouchey contacted Heartland requesting assistance on the repairs to the sidewall of the unit. During the conversation, the customer stated that there was no sealant around the refrigerator vent and that was the cause of the water damage. I stated to the customer that per his owner's manual it is his responsibility to maintain and reseal the unit and prevent damages such as this. I advised the customer that due to the unit being 2.5 years outside of warranty and that per the customer's own admission, the sealant has not been maintained that Heartland would have to respectfully decline any type of coverage on the repairs. 🚚

TAKE ACTION » After exhausting all other resources without success, please forward information with copies of appropriate bills and correspondence to RV Action Line, 3300 Fernbrook Lane N, Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN 55447. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. No phone calls, please.

(Interstate National Dealer Services) turned me down on my insurance claim, but after your communications with them, they changed their minds...

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LIFE



User Guide

Contents



Migration, Birds and Glass

What you need to know for your next bird adventure

Autumn is the perfect time for birding, one of America's fastest-growing outdoor pursuits. It is also the second of the year's two migratory seasons, when millions of avian travelers are spending weeks at a time winging their way across the landscape, from southern climes where they were growing up and getting strong and fat toward northern winter mating and nesting destinations. Libraries full of good guidebooks are available (we are especially fond of the Peterson Field Guide Series, paper and digital versions are available) to help you develop a keen eye for identifying the difference between an American pelican and an anhinga.

Just about everywhere can be a good birding location, including your own backyard or a local, regional, state or national park. However, some destinations are better than others. Here are five of our favorite bird-watching locations across the United States:

HAWK MOUNTAIN SANCTUARY, PA.
Perched upon a 300-mile-long hog's back mountain near Reading, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, is a hot spot for predatory birds. The 2,400-acre preserve is considered by some as the best place in the United States to see raptors, and the prime viewing spot is North Lookout, just one mile from the visitor center. Black vulture, bald eagle, osprey, Cooper's hawk and American kestrel are highlights. 610-756-6961, www.hawkmountain.org.

J.N. "DING" DARLING NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, FLA.
North of the famous Everglades, and just next door to scenic Sanibel, the compact 6,000-or-so-acre refuge might bring you 250 bird species in a day during the winter. Darling is a mix of ocean, mangrove thickets, wetlands and upland forest. The site also features an observation tower. American bittern, wood

stork and roseate spoonbill can be found here. 239-472-1100, www.fws.gov/dingdarling.

FELSENTHAL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, ARK.

It just so happens that two of the largest migratory flyways across North America, the Central and the Mississippi, converge on top of this state, and it's dense with hardwood forests, rivers, creeks, sloughs and lakes — all prime bird country. Our first choice is the 65,000-acre Felsenthal Refuge near West Crossett, which is highlighted by the 15,000-acre Felsenthal Pool. During recent years, its surface has been covered by more than 300,000 wintering waterfowl. 870-364-3167, www.fws.gov/felsenthal.

SONNY BONO SALTON SEA NATIONAL REFUGE, CALIF.

The Salton Sea, just south of Palm Springs, is considered a globally significant bird habitat, but is also an accident. Formed when Imperial Valley irrigation canals suffered a series



Hawk!
The Ferruginous Hawk is North America's largest hawk and is found in open, arid regions.

of breaks, allowing the Colorado River to flood the then-Salton Sink during 1905-1906, the 35-mile long "sea" and surrounding briny habitat include about 38,000 acres of open water and salt marsh. During the winter months, the Salton Sea attracts a total of around 4 million birds, and more than 380 species have been recorded. 760-348-5278, www.fws.gov/saltonsea.

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK, WASH.

Nearly 95 percent of Olympic National Park's almost 1 million acres is wilderness. The terrain and habitat of this park on the Olympic Peninsula, west of Seattle, is so diverse that visitors can drive from fog-shrouded coastline through temperate rainforest and over snow-capped mountain passes in this park alone. Ruby Beach is home to dozens of shore bird species and pink sand made up of tiny garnet crystals. The Hoh Rain Forest (American dipper, varied thrush, pileated woodpecker, or the endangered spotted owl) is a landscape of moss-covered trees and tropical ferns. 360-565-3130, www.nps.gov/olym.

No matter where you are, observations of these beautiful, interesting, and often rare bird species can be difficult, if not impossible without the aid of magnifying optics such as binoculars. Here we gathered a quartet of high-quality binoculars to help you find just the right one for your birding adventures:

NIKON TRAVELITE VI SERIES ▲



The Nikon Travelite is compact, lightweight and easy to carry. Available in 8x25, 10x25 and 12x25 configurations, these models feature Nikon's bright, multicoated optics and BAK-4 high-index prisms, delivering a brighter, sharper view during critical early and late periods of the day. The Travelite features turn-and-slide eyecups and a

central focus knob; enhanced ergonomics and aspherical eyepiece lenses for an enhanced field of view. **MSRP: 8x: \$99.99, 10x: \$109.95, 12x: \$119.95. Nikon: 631-547-4200, www.nikon.com.**

BUSHNELL TROPHY XLT ▶

Bushnell's affordable Trophy XLT Binoculars have a sleek, ergonomic build with fast focus capability, making these binoculars perfect for checking out wildlife on the move. The Dura-Grip coating with soft touch thumb grips makes them easy to hold for longer periods of time. The fully multi-coated lenses feature lead-free glass for greater clarity and light transmission. Trophy series binoculars are 100 percent waterproof and fogproof. Each pair also comes with a set of flip-up objective lens covers. **MSRP: 10x28: \$99.99, 8x32: \$119.99, 8x42: \$189.99, 10x42: \$199.99, 12x50: \$219.99. Bushnell: 800-423-3537, www.bushnell.com.**



ZEISS CONQUEST ▲ 8X30

The Conquest 8x30 is a good binocular for those who prefer mid-size glass. Zeiss' proprietary multi-coating on the lenses and its phase-coatings on the prisms improve light transmission for bright, sharp images and enhanced twilight vision. And the 17.46-ounce, rugged Conquest binoculars are ergonomically designed for



comfort during extended use in the field. **MSRP: \$649.99. Zeiss: 800-441-3005, www.zeiss.com**

CELESTRON 10X50 NATURE SERIES ▼

The Nature Series from Celestron feature an open-frame style with a rugged aluminum main body and a rubber covering for additional protection. Significant features include fully multi-coated optics and high-precision BAK-4 prisms to enhance the optical quality with maximum contrast and color rendition. Twist-up eyecups provide easy adjustment. The Nature series is waterproof, and nitrogen purged to be fog proof. **MSRP: \$115.95. Celestron: 310-803-5955, www.celestron.com.**





Overflowing with Activities

Wyoming and Montana share this RVing hot spot

For millions of years, the waterway that today bisects northern Wyoming and southern Montana flowed north, carving a deep canyon that made interacting with the river dangerous for the people who later would inhabit the river's banks. Yet the Bighorn River became downright friendly to travelers and locals once the Yellowtail Dam was built in 1968, near Fort Smith, Mont.

In addition to providing hydroelectric power, doling out water for irrigation and controlling floods, the dam created 71-mile-long Bighorn Lake, the focal point of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. The region nearly overflows with scenery and outdoor activities, all designed for visitors to enjoy.

Montana and Wyoming have long been known as prime RV destinations, but during their explorations of the big-name attractions in the region visitors may be tempted to skip Bighorn

Canyon Recreation Area. This would be a mistake, particularly to fans of wildlife, since black bears, wild horses, mountain lions, mule deer and the namesake bighorn sheep inhabit the region, and more than 200 species of birds either live there or pass through.

The lake and river are, of course, the main attractions. Afterbay Campground, with its 28 sites on the south shore of the afterbay near Fort Smith, makes for a good base from which to explore. Boating of every kind is immensely popular on Bighorn Lake since the waterway features numerous coves to be explored by powerboats, canoes and kayaks.

Anglers plying either Bighorn Lake or the Bighorn River will likely be awed by the possibilities: Yellow perch, carp, catfish, ling, crappie, walleye and brown and rainbow trout all inhabit Bighorn Lake. The Bighorn River is also known as a world-class trout fishery, anglers have caught 38



species of fish in the river. This abundance means that an angler's biggest problem in the region will be deciding which species to target.

Amateur geologists should not miss the ridge at Horseshoe Bend, where five distinct rock layers are exposed. And four visitor centers exist within the recreation area, spread out for easy access. 🗨️

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area:
 (406) 666-2412, www.nps.gov/bica.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Bighorn River is a tailwater, which means the water temperature doesn't fluctuate like a freestone river, and rarely freezes. This means float and wade fishing is available year round, and anglers can be found on the water 365 days a year. — NPS.

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- Designed for fifth wheel trailers up to 26,000 pounds.



Husky 10 with Husky 26K W hitch
(components sold separately)



1
Compression cylinder takes the pressure from the load on the mechanism



3
Flipper automatically selects the next lock position, while you are still in your truck



2
Truck moves forward, compression cylinder relaxes to allow flipper to work



4
Composite materials glide to prevent metal-on-metal grinding for quiet operation

"No-Bind" Latching Mechanism

With a typical 5th Wheel Roller, if you have load against the locking pin/mechanism you have to jockey the truck, getting in and out trying the handle until it disengages. With the Husky 10, you just put the operating handle in the Unlock position, get in your truck and move forward or back... The Husky 10 glides quietly, and automatically locks in the next position. No more 2-person job. No more in and out of the truck to work the handle. Get the "No Bind" solution... Husky 10, another innovative product from the towing professionals at Husky.



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THE SCENIC ROUTE:

PACIFIC COAST SCENIC BYWAY

When traveling the Oregon coast, it turns out the stunning views are not the main attraction

story and photos by Alan Rider

Standing 500 feet above the crashing waves and rugged cliffs of the Oregon coast, I am struck by a somewhat counterintuitive notion. As inspiring as this panorama is, my family and I aren't necessarily here for the scenery. In fact, if this first trip in our yearlong quest to explore America's scenic byways is any indication, the jaw-dropping views from roadside turnouts like this are only half the story.

THE ROADS LESS TRAVELED

Our 12-month expedition, which we've dubbed "The Scenic Route," is designed to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the National Scenic Byways program (www.byways.org). So we thought it was only fitting to start here in Oregon on one of the first routes to achieve this special designation from the Federal Highway Administration.

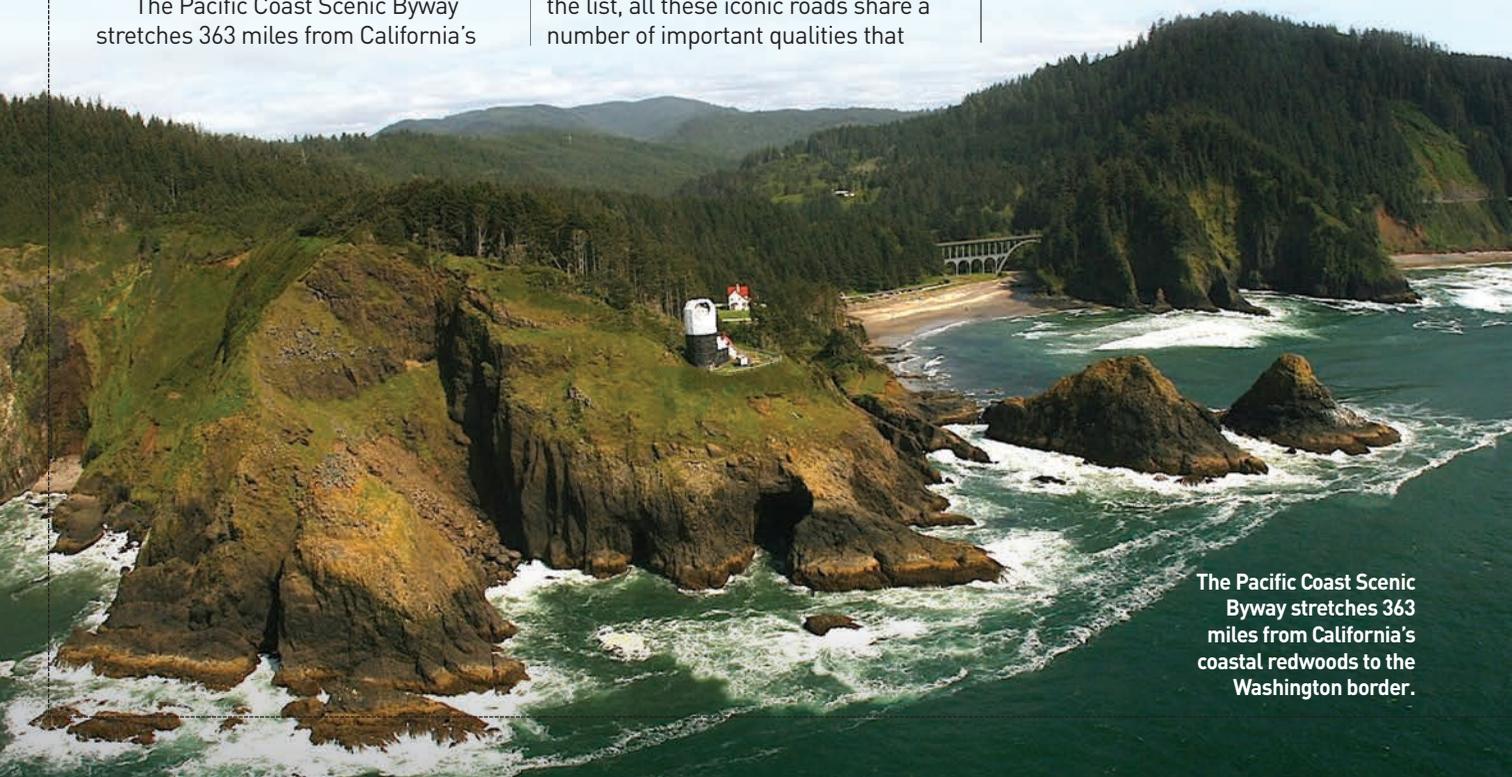
The Pacific Coast Scenic Byway stretches 363 miles from California's

coastal redwoods to the Washington border at the mouth of the Columbia River. Along the way this undulating ribbon of asphalt took us past strikingly beautiful stretches of rocky coastline, bucolic rural scenes and small seaside towns fronting miles of wide, sandy beaches.

And yet, as different as it was from many of the other 150 scenic byways on the list, all these iconic roads share a number of important qualities that

make them ideal RVing destinations.

For starters, they are almost by definition the roads less traveled, places where traffic jams are all but unheard of and national fast food chains have scarcely gotten a toe-hold. They are also places where the forces of natural and man-made history intersect, often with fascinating results. Then there are the abundant recreational opportunities — in this specific case everything from world-class beachcombing to mountain biking — that can't be overlooked. Last but certainly not least is the scenery. Oregon can hold its own with anything



The Pacific Coast Scenic Byway stretches 363 miles from California's coastal redwoods to the Washington border.



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LIFE



User Guide

Contents



on the face of the planet.

In short, these roads are the very definition of the scenic route, roads chosen as much for the pure pleasure of driving them than their sheer efficiency at delivering us from Point A to Point B.

GOT SAND?

We began our trip on the Pacific Coast Scenic Byway by following Highway 101 north across the border into the southernmost towns of Brookings and Gold Beach, known for mild weather and a sea stack-studded coastline. While this gorgeous meeting of land and sea is generally the first thing that comes to mind when people think of the Oregon coast, we pushed on to experience what in many ways is an even more remarkable natural wonder.

Being the father of a teenage boy means constantly being on the lookout for activities with a suitable cool factor and, for my son, not much ranks higher on that scale than riding an ATV like it's a free-spirited bronco. Fortunately for us, the 40-mile Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area that runs between North Bend and Florence provides a perfect playground for this kind of four-wheel rodeo.

Spinreel Dune Buggy & ATV Rentals (541-759-3313, www.ridetheoregondunes.com) set my wife and I up with a side-by-side two-seater while my son opted for the independence of a traditional quad. Once suitably briefed and outfitted we headed for the dunes where we spent hours climbing the gentler slopes of these colossal sand piles, some of which are as tall as a 50-story building. At the top we were rewarded with views of the largest coastal sand dunes, coastal lakes and the blue waters of the Pacific.

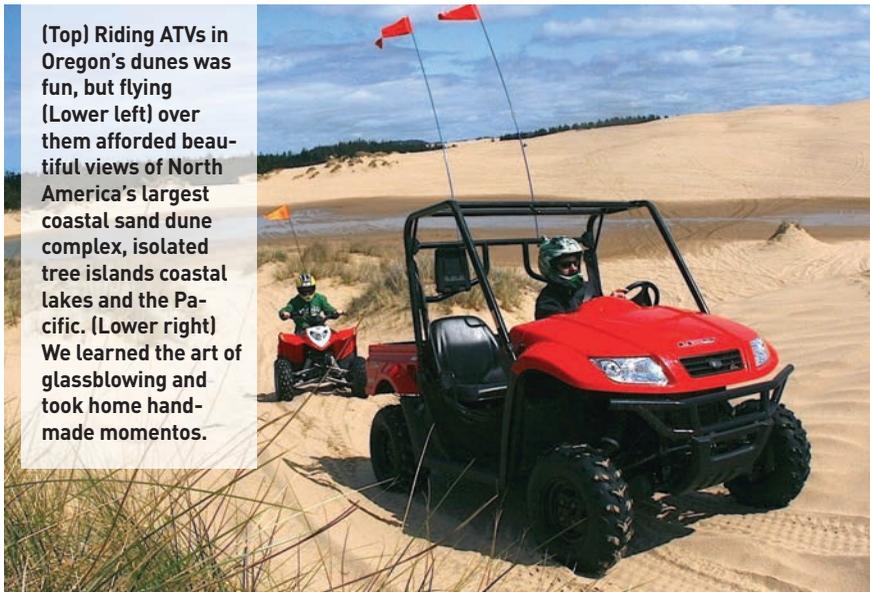
If you find the idea of renting your own ATV intimidating, there are also a number of guided tour operations that will allow you to get first-hand look at this dramatic landscape while letting someone else do the driving.

UP IN THE AIR

Admittedly there's no shortage of impressive viewpoints along the Pacific Coast Scenic Byway. I can tell you from personal experience, however, that not all of them are created equal.

We came to this conclusion shortly

(Top) Riding ATVs in Oregon's dunes was fun, but flying (Lower left) over them afforded beautiful views of North America's largest coastal sand dune complex, isolated tree islands coastal lakes and the Pacific. (Lower right) We learned the art of glassblowing and took home hand-made mementos.



after lifting off from Apex Heli's base (541-997-3270, www.apexheli.com) at the city of Florence's sleepy airport. Our pilot smoothly climbed to 500 feet as he headed north along the coastline toward the Cape Creek Bridge and historic Heceta Head lighthouse. Built in 1894

on an isolated rocky headland 100 feet above a sandy cove, the still-active lighthouse is considered to be one of the most picturesque of its kind.

Though the folks at Apex Heli offer several options for these half-hour flight-seeing tours, I would highly recommend

BEFORE YOU GO

Despite its remoteness, traveling the Pacific Coast Scenic Byway is relatively easy, with fuel stations and grocery stores located in most of the larger towns. Finding a place to spend the night is equally straightforward, with plenty of inexpensive public campgrounds and affordable RV parks from which to choose. We found these three to be especially well placed for exploring the surrounding area:

The Mill Casino RV Park (North Bend): 541-756-8800, www.themillcasino.com

Logan Road RV Park (Lincoln City): 877-564-2678, www.loganroadrvpark.com

Cannon Beach RV Resort (Cannon Beach): 800-847-2231, www.cbrvresort.com



our route as an outstanding way to get a perspective on this stunning landscape.

FEELING THE HEAT

While many of the small towns here have no shortage of shops peddling t-shirts and refrigerator magnets, I'm a sucker for souvenirs of a more do-it-yourself nature. So when I heard that the folks at Lincoln City's Jennifer Sears Glass Art Studio (541-996-2569, www.jennifersearsglassart.com) were willing to let a five-thumbed artist like me try glassblowing, well, I couldn't resist.

Given the fact that the art of glassblowing can take years to master, my instructor allowed me to take a remarkably hands-on role in everything from gathering the molten glass from the furnace ("hotter than a volcano," she nonchalantly informed me) on the end of the blow-pipe to rolling the red-hot blob in small chunks of colorful glass first to shaping it with gentle puffs of air. The cantaloupe-sized globe now hangs in our kitchen window, giving me both a pleasant reminder of our time here and the satisfaction of knowing that I created something beautiful with my own two hands.

CHEESY IS GOOD

Continuing north, the Pacific Coast Scenic Byway turns inland as it meanders through the national forest and small dairy farms before emerging in the bay-front town of Tillamook. Among its other claims to fame, this small burgh is best known for being the home to one of the West Coast's largest dairy- and cheese-making operations.

We immersed ourselves in this century-old local industry at the Blue Heron French Cheese Company (503-842-8281, www.blueheronoregon.com) where we sampled



The Blue Heron French Cheese Company offers samples of gourmet cheese, mustard, hot sauce and wine. The kids can enjoy the petting zoo.

a tasty assortment of gourmet brie and blue cheese, mustard, hot sauce, wine and more.

NOT DISMAL

Leaving Tillamook, we headed north toward the town of Seaside, Cannon Beach and the route's terminus in Astoria. This area is home to the Lewis and Clark National Historic Park (503-861-2471, www.nps.gov/lewi), a collection of sites marking the terminus of the Corps of Discovery's arduous westward journey to the Pacific Ocean.

We spent the morning touring Fort Clatsop, a recreation of the tiny 50-square-foot outpost where the expedition housed more than 30 people during the winter of 1805-1806. On this sunny, 75-degree day, it seemed hard to imagine the journal entry we read that recorded it rained on all but 12 days of the four months the party spent here.

MORE THAN THE VIEW

While we traveled the length of the Pacific Coast Scenic Byway in five days, I can tell you there are enough memorable diversions here to keep anyone amused for weeks. That is the point, to take in the scenic route and not worry about speed. It is also, surprisingly enough, about a whole lot more than just the scenery. 🗽

UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES

Jerry's Rogue Jets

Gold Beach

www.roguejets.com

This local institution offers visitors an easy way to experience the beauty of the federally designated wild-and-scenic Rogue River. Daily jetboat tours take passengers as much as 104 miles upriver through whitewater and rugged canyons in an outing that is equal parts sedate nature tour and thrill ride.

West Coast Game Park Safari

Bandon

www.gameparksafari.com

For more than 40 years, this 21-acre park south of Bandon offers visitors a chance to interact with hundreds of surprisingly approachable exotic animals ranging from tigers and snow leopards to bison and camels. A highlight is the always-changing collection of new cubs from the park's captive breeding programs available for petting and bottle-feeding.

Whale Research EcoExcursions

Depoe Bay

www.oregonwhales.com

Unlike most whale-watching trips that herd large crowds onto bigger boats for what often ends up feeling like little more than an extended scenic cruise, small groups board these small and nimble Zodiac powerboats to meet the whales — most of which the accompanying marine biologist can identify by sight.

Aero Legends Biplane Rides

Florence

www.aerolegends.com

Experience a unique opportunity to enjoy an earlier era of aviation with rides in a 1944 Stearman biplane. Choose to fly north past the picturesque Heceta Head lighthouse, south over the dunes or a little of both with these customizable "Just Flying" packages.



Tillamook is home to one of the largest dairy- and cheese-making operations on the west coast.

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User Guide

Contents





DRIVING COLONIAL SOUTH CAROLINA

by Pamela Selbert

Ashley River Road Connects the South's Living History

Years ago, if you were traveling from Charles Towne in the Carolinas to one of the grand plantations a few miles northwest along the Ashley River, chances are you went by boat. Even long before Europeans settled the area, Ashley River was the major route linking the coast and settlements inland.

Fast-forward a couple of centuries to today and the more common route between Charleston, S.C., and the plantations is paved. Named the Ashley River Road, it's the 11 mile stretch of Highway 61 that bisects the Ashley River Historic District, and is

worthy of the National Scenic Byway designation.

Hickory and oak trees line the two-lane road on either side, interspersed with fan-like palmettos, sweet gums, pyracanthas lavish with orange berries, and enormous live oaks draped in gray beards of Spanish moss. Tentacle-like, gnarled branches of the ancient oaks have woven together high overhead into a leafy jade canopy.

But although the drive is lovely, it isn't the main reason visitors come to this "Lowcountry" locale. That would be the plantations, though few remain of the nearly two dozen that stood



before the Civil War. Three can be visited today: Drayton Hall, the only plantation house to largely survive both the American Revolution and Civil War; Magnolia, with the oldest public garden in the country; and Middleton Place, once a fine three-building residence of which only the "south flanker," or original gentlemen's guest quarters, was not destroyed.

The remains of the Fort Bull Confederate Earthworks are also in the historic district, near Bees Ferry and Ashley River Road (from where the British staged the capture of Charleston in 1780). The fort was built by slave labor around 1863, but was evacuated by the time Union troops arrived toward the end of the war. Today the earthworks are hidden behind the trees.

We learned about the historic district and designated scenic byway from an RVer friend. For years she has spent nearly every vacation in South Carolina.

"The Ashley is a gorgeous drive that you can make in 20 minutes," she said. "But to see all it has to offer you'll need at least two days." My husband, Guy, and I allowed two days, and later wished for three. Parking is available at the plantations, but we took our friend's advice and left the fifth-wheel at the Mount Pleasant/Charleston KOA.

DRAYTON HALL

Our first stop was at Drayton Hall, set imposingly back from the road, with views through gardens of the meandering, sky-blue river. Drayton Hall now occupies 125 acres, but the massive oaks that statue the lawns have been here since before John Drayton, the first of his family's seven generations to own the plantation, began construction of the house in 1738.

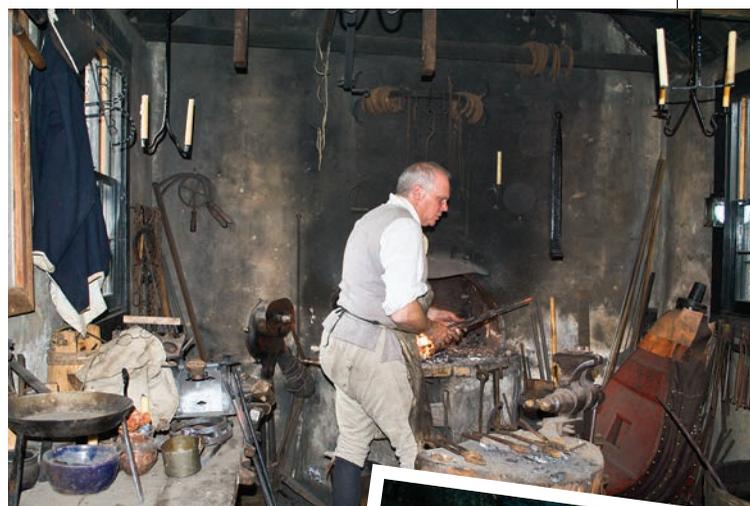
Guide Betsy McAmis noted the African slaves brought here by the Draytons and their descendents also lived on the plantation for seven generations.

Built of bricks made on the premises by the slaves — the family owned about 50 — the two-story mansion, with raised basement and double projecting portico, is considered one of the country's finest examples of Georgian-Palladian architecture, said McAmis. Drayton Hall was completed in 1742 and occupied by the family for the next 120 years.

Now a National Historic Landmark, the home has survived a variety of disasters. Drayton was the only Ashley River plantation not burned by Union troops during the Civil War. But two of its "flankers," which early drawings show connected to the house by colonnades, were not so fortunate: though spared by soldiers, the laundry house was destroyed by an earthquake in 1886, and a hurricane took down the kitchen seven years later. Local historians say Drayton may have been saved because Union troops believed it was being used as a hospital for smallpox patients.

McAmis points out that although cattle raised by Thomas Drayton, Jr., John Drayton's father, on adjacent Magnolia Plantation "were the foundation of the family's wealth," Drayton Hall grew rice, which was a profitable crop during Colonial times. Before his house was complete John Drayton began developing fields, building dikes to keep salt water out, and ditches and gates to bring fresh water in, as rice fields must periodically be flooded.

After the Civil War the Draytons used the home only as a



(Top) A photographer gives scale to a giant live oak on Magnolia Plantation. **(Middle)** The blacksmith at Middleton Place forms red-hot iron. **(Bottom)** Sherrie Zabinski, a drover at Middleton and her friend Adem, a 2000 lb. water buffalo. A Veterinarian was forced to remove Adem's left horn following an accident.



country retreat. In 1974 the family sold Drayton Hall to the National Trust for Historic Preservation and it was opened to the public three years later. Today it is preserved in its mid-19th century appearance.

Several programs and self-guided tours are available, including "Connections: From Africa to America" which explores the lives of 18th and 19th century African Americans; "A Sacred Place" that describes Drayton Hall's still-used 18th century African-American cemetery, 30-minute "River Walk" and 45-minute "Marsh Walk." There's also a fine book and gift shop.

Admission is \$18 for adults, \$8 for ages 12-18 and \$6 for ages 6-11. For other information contact Drayton Hall: 3380 Ashley River Road, Charleston, SC, 29414, 843-769-2600, www.draytonhall.org.



MAGNOLIA PLANTATION

Magnolia Plantation, the “South’s most complete plantation experience,” is one mile north of Drayton Hall. The 500-acre plantation, with some of the most spectacular gardens you’ll see anywhere, has been home to the Drayton family since 1676, says Operations Manager Mary Ann Johnson. Now managed by members of the twelfth and thirteenth generations of the family, it’s the oldest plantation on the Ashley River, and is believed to be South Carolina’s oldest still under original family ownership.

Thomas Drayton, Jr., who had left England for Barbados with his father in the mid 1600’s, came to the Carolinas in the 1670’s, she said. Here he married Ann Fox whose father, Stephen Fox, gave the plantation to the couple as a wedding present.

Early drawings show the original house, built in the 1680’s, as similar in style to Drayton Hall. It burned in 1811 and was replaced with a three-story home of cypress built atop the brick first floor of its predecessor. Fifty-four years later the second house also met a fiery fate at the hands of Union troops during the Civil War, Johnson said.

Today’s elegant dwelling, which includes a wrap-around porch added in 1995, was built 14 miles upriver in 1760 as a summer cottage. After the war cost the Rev. John Drayton, Magnolia’s

eighth owner, most of his wealth as well as his home, he had the cottage dismantled and barged here and rebuilt on the burned-out first floor of the second house.

With the additions and changes made over the years, the home hardly resembles its original, humble appearance. Guided tours are available, and showcase the family’s collections of early-American antiques, porcelain, quilts and more.

Magnolia is known for its 30 acres of magnificent gardens continuously planted since the 1680’s. Highlights are the Biblical Garden, Herb Garden, Camellia Garden and Barbados Tropical Garden. There are flowering trees and plants in bloom year-round.

Visitors pay admission for access to the garden and grounds. Other tours are extra and include: “Nature Tram,” narrated rides that explain plantation history, flora and fauna; “From Slavery to Freedom,” a discussion of African-American life here before and after the war; “Nature Boat,” narrated tours of Magnolia’s 135-acre marsh; and “Audubon Swamp Garden,” self-guided tours along a boardwalk that crosses the 60-acre black water cypress and tupelo swamp.

With time for just two of the tours, Guy and I chose “From Slavery to Freedom” and “Nature Boat.” With guide Mike Laskavy and other visitors, we climbed aboard a tram and rode to a

“street” of African-American cabins, four humble dwellings dating from the 1850’s to the 1960’s. All were occupied into the 1990’s, he said.

The slave trade constituted the “largest forced migration in history,” he said, with 15 to 20 million Africans taken into slavery. Just 10 to 12 million survived the horrendous trip to the New World. More than half were taken to Brazil to work coffee or rubber plantations or silver mines, a third to the Caribbean sugar plantations; and the rest, about 500,000, to North America to grow rice, a crop raised in Africa for centuries. By the time of the American Revolution, Carolina rice fields were yielding 60 million bushels a year. Slaves brought other skills as well, such as blacksmithing, woodworking, brick making and weaving.

The “Nature Boat” tour, on a large pontoon with Don Hartseen as guide, plies a pristine-looking marsh he says was once private hunting ground and is now wildlife preserve. The marsh is home to several hundred alligators — a handful were even dozing near the water; 30 varieties of snakes, turtles, and numerous bird species, marsh hens, anhinga and great blue herons among others.

Hartseen explains the ins and outs of growing rice — the “Carolina gold that made planters rich.” In turn, fields would be drained through the year, weeds burned off, fields raked, rice seeds broadcast, fields flooded, and so on. After harvest, the crop would be taken to Charleston for milling, then England to be taxed, Hartseen said.

At the start of the Civil War, Rev. Drayton was one of the South’s wealthiest landowners. But the war, locally referred to afterward as “the Recent Unpleasantness,” reduced him to near-poverty. Rebuilding cost him a townhouse, sea island plantation and much of Magnolia. Still financially strapped, he opened the garden to the public in 1870, making it America’s oldest man-made tourist attraction.

Admission is \$15 for adults, \$10 for ages 6-12; \$8 for each of the five tours; admission and tours free for age five and younger. For information contact Magnolia Plantation; 3550 Ashley River Road, Charleston, SC, 29414, 800-367-3517, www.magnoliaplantation.com.

Magnolia Plantation sits on 500 acres, with some of the most spectacular gardens in the South and has been in the Drayton family since 1676.



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MIDDLETON PLACE

Middleton Place, also a survivor of the Revolution and Civil War and with significant damage, is about four miles north of Drayton Hall. Built in 1706, Middleton originally consisted of a main house and two flankers, said guide Mary Hart. The north flanker contained a library with 10,000 books and numerous oil and watercolor paintings. The south flanker housed the plantation office and sleeping quarters for guests.

Henry Middleton acquired the plantation through his marriage to Mary Williams in 1741, and over the next 124 years it housed four successive generations prominent in American history, Hart said. Henry was the second president of the First Continental Congress; Arthur succeeded him in the next Continental Congress and was a signer of the Declaration of Independence; the second Henry was a governor of South Carolina and minister to Russia; and his son William was a signer of the Ordinance of Secession four years before Union troops set fire to the beautiful

home on February 22, 1865.

The house and north flanker were destroyed — and remain, nearly a century and half later, a heap of brick rubble. But after the war the less seriously damaged south flanker was restored, and was the family's residence until 1974. A year later, Middleton opened to the public as a National Historic Landmark.

Today, guided tours lead through an antique world of opulence, rooms of fine furniture, walls hung with portraits, glass cases displaying the family's silver, porcelain, ornate jewelry, books and documents.

The plantation also includes a reflecting pool, springhouse and chapel, gardens, museum shop, carriage house and stable yards, where costumed reenactors demonstrate 18th and 19th century life.

General admission to Middleton is \$25 for adults, \$10 for ages 6-13; house tours \$12; carriage rides \$18. For information contact Middleton Place, 4300 Ashley River Road, Charleston, SC,

29414-7206, 800-782-3608,
www.middletonplace.org.

LIVING HISTORY

Comparatively recent conflicts like World War II have countless relics you can see, touch and, in some cases, listen to all over the world — equipment, battlefields and survivors with firsthand accounts of their lives during wartime. As the Civil War has been over for nearly 150 years, much of its physical evidence was destroyed by weather and time, yet the story of its history is still being discovered and told at unique sites like the plantations we visited in South Carolina.

Starting at the coastal Atlantic city of Charleston, with its historic architecture and charming neighborhoods, the Ashley River Road National Scenic Byway winds its way westward through towering oaks and beautiful country. If you take the time to stop, you'll also get a firsthand glimpse at one of early America's most trying, divisive and definitive periods that should never be forgotten. 🗣️



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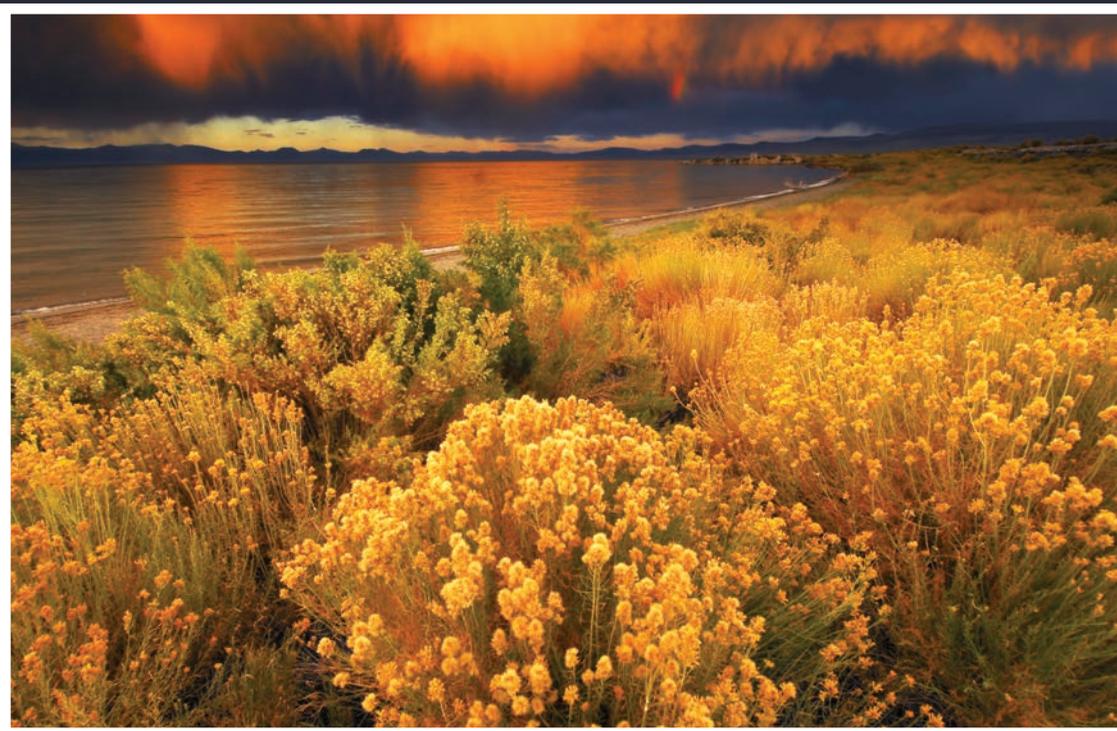
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CELESTRON "WORLD OF NATURE" PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

The *Trailer Life* and *Camping Life* staff poured over the nearly 900 entries received and here are the three top photos:



Grand Prize Winner: Victor Krasenics, "Storm Over Mono Lake, Calif."



First Runner-Up: Dave Christiansen, "Mother Fox and Her Pups in Charlevoix, Mich."



Second Runner-Up: CJ Boales, "Two Fishermen at Caddo Lake State Park in Texas"

The Celestron "World of Nature" Photo Contest, created in partnership with *Trailer Life* and *Camping Life* magazines, was open to readers who submitted photographs of landscapes, plants and animals from their camping trips during March – June 2012. Contestants competed for the grand prize, a Celestron SkyProdigy 130 Telescope (approx. retail value \$699); first runner-up prize, Celestron AstroMaster 70AZ Telescope (approx. retail value \$149.95); and the second runner-up prize, a Celestron Outland X 8x25 Binocular (approx. retail value \$49.95). Thank you to all of our contestants! There were many spectacular entries and we hope that you enjoyed sharing your beautiful photographs with us.



by Irene Middleman Thomas

Elkhart Lake

This little town has Big A

There's a small village on the shores of a crystal-clear lake in Wisconsin that you will wish you had heard of a long time ago. Elkhart Lake, a bit larger than a mile in size with about 1,000 permanent residents, offers vacationers just about anything they might want.

This area, adjacent to the heavily wooded Kettle Moraine State Forest North and midway between Milwaukee and Green Bay, has been a legendary respite since the 1800's. Elkhart Lake has a wealth of outdoor recreation options on land and water, top-flight dining, a world-class spa, culinary school and delightful shops (including a wintertime German Christmas market);

but the town's crown jewel, the premier Road America racetrack, is what really put this quaint village on the world map.

Originally a gambling resort, Elkhart Lake was a hot spot back in the Victorian era. Various inns, hotels and other period buildings have their distinctive architecture lovingly restored and maintained. Just strolling the small downtown's shady lanes and viewing the well-kept flower gardens, a block or so from the lake, brings on a mood of peaceful relaxation.

RACY CHARACTER

During the early 1950's, Elkhart Lake began enjoying its new identity as a road-racing haven, as top sports car

drivers traveled from around the world to take on the hills and sharp corners of its open-road race circuit. It was founded by World War II vets who returned to the quiet little town thirsting for the excitement they experienced during their time abroad. The open-road circuit then segued into the international motorsports venue of Road America after open-road racing was banned. Fortunately, the historic circuit remains a lovely public drive, marked with nostalgic signs such as Wacker's Wend, Kimberly's Korner and Dicken's Ditch, commemorating some of the famous early racers.

Road America, a wooded 640-acre property, is known as "America's Na-

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY ELKHART LAKE TOURISM





Adventure

tional Park of Speed.” Just one mile from Elkhart Lake, it is the site of international motorsport events with celebrity drivers and riders. This year-round venue is one of the very few that openly allows the public into the paddocks and pits, offers free parking and allows patrons to bring in their own picnics. Road America hosts activities for groups of all sizes. Attracting 700,000 annual visitors from around the world, the track holds 425 events each year, often running multiple events each day,

Not just a raceway town, Elkhart Lake has a variety of land and water activities, including boat rides, resorts and restaurants on the water.

using the 4-mile, 14-turn track, the interior motorplex and the other surrounding event grounds. Events include NASCAR, American LeMans, the Corvette World Tribute and various motorcycle competitions, along with other unique motorsport affairs. Major race weekends run from May-September, and tickets should be bought in advance as they typically sell out.

Road America also hosts a variety of adventure programs for all four seasons, such as paintball, ATV rides, disc golf, geocaching, go-karting, motorcycling, Supermoto, snowshoeing, dog sledding, hiking, outdoor survival and more.

HIT THE TOWN

Road racing is not the only thing to do when visiting Elkhart Lake. A totally different experience is offered at the lavish

Osthoff Resort, home to a French culinary school, L'ecole de la Maison. This world-class school is open to the public and has workshops that last from two hours to two days, teaching in a hands-on and interactive experience, ranging from whole food to presentation. Chef Scott Baker teaches courses such as a French Christmas, Chocolate Desserts, Northern Italian Cuisine and Teen Cuisine, to name a few. Note that 48-hour reservations are required. Ready for some pampering? The Osthoff also offers the holistic, organic-approach Aspira Spa, a truly five-star facility with unique treatments in a sublime setting.

Shopping and dining are treats as well, with a bevy of independent, one-of-a-kind stores and restaurants in Elkhart Lake. Check out the eclectic array of handicrafts, antiques and collectables at



Elkhart Lake

Rhine Street General, or the Scandinavian products and foodstuffs at Nordic Accents. Looking for meats and cheeses? Feed Mill Market has just about everything. Local and regional artists have a hefty offering at Two Fish Gallery & Sculpture Garden, and nostalgia buffs will have a heyday at Lieutenant Dave's Area 51 Vintage Shop. Saturday mornings from June through mid-October, you'll find the Farmers and Artisans Market inside the village, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Dining choices range from rustic and casual to semiformal. Check out the European and nouvelle cuisine at The Paddock Club or the Lake Street Café, which hold *Wine Spectator* Awards of Excellence, or dine elegantly at Lola's on the Lake at the Osthoff, overlooking the lake (perfect for that special evening). A charming local favorite is the Off the Rail Café, located in the town's original railroad depot, where you might want to relax for hours with a special coffee and homemade baked good, or gourmet sandwich — check out the weighty "Freight Train."

Back in the gambling days of the village, bars were a big part of the scene, and the places to be seen. When racing took over, bars kept up the tradition, and the one to not miss (even if you just visit for a soda pop) is the Stop-Inn Tavern & Restaurant at the turn-of-the-century Siebkens Resort, right on the banks of the lake. While the resort itself is a landmark beautifully remodeled to state-of-the-art standards, the Stop-Inn's walls are still covered from top to bottom with old racing posters and memorabilia, and its heavy wooden furniture dates back several decades. It is known as the "best



Elkhart Lake offers a variety of food to satisfy any palate – fresh food can be found Saturday mornings June through mid-October at the Farmer's Market.



Elkhart Lake Area Campgrounds

CAMP ROAD AMERICA - Hwy 67, Elkhart Lake, has RV sites available on all major race weekends, so you can stay right where the racing action is taking place. This extremely popular campground (make reservations well in advance) has a one-site fee, applying to all campers on the site with a maximum of six people allowed. Each area is described on the website campsites options link. Locations and prices vary by event. Sites range from General (about 75 feet from the safety fence,) to Trackside, about 10 feet from safety fence, to electric sites, located on the front straight south of the grandstands and VIP tower. There are no water hookups on property and generator use is allowed only from 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. in all areas. There are two permanent restroom/shower locations on the property, and more showers are brought in when demand necessitates. Potable water and dump station available. 800-365-7223, www.roadamerica.com

SHEBOYGAN MARSH PARK – W7039 County Hwy SR, Elkhart Lake, two miles northwest of Elkhart Lake, this county-owned, 30-acre, four season park offers 49 campsites with electrical hookups, potable water, dump station and showers (mid-April thru mid-October). You can enjoy picnicking, fishing, rowboat/canoe rentals, playground, a full menu, year-round restaurant and access to the Sheboygan County's snowmobile trail system. Marsh Park is a recreational haven for outdoor enthusiasts, attracting hunters, fishermen, and wildlife/nature observers on it's 13,000 acres. Most of the park remains a wilderness, but a 30-acre section of the park is developed and is open year around. There are 37 rental sites for trailers, at \$30 per site, tax included, with electricity, water, shower and dump station (winter rates are \$15 nightly). 920-876-2535, www.threeguysandagrill.com

PLYMOUTH ROCK CAMPING RESORT - Hwy 67, three miles south of Elkhart Lake. This resort is home to 609 sites as well as log cabins with private porches. Three heated swimming pools and two whirlpools, 18-hole mini golf, bicycling, volleyball, scheduled activities with a full-time director, outdoor-theater, gift shop and more are offered here, along with the onsite Del Coronado Restaurant. Plymouth Rock features Theme Weekends, such as the Christmas in July – with an ice skating rink and lights, gifts, etc., Pirates and Princesses, Hawaiian Luau and Hollywood (reserve early!) Open April to October, rates range from \$20-\$56 nightly. 888-892-4252, www.plymouthrock-resort.com

NASCAR RV at WESTWARD HO CAMPGROUND N5456 Division Road, Glenbeulah, conveniently situated on 103 acres of countryside, Westward Ho was awarded Woodall's five-star rating for recreation. Three heated swimming pools, a fishing pond and miniature golf course. Watch big screen live NASCAR races, sports programming and movies. This year, the property will introduce themed weekends and activities, for all ages. Rates range from \$28-\$50 per night, with a limit of six persons per site. 920-526-3407, www.westwardhocampresort.com

Three state parks nearby also offer RV camping, including Long Lake (920-533-8612), Mauthe Lake (262-626-4305) and Terry Andrae (920-451-4080)



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User Guide

Contents

Elkhart Lake

bar on the racing circuit" and is packed with racing enthusiasts during the season. It's a delightfully cozy, nostalgic spot to enjoy a drink and listen to live music any time of the year.

FRESH AIR

Getting outside and enjoying Elkhart Lake is easy. The 286-acre, 120-foot deep, vividly blue spring-fed lake measures just a bit more than one mile across, and a leisurely hike around its wooded banks takes about 1.5 hours. The surrounding area provides excellent

hiking in the glacial hills and forests, as well as biking, fishing, pontoon cruises, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, tennis, golf and volleyball. Winter activities include skiing and snowshoeing. Lovely trails for hiking and snowshoeing are found in various parks and state forests in the area, such as the Ice Age Trail's foot path, and the Old Plank Road Trail's 17 miles built for bicyclists, runners, in-line skaters, horseback riders, moped users, Nordic skiers and snowmobiles on 10 feet of asphalt and 8 feet of turf.

History buffs might want to schedule their visit around the Civil War Weekend held in September at the Wade House, a former stagecoach inn now operating as a living museum. Wade House becomes the center of battle reenactments, military drills, medical care situations, period music and food, demonstrations and more. The weekend spectacle involves more than 500 reenactors. Each year features a different historical scenario of the war, with the 2012 reenactment to be held September 29-30.

Elkhart Lake hosts special events

and festivals all year, but a few of the best include Jazz on the Vine, a Mother's Day weekend celebration, the three-day family-themed Independence Day event and the wintertime SchneeFest. Christmas is a big deal here, with the Old World Christmas Market and its authentic German artisans' craft fair under warm tents (just like Germany, without the cold!) at the Osthoff Resort with traditional German and Wisconsin holiday foods and beverages, running November 30 - December 9, 2012.

No matter what time of year you choose to visit the Elkhart Lake region in your RV, you'll find plenty of activities, fine cuisine and friendly hosts to keep you happy and if your timing is just right, the hum of race cars will fill the air. 📍

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Elkhart Lake Tourism: 877-355-4278; www.elkhartlake.com.

Road America: 800-365-7223; www.roadamerica.com.

Osthoff Resort: 855-876-3399; www.osthoff.com.



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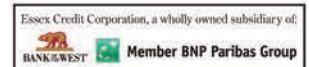
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User Guide

Contents

Fly Ball

Winnebago takes a swing and gets a hit

Many years ago Winnebago trailers stopped rolling off the assembly line, and although the company became highly regarded for its motorized RVs, for the most part, it's trailer-building heritage was all but forgotten. For decades afterward, the company marched forward producing high-quality motorized RVs and established a name for itself that became part of the American lexicon. Then in 2010, trickles of talk were leaked that Winnebago was returning to the towable market, and eventually the feature filled Winnebago One line of travel trailers and Lite FIVE line of

fifth-wheel trailers were born.

One of the newest to come into the family is the Winnebago One 32BH, and it piqued our curiosity enough to grab one for a review. Largest of the One series, the 32BH is a rear bunkhouse floorplan that is obviously built to house a big family, or maybe even two. The remainder of the trailer is given up to a large living space made larger by a nearly full-wall slide, a well-stocked kitchen and a splendid bath and front master bedroom.

But it's the four bunk beds in the rear that define the character of this new 32-foot, 11-inch-long travel trailer from Winnebago.

One of the first things you notice when you step inside the 32BH is the arched ceiling. A 5.5-inch arch allowed for higher center and overall heights, while maintaining lower overall side-wall heights. A reduction in drag coefficient, easier towing (better fuel mileage for the tow vehicle) and a more pleasant, residential feel for the owner is the result.

An outdoor kitchen is an available option on the 32BH.



PHOTOS BY RICH COX



The kitchen offers bountiful storage space with large cabinets and full-extension drawers on ball-bearing roller guides. Seating space in the dinette and couch is comfortable and pleasant; large windows provide generous lighting and roomy feel to an already spacious rig.

Generous countertop spaces have been built into the kitchen, and cabinet and storage space is abundant. The cabinets are a rich Brandy Maple throughout, giving the entire trailer a luscious, regal look. The spacious drawers in the kitchen offer full-extension with ball-bearing roller guides for smooth operation as do all drawers in Winnebago One trailers. There's plenty of room for a kitchen full of culinary implements, and a large pantry for all the foodstuffs needed. Extra large and deep double stainless steel sinks with snap-in cutting board/covers sparkle in the countertop. A three-burner range with a 21-inch oven and a 1.5-cubic-foot capacity microwave make meal prep easy. A 6-cubic foot refrigerator/freezer just forward of the stovetop can hold enough food to keep a family going for a week. A few more inches forward in that curved cabinet structure sits an optional (\$718) 32-inch LCD HDTV angled just right for viewing from the dinette and optional (\$428) hide-a-bed sofa. Just below the TV sits a DVD/CD/media player and entertainment center.

Another set of cabinets is perched above the convertible dinette (with storage under its seat cushions) and the optional (\$428) hide-a-bed sitting in the slide. This main central area offers an amazing amount of living space with accent lighting for a touch of elegance, plenty of area lighting for general purposes and large windows for great natural light during the day. Ventilation, cooling and heating of the room was more than adequate considering the number and placement of jalousie windows, air-conditioning and heating

vents. Two 120-volt AC electrical outlets are also placed in handy locations. It's a good space to spend time visiting with family and friends, prepping meals and dining, and enjoying the entertainment center while relaxing in the living room. And to prove the versatility of the 32BH, when needed this space can double as a sleeping area and bed down four to six persons for the night.

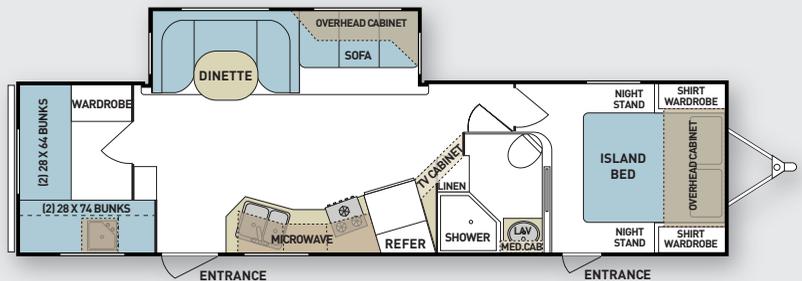
The four-bunk rear bedroom offers a larger-than-expected three-quarter-length wardrobe, good size bunks and mattresses that are not all that thick or comfy. The bunkroom is, however, cable TV-ready, has a 120-volt AC outlet and

cool toy box located the rear bunk.

Jumping far forward to the master bed and bath, we found a much different situation. The master bedroom was simply gorgeous and the bedding sumptuous with its standard Everpedic Memory Foam mattress. Again, the rich look of the cabinetry really came through here, and the marbled countertops of the bed's nightstands gave the bedroom a classy look. Hanging mirror-faced wardrobes on each side, large cabinets above and space under-bed complete the storage story here.

The large bathroom features a porcelain toilet, tall double-door linen

QUICK INFO



Ext. length	35' 11"	LP-gas cap	14 gal.
Ext. width	96"	Hitch Weight (Dry)	7,800 lbs.
Ext. height	11' 2" (with AC)	Gross Weight (Dry)	760 lbs.
Interior width	94"	GVWR	9,800 lbs.
Interior height	6' 10" (living area)	Sleeping cap	10
Freshwater cap	56 gal.	Base MSRP	\$28,992
Black-/Gray-water cap	33/66 gal.	Price as Reviewed	\$36,817

Winnebago, (641) 585-3535, www.winnebagoind.com Circle 201 on Reader Service Card.



2012 RAM 2500 MEGA CAB 4X4

MPG:	Solo: 18.2; Towing: 10.8
Engine	6.7L I-6 turbodiesel
HP	350 @ 3,000 RPM
Torque	800 @ 1,500 RPM
Transmission	6-speed automatic
Axle Ratio	4.10:1
Fuel Cap	34 gal.
Tires	LT265/70R17
Suspension	F/R Five-link w/track bar, coil springs, solid axle/Hotchkiss leaf spring, solid axle
Brakes	Four-wheel disc ABS
Tow Rating	14,050 lbs.
GVWR	9,600 lbs.
GCWR	22,000 lbs.
Length	20' 8.5"
Wheelbase	160"
Base MSRP	\$49,875
MSRP as Tested	\$63,645

Ram Trucks, (866) 726-4636,
www.ramtrucks.com

closet, and an angled shower with a glass enclosure that a 6-foot, 2-inch person can stand in. A large ceramic sink set in a sizeable cabinet has a mirrored and very well-lit medicine cabinet perched on the wall above it.

Before we ever stepped a foot inside the trailer, though, we spotted some features outside that were worth noting. Slideouts all have manual overrides, but some are difficult to find or are in hard-to-reach places. Not so with the 32BH. The access port to the manual override for the electric slide system is easy to find and reach, right on the lower exterior edge of the slideout room. The exterior shower with hot and cold taps, and all the water hook-ups, including a black tank flush are located together conveniently behind an enclosed, locked

WALK-THROUGH: WINNEBAGO ONE 32BH

panel. Hooking up to power in camp will be a much smoother operation using the 32BH's detachable 30-amp power cord, rather than having to wrestle with a dirty or muddy stiff cord you're trying to stuff back into a tiny compartment in the side of a trailer.

The large pass-through storage compartment in the front end of the trailer will hold any lengthy cargo you choose to carry, and both sides were sealed with optional (\$72) sturdy 1-inch thick, slam-latch baggage doors that have keyed locks unlike the universally keyed doors used by others.

Also mounted up front are two standard 7-gallon LP-gas cylinders, giving the Winnebago One 32BH enough propane for an extended stay on the road. Which brings us to a point: the rig has plenty of propane for a long haul, a large refrigerator/freezer, fairly good-sized fresh- and grey-water tanks, and the sleeping capacity of a football team. However, we think it needs a black water tank larger than 33 gallons.

Running gear consisted of dual E-Z-Lube axles with the optional (\$363) deluxe aluminum spoke wheels, but Winnebago does offer the Trail Air Equa Flex independent suspension as an option for those that might be regularly traveling over irregular or severe road surfaces. Winnebago has also opted to provide radial (ST225/75R15) tires as standard on its towables; they come filled with nitrogen (NitroFill) that claims to offer cooler running temperatures, lower rolling resistance and higher fuel mileage.

Setting up the trailer for camp is quick with the help of the optional (\$551) two-way electric jacks at each end of the Winnebago. With switches mounted on the trailer body just above the jacks, extension, retraction and leveling was accomplished with just the touch of a finger. The same was true when it came to the A-frame; an optional (\$174) electric jack made hitching and unhitching the trailer a breeze.

Living outside is easy when you consider that within steps of the extra-wide

30-inch door are amenities such as a pair of high-quality marine-grade speakers wired to the rig's Touch Elite radio/DVD/CD player system so you can enjoy great music (it even has Bluetooth so you can stream music from an iPhone/iPod while sitting outside), a GFCI 120-volt AC outlet to operate electrical appliances such as a blender, and a power A&E awning that shades nearly two-thirds of this trailer's curbside length. Adding to the outdoor lifestyle, the 32 BH also came with an optional (\$653) outside kitchen built in to the curbside of the trailer's tail that delivered a small refrigerator, plastic sink and faucet, countertop and swing-out two-burner cooktop. The outdoor cooking accommodations did come in handy, but we found the workspace above the sink and countertop somewhat limited by a portion of the trailer's bunk bed structure just a dozen or so inches over it.

Some of the 32BH's construction highlights worth mentioning include extruded steel 8-inch I-beams for the main frame members, six-sided aluminum frame construction, laminated Darco-wrapped floors to keep out moisture, and an enclosed underbelly. All cabinetry is built using screwed and glued face frames so you get tight joints that will last longer than those assembled with staples.

During our evaluation of the Winnebago One 32BH travel trailer we were generally impressed by the comfort and luxurious feeling that the manufacturer injected into this trailer while attempting to create a rig that will satisfy the needs of a large group of people. It's an eye-catching towable as well, with a one-piece fiberglass front cap, and the high-gloss gel coat finish more commonly seen on motorhomes.

While the ultimately powerful, richly comfortable and handsome 2012 Ram 2500 Mega Cab 4x4 turbodiesel handled it on tight roads with ease and pulled it like a champ on the open road, the overall length of the Winnebago One 32BH travel trailer does place it in a category that could have most owners gravitating toward larger campgrounds and resorts rather than state parks and more rustic locales where smaller sites and skinnier campground pathways are likely to be encountered. 🗨️

"Cabinetry is built using screwed and glued face frames.."

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GRAY WATER (GAL.)	30
AWNING	15'



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User Guide

Contents



WALK-THROUGH: SPACE CRAFT V-390 FIFTH-WHEEL

A No-Compromise RV

Space Craft's Custom Trailers Offer Almost Unlimited Choices

Most travel trailer and fifth-wheel builders offer customers a plethora of choices in floorplans, finishes, sizes and optional gadgetry, but there's usually some aspect of compromise for new owners. Buying a typical RV is analogous in some ways to buying a preexisting home instead of building one to suit your exact specifications.

At the west-central Missouri headquarters of Space Craft Manufactur-

ing, a custom trailer manufacturer that prides itself on an anything-is-possible attitude, the staff thoroughly interviews potential buyers about their road rambling lifestyle, walks them through all the available design and layout choices, discusses potential options and seeks to find out what, exactly, the customers are looking for — whether it be a front-kitchen fifth-wheel with an extra-tall rear master bedroom, an onboard office for conducting business

on the road, a personally designed kitchen or even a 6-foot-long steam shower. Within the confines of weight and price, just about anything is possible within a Space Craft custom trailer.

Custom-Built Possibilities

Space Craft has been in business for more than 45 years, and got its start building slide-in truck campers and



PHOTOS BY SPACE CRAFT





(Left) Space Craft's trailers look and feel truly residential, and are built to owner's exact specifications. **(Right)** Fully ducted, molded fiberglass ceilings add function, durability and style — they're also easier to keep clean.

smaller travel trailers. Today, its diversified product mix includes fifth-wheels, bunkhouses and travel trailers, as well as custom-built semi-trailers and specialty units. With such custom-built possibilities, its trailers attract an unexpected mix of customers: full-time and weekend RVers, circus and carnival workers, contractors and movie production companies.

Beyond the basic floorplan, the customization options of the trailer are virtually infinite and the scope of possible upgrades are too numerous to list completely, but can include additional air-conditioning units, automatic hydraulic leveling jacks, heavy-duty surge protectors, automatic shades, surround sound speakers, built-in vacuum sweepers, dishwashers, king-size beds, solid surface counter tops and dual-pane windows with reflective glass.

Building a custom trailer can be as

hands-on or off as customers wish — the company is accustomed to translating ideas scratched on napkins into detailed blueprints, or guiding customers that do not have a specific design in mind through the process.

After a clear picture of what the customer is looking for in his or her rig has been developed, a plan is drawn up including length, height and the basic layout. Customer input on colors, materials, fabrics and interior details is gathered. Then once the build is finalized, Space Craft quotes the customer a price, a 25 percent deposit is secured, and then it's time to review the cabinet drawings and interior mockups.

When customers have signed off on

dimensions, they can visit Space Craft's office in Concordia, Mo. — an hour east of Kansas City — to browse the full selection of wall and floor coverings, window treatments, cabinetry wood (birch, maple, walnut, cherry and hickory are available) and stains, as well as carpeting, laminate flooring, tile, furniture upholstery and even cabinet pulls.

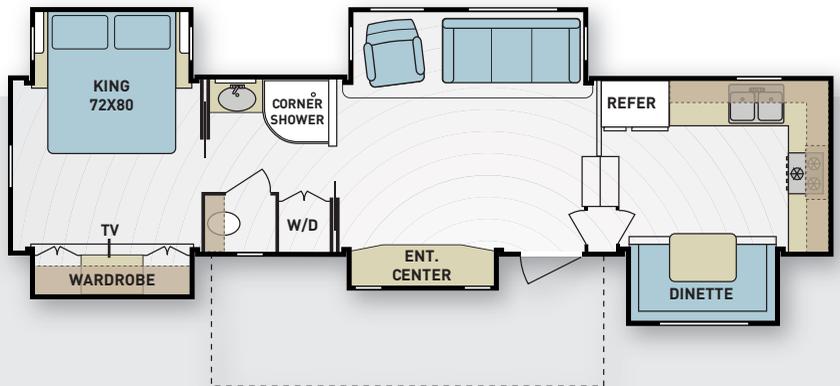
Far-flung customers can choose to see an abbreviated sampling of finishes and materials through the mail, without having to travel to Missouri. And, as company President Marsha Trautman tells us, some customers would rather not wade through a long list of options.

"For most people it is fun, but for some, it gets overwhelming, and that's

Building a custom trailer can be as hands-on or off as customers wish

QUICK INFO

Ext. length	39'
Ext. width	8' 5"
Ext. height	13' 2"
Int. height	8' 4"/6' 4" (kitchen)
Freshwater cap	45 gal.
Black-/Gray-water Cap	45 gal. (each)
LP-gas cap	20 gal.
Hitch weight	4,800 lbs.
GVWR	22,500 lbs.
MSRP, as tested	\$145,000



Space Craft Mfg., Inc.: (660) 463-7520, www.spacecraft.com Circle 202 on Reader Service Card.

when I step in," said Trautman. "By this point in the process, I usually know my customer pretty well, and sometimes people say 'don't give me too many choices.'"

Space Craft's catalog isn't the limit, as the company can attempt to get appliances, furniture or something the customer has seen at a home improvement or furniture store. The goal is to create a recreational vehicle as close to residential-grade as possible.

Hand-Built Quality

Aside from infinite choices, Space Craft's custom-built process also offers RVers several standard features that distinguish its products from mass-produced units, and that, according to the company, offers higher quality, more functionality and comfort for the owners.

The first is molded fiberglass ceilings, which afford owners several benefits, including in-ceiling air ducts which help create easier cleaning on the areas above the stove, shower and near the

cold-air return. This design also allows higher ceilings — a towering 8-foot, 4 inches on standard fifth-wheel models.

Ceiling height, like anything else, is subject to change, as some buyers need a lower height for clearance, while other, taller folks desire higher ceilings — an easy modification for Space Craft.

Front kitchens are also common in its fifth-wheel models, which allow more spacious, rear-located bedrooms that inherently are much taller than the 6-foot, 4-inch ceilings in the front bedrooms of most fifth-wheels.

The trailers are built on custom Space Craft chassis, using laminated aluminum-framed sidewalls and 1 1/2-inch polystyrene insulation. The full-body basement storage is heated, carpeted and lighted. The 39-foot five-slide model pictured here includes 45 gallons of gray- and black-water capacity, a 12-gallon direct-spark-ignition water heater, two 31,000-Btu furnaces and dual 15,000-Btu air conditioner units. Its total dry weight is 18,000



pounds, and all new trailers include a 1-year warranty.

Painted interior walls, sturdy tongue-and-groove sub-flooring and fully insulated slides (and water lines) are other features you can expect to find standard in a typical Space Craft product.

Trailers with personalized designs, upgraded finishes and residential-style conveniences, of course, come at a premium over assembly line-produced vehicles and Space Craft's prices vary

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(Left) This demo unit features light finishes for an open feel, yet any wood and tone are available in the custom-build process. **(Right)** If weight allows, trim and cabinetry can be high-density solid wood, which adds to the residential feel.

wildly depending on features, length and the number of slide-outs.

A typical, 34-footer with three slide-outs will be around \$90,000, although a 39-foot demo unit with five slideouts and many extra features like four-point hydraulic leveling, full-body paint, multiple LED TVs and dual-pane windows sells for approximately \$145,000. At the top end, some Space Craft trailers have

been pushed close to \$300,000 with custom add-ons and ultra high-end surfaces and features.

Taking Delivery

Once the custom trailer is finished, personalized service with a hands-on, two-to three-hour walk-through during which Space Craft personnel explain all the features, functions and maintenance

with clients — and encourages clients to set up the RV and stay for a few days to make sure they're comfortable with the unit is standard-operating-procedure.

For the RVer with high expectations and a budget to match, Space Craft offers a high level of choice and service that comes with a price — one that many of its customers seem to be happy to pay to get exactly what they want. 🚐

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[5TH AND GO FORTH]

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF SELECTING A FIFTH-WHEEL HITCH

There was a day when selecting a fifth-wheel hitch was mostly about looking at the thickness of the bed rails and the quality of the welds on the risers. But within the past dozen or so years, industrious and innovative hitch designers have developed a variety of features and options for fifth-wheel hitches, making them easier to use, smoother, safer and more useful on more trucks.

When it comes to choosing a fifth-wheel hitch, don't get the trailer ahead of the truck — unless you don't have a truck, which means you can choose the trailer and then find the best truck to tow it, but that's another issue. Whether you are setting up a truck for the first time or looking to upgrade your hitch, there are some things you need to know about fifth-wheel hitches before you make your purchase.

SHORT AND SWEET

Since the trailer's king pin must be just slightly ahead of the rear axle for proper weight distribution, there is a limited amount of room between the rear axle and the back of the pickup cab for mounting the hitch in a short-bed pickup. Using a standard fifth-wheel hitch, maneuvering the trailer in tight spaces or taking sharp turns could put the truck's cab and the nose of the trailer in contact with each other. The popularity of short-bed pickups promoted development of the sliding fifth-wheel hitch, allowing movement of the trailer attachment point backward to produce enough room between the trailer and the truck for safe maneuvering.

Sliding fifth-wheel hitches are available in a variety of designs. Fully manual slider hitches require uncoupling the trailer to change the location of the hitch. Although more economical, it's easy to imagine the limitations of this type of hitch when pulling into a campground, gas station or your own driveway.

Another type of sliding hitch is the rolling manual slider. This type doesn't require uncoupling, but it does require you to get out of the vehicle to unlatch the slider locking mechanism, get back into the truck to move it forward, get back out to re-lock the slider and back in to drive the truck. It may even be necessary to chock the trailer wheels or activate the trailer brakes manually during this process.

Husky Towing's design requires drivers to unlock the mechanism manually, but after that the moving and latching take place automatically. A "No-Bind" design ensures that the hitch moves back, even when the road surface is not level.

We found two automatic sliding hitches that move into position without input from the driver. The head of the

Hijacker Autoslide from Demco employs a capture plate to grip the pin box, which turns the hitch head as the truck turns. This head movement engages rack and pinion gears to move the hitch head back 14 inches toward the rear of the truck.

PullRite's SuperGlide, the first fully automatic hitch of its type, uses a cam and roller system to automatically move the head back. It requires a pin box adapter that wedges into the hitch funnel to make the pin-box-hitch-head connection needed to turn the head and activate the slider automatically as the truck turns. The 12K SuperGlide for "shorter than short" bed pickups (F-150 Super Crew, Dodge Quad Cab with 5-foot 6-inch beds; Nissan Titan, Toyota Tundra, '05 Chevy with 5-foot 8-inch beds) can move as much as 22 3/4 inches.

TRUCK TRANSFORMATION

One downside to fifth-wheel hitches has been interference with cargo when the truck is not towing. Today there are several quick-release options available to rapidly convert from towing to cargo hauling mode. Among these are under-bed hidden mounting systems, and some quick-change systems that work with under-bed gooseneck setups by engaging the gooseneck ball as the mounting point.

When choosing a quick-release hitch system, consider the weight of the hitch. It won't do you much good to quickly disconnect the hitch from the truck if you can't lift it out of the bed. Some hitch designers address this by providing a hitch that breaks down into smaller pieces, which can then be handled more easily.

Hitch height, which affects the attitude of the trailer, is another important aspect to hitch selection. The trailer

HITCH RATING

It takes more than hitch ratings to ensure a safe setup. All of the components must be up to par including mounting rails, kits and hardware. While fifth-wheel setups are ideal for towing to the truck's maximum rating, make sure you know the gross combined weight rating (GCWR) for your truck. Truck, trailer, fuel, potable water, passengers and cargo all factor in. You may improve your truck's ride with aftermarket upgrades, but you can't increase the GCWR because it involves the entire drivetrain, frame, suspension, brakes ... you name it. **Don't overload!**

must be properly leveled when towing to evenly distribute weight on the trailer axles. Your trailer and hitch combination can also affect vertical bed rail clearance to the trailer overhang. You will need at least 6 inches of clearance, perhaps more if you are moving the trailer off-road or on uneven road surfaces.

You may want to find a hitch with height adjustment to ensure clearance and proper trailer attitude, especially if you drive a lifted truck.

LOCK JAW

Fifth-wheel hitch designers have developed a variety of mechanisms for the fifth-wheel hitch to engage, grip and lock the king pin into the saddle. Hitches such as the Elite Series from Reese feature a forged, one-piece, self-latching jaw designed for maximum jaw-to-king-pin contact to minimize rattle and movement.

Some hitches employ a two-piece jaw design that latches around both sides of the kingpin. The Curt Q24 hitch uses a positive locking dual jaw system that offers 360-degree contact.

The third style of latch is a bar type, which is the most common design and

PIN BOX UPGRADES

Some fifth-wheel towing and ride quality solutions can be found in the pin box design rather than in hitch design. A couple of examples are the Tri Glide Air Ride (pictured) pin box from Lippert Components that uses both an airbag and a shock absorber to control fore and aft movement referred to as "chucking," as well as vertical push and pull between trailer and tow vehicle; and the MOR/ryde Pin Box System, which uses a simpler rubber shear spring to absorb the shock from the trailer's motion. Lippert Components: 574-535-1125; www.lci1.com or MOR/ryde: 574-293-1581, www.morryde.com.



comes on more economical versions of the hitches. Look for bar latch models with adjustments to take up slack between the king pin and hitch to minimize “chucking.”

INDICATORS

High visibility indicators inform drivers of the hitch connection status, confirming at a glance that the king pin is fully engaged in the saddle. The best of these indicators can be seen from in-

side the truck cab. If a hitch doesn't have an indicator, it's difficult to tell from the cab whether the king pin is locked inside the hitch mechanism. The hitching process can also be aided by a wide funnel — the V-shaped opening in the hitch head that guides the trailer's pin towards the latching mechanism — which can make it easier to guide the hitch and king pin together. It's always best to visually confirm that the king pin is locked in place.

Safety is an issue to consider when unhitching your fifth-wheel, as well, and many use a checklist to keep track of chores such as lowering and pinning the jacks prior to unhooking the hitch and driving out from under the trailer to avoid dropping the trailer on its nose and damaging the truck and trailer. Blue Ox (800-228-9289; www.blueox.com) offers the Bed Saver/Pin Lock, an easy to install funnel-shaped device that allows the king pin to glide right over it when the trailer jacks are set right. If not, the king pin drops into the device and the trailer stays connected to the hitch, rather than crashing down on the truck bedrails, tailgate or the ground.

COMFORT AND RIDE

Hitching is also made easier with another innovation in hitch head design that allows the head to pivot side-to-side as well as front-to-back. These 4-way or omnidirectional setups provide more leeway when hooking up on uneven ground. Additionally, the multi-direction heads improve ride quality by minimizing twist input from the trailer.

Some units, like the Reese R16, use additional vibration isolators to help improve ride quality. Hitches with airbags also help damp the impact of rough roads transferred through the trailer. AirSafe has a few designs that implement airbags in different ways with a common goal of stopping the shock flow between the trailer and tow vehicle. Its 3-in-1 AIRBOX uses two airbags under the fifth-wheel head to absorb bucking, surging and twisting. The airbags also provide control over ride height making it easier to level the trailer. Airsafe's Omni-directional line of hitches utilize four airbags in towers at the corners of the hitch that are connected by air lines allowing flow from bag to bag to provide a smooth controlled ride.

No matter what setup you are looking for, there is something designed to accommodate your truck's cab and bed configuration. We may not have all the answers, but here is a good place to start:

(continued on pg. 48)

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User Guide

Contents





AirSafe

AIRBOX Revolution

The AIRBOX Revolution from AirSafe is a compact air-hitch system rated for 18,000 pounds. Economically priced and built tough, the revolution is versatile and can accommodate a long or short bed, with a regular rail base, slider or under-bed mounting system. Using two air bags below the hitch head allows the hitch to absorb trailer-to-tow-vehicle forces. Its lightweight design makes it easily removable. Four height adjustments accommodate a variety of late-model truck beds. The AIRBOX Revolution includes a 2-year limited warranty. AirSafe: 866-414-4824, www.airsafehitch.com.



B&W Trailer Hitches

Companion

The Companion RV hitch by B&W Trailer Hitches uses its Turnoverball under-bed gooseneck post as its mounting system, leaving the pickup bed floor level and free of obstruction when the fifth-wheel hitch is not in use. The head of the unit can be removed separately making a changeover manageable for one person. Latching is done with a 1-inch thick, wrap-around jaw to fit the kingpin perfectly, eliminating sloppy starts and stops. A fully articulating head allows front-to-back and side-to-side pivoting. B&W Trailer Hitches: 800-248-6564, www.turnoverball.com.



Curt Manufacturing

Q24

Curt Manufacturing makes the Q24 fifth-wheel hitch strong enough to tow up to 24,000 pounds. Curt's Q-Series hitch heads are mounted to the hitch body using a sturdy bearing, which allows the head to move in all directions for more movement than is possible with a standard pivot fifth-wheel hitch. A three-point indicator can be clearly seen from inside the truck so drivers know when the jaws are locked open, ready to couple and locked closed. Curt backs its Q-series hitches with a 10-year warranty. Curt: 877-287-8634, www.curtmfg.com.



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NuWa, Circle 141 on Reader Service Card



Demco

Hijacker Autoslide

Demco's Hijacker Autoslide produces 14 inches of travel for tight turns with a short bed pickup. Drivers do not have to worry about cornering in tight spaces because the slide works automatically with no need to think about truck-to-trailer clearance. This Autoslide model features three vertical height adjustments and comes with a five-year warranty. Mounting options include using the Demco UMS (under bed) or its Ultra Series "Above Bed" mounting system. **Demco: 800-543-3626, www.hijacker.com.**



Hensley Manufacturing

TrailerSaver TS3

The TrailerSaver TS3 from Hensley Manufacturing uses a dual air-bag system that provides both up/down and fore/aft cushioning. The TS3 operates on a level pivot point system, which means the pivot point of the entire hitch is level with the hitch head itself. The level pivot system allows the fifth-wheel to move in all directions without the jarring sensations that can be typical of other airbag systems. In addition to the airbags, the hitch also uses two shock absorbers to help damp the motion. **Hensley Mfg.: 800-410-6580, www.trailersaver.com.**



Hensley Manufacturing

TrailerSaver BD3

Hensley's TrailerSaver BD3 is a lighter, easier to remove version of the TS3 designed to appeal to weekend warriors. The BD3 uses two air bags and two shock absorbers like the TS3, with all the features and innovations of the popular TS3 fifth-wheel hitch from Hensley, but it travels along two vertical glide rods. The TS3 and BD3 offer the comfort of air-ride and a longer life for both the trailer and truck frame. **Hensley Mfg.: 800-410-6580, www.trailersaver.com.**



Husky

10 Glider

The Husky 10 Glider replaces traditional roller assemblies in short-bed fifth-wheel hitch installations with a composite material that reduces noise compared to metal-to-metal systems. The design also eliminates rust that typically appears with slide systems. A no-bind latching mechanism eliminates tension on the handle allowing the flip lever to release and automatically lock into the next desired position when the truck is moved. The 10 Glider is designed for units up to 26,000 pounds with a 2-inch king pin and can be used with Husky 16K and 26K fifth-wheel hitches as well. **Husky Towing Products: www.huskytow.com**



PullRite

ISR SuperGlide

The ISR (Industry Standard Rail) Series SuperGlide fifth-wheel hitches are designed to fit most popular brands of standard base rails. This allows you to simply pin a SuperGlide hitch directly to the base rails that are already in the bed of your truck. You'll be able to automatically slide up to 14 inches without stopping or locking and unlocking the hitch, eliminating the hassles of a manual slider. All PullRite latches lock automatically and use a gear-driven rotary latch design to create a tight connection minimizing "chucking," bump and noise while towing. **PullRite: 877-785-5748, www.pullrite.com.**



Reese

R16

The new Reese R16 fifth-wheel hitch is designed with a vibration isolator system for improved ride quality, and a contoured control handle. It utilizes a double jaw mechanism for longer wear, improved tolerances and to eliminate chocking in the jaw system. The R16 also features wider mounting points for better stability; more grease points for reduced wear and a vertical height adjustment of 14 to 18 inches. The R16 has a limited lifetime warranty. Sliders are available for short bed applications. **Reese (Cequent Performance Products): 800-632-3290, www.reeseprod.com.**



BED TOPPERS

Security, sweet looks and fuel savings are among the reasons truck bed covers are becoming so popular with trailer towing recreationists

Pickup trucks are immensely popular with RV enthusiasts, as they are the primary choice for a vehicle when towing travel trailers and fifth-wheel trailers. Unfortunately with a pickup truck, the cargo in the bed is often left wide open to unfriendly elements and unscrupulous people.

That's where the aftermarket comes to the rescue. There are covers designed for almost every brand of short- and long-bed trucks, and even models specially designed to fit over fifth-wheel hitches. Truck bed covers, commonly known as tonneau covers, derived their name from a French word that means rear-seating compartment. While truck beds are no longer legal for use as a seating compartment in most states, the name tonneau has remained in our vernacular.

Tonneau covers are a great way to go if you want to improve the appearance of your ride and protect your valuables. Besides looking good and keeping your cargo protected from

the elements, a bed cover can provide better mileage through improved aerodynamics. As air flows over a pickup truck, it swirls into the recess of the bed and creates drag, which must be overcome with engine power. Covering the bed with a tonneau cover helps streamline the vehicle, which saves fuel, especially at higher speeds.

A few years ago the Specialty Equipment Marketing Association (SEMA) published the results of a study of the effect pickup-bed covers have on aerodynamics. The study concluded that bed covers do reduce aerodynamic drag, and as long as the covers don't add a significant amount of weight can also improve fuel economy. The SEMA tests showed that all of the covers evaluated improved the coefficient of drag for each of the pickups tested. Fiberglass covers and two of the roll-up vinyl covers performed best, with gains of 6.5 percent or better. Overall, based on the 13 different covers tested, they



Pace Edwards Bedlocker Electric



reduced the coefficient of drag by an average of 5.73 percent

It's important to take the time to choose a cover that meets your specific needs. Lockable flip-up hard covers provide long-lasting durability along with greater security, but they also limit the utility of the bed to carry tall objects. That's where the innovative hard roll-up style bed covers are making headway in the market. Flexible soft covers are easy to use, and allow you to carry tall items, but provide minimal theft protection. So it's vital to take a realistic look at your intended use before choosing a bed topper.

Folks who live in heavy rain or snowy areas, or are concerned about theft, may want to purchase a hard cover. For those in moderate and drier climates, and if security is less of a concern, might be fine with a soft tonneau.

CARE

Hard covers generally need the same cleaning and care as the exterior of the truck. Soft covers need more care. They tend to shrink and expand in the heat or cold, and the metal or composite stays or ribs that hold them in place and shape have to be adjusted occasionally. Avoid standing water on your soft cover, it can stain or freeze and damage the cover.

Hard tonneau covers should be cleaned with mild soap or car wash solutions; for soft tonneaus use cleaners made specifically for vinyl. Most truck bed covers will be fine in a car wash, but make sure not to have any wax sprayed on a soft tonneau. Regular cleaning will prevent dirt or mold build up, fading and brittle fabric. Always follow manufacturer's recommendations for specific cleaners. Avoid using tire or interior cleaners or protectants on fabric covers; many of these products are too harsh and could damage the material.

TYPES AND PRICING

Prices vary between different brands, models, styles, sizes, applications and types of finish. Simple soft covers start as low as a few hundred dollars; other more complicated rolling hard tops range as high as a couple thousand bucks with custom paint and fitment. Keep in mind that covers that need to be painted to color match the truck will considerably add to the purchase price. To finish off bed cover installation, apply truck bed and tailgate seals to keep your truck weatherproof and dust tight. These are available from several manufacturers, including the Access TrailSeal, Lund Genesis Tailgate Seal and the Pace Edwards Weathergate seal.



ACCESS

ACCESS

The sporty Lorado (pictured) is a low-profile version of the Access Original with a more streamlined appearance, sitting just 1-inch above the truck bed. It retains all the same features and components of the Access Original soft roll-up bed cover that's been made for nearly 20 years, such as the Slantback rear design, XT-Dial tension adjusters that quickly dial in the tension of the cover, the Lorado's dual-locking sys-

tem, and its four-edge seal that creates a barrier against the elements. Access soft roll-up covers are compatible with the Adarac brand of bed racks, and most bed rails, caps, protectors and liners. **Agri-Cover: 866-414-5422, www.agricover.com.**



BAK

BAK

The three main designs of truck bed toppers from BAK Industries are the BAKFlip, TiltBAK and the RollBAK. There are a number of styles of BAKFlip (pictured) bed covers, ranging from the aluminum G2 to the fiberglass F1, but this hardcover quad-fold design would

be good for a fifth-wheel hitch. The TiltBAK is a modern take on the traditional front hinged, flush-fit tilting covers. And then there's the granddaddy of the company's hardware, the RollBAK, an all-aluminum retractable cover that opens and closes with no effort. It features a lock, incremental stopping positions, Teflon-guided rails for smooth operation and aluminum slats with a powdercoated finish for durability. **BAK Industries: 818-365-9000, www.bakliner.com.**

BESTOP

Bestop offers soft vinyl tonneau styles. The EZ Fold (pictured) is a tri-fold design that's easy to install and remove. There are no permanently mounted internal rails. Just unfold the EZ Fold, and fasten the front and back clamps or fold it to the back of the cab for open space. The EZ Roll tonneau uses integral bows to make rolling it out of the way very easy. The hook-and-loop fastener is also designed to quickly and easily attach the tonneau to the truck. The ZipRail (pictured) soft tonneau line uses the Bestop BeltRail attachment system, which ensures a tight, weatherproof fit and stays flexible in any weather. **Bestop: 800-845-3567, www.bestop.com.**

Bestop offers a number of bed covers including the EZ Fold.



TRUCK BED TOPPERS

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COVERCRAFT

Although it doesn't fully cover the bed, this unique product is designed on the simple rule that in some cases Mother Nature knows best. The Spidy Gear Bed Webb from Covercraft uses a spider web shape to secure the load with strength and elasticity. Made of heavy-duty 6mm, 100-percent stretch shock cord, the web radiates from a stainless steel center ring that focuses the net's tension at the center of the load where it's needed. The web returns to its original unstretched shape and size after use. And it is available in four colors, and two sizes to fit full-size or compact pickups. A Luggage Webb version is also available for rooftop racks. **Global Accessories: 800-950-9502, www.global-accessories.com.**

COVERCRAFT



LEER

LEER

The 100XR truck cap from Leer delivers many of the sought-after features buyers look for in one stylish, economical unit. It features a one-piece curved tinted glass rear door with a center-mounted LEER Flip Handle lock and reliable 50/50 framed side sliding windows with screens for flow-through ventilation. You can also specify optional side Windows that open up awning-style. The 100XR is finished in automotive-quality high-gloss basecoat/clear coat paint mixed to match OEM color formulas.

Leer's 100XR also accepts a wide range of factory-installed storage and convenience options, including a factory-mounted Thule roof rack system, a

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ceiling-mounted interior Gear Net, an integrated locking storage box that allows valuable items to be locked up out of sight, a three-outlet 12-volt DC power block for electrical accessories, tough nylon headliner, and a wide range of other convenience and storage options. Leer: 574-522-5337, www.leer.com.

PAGE EDWARDS

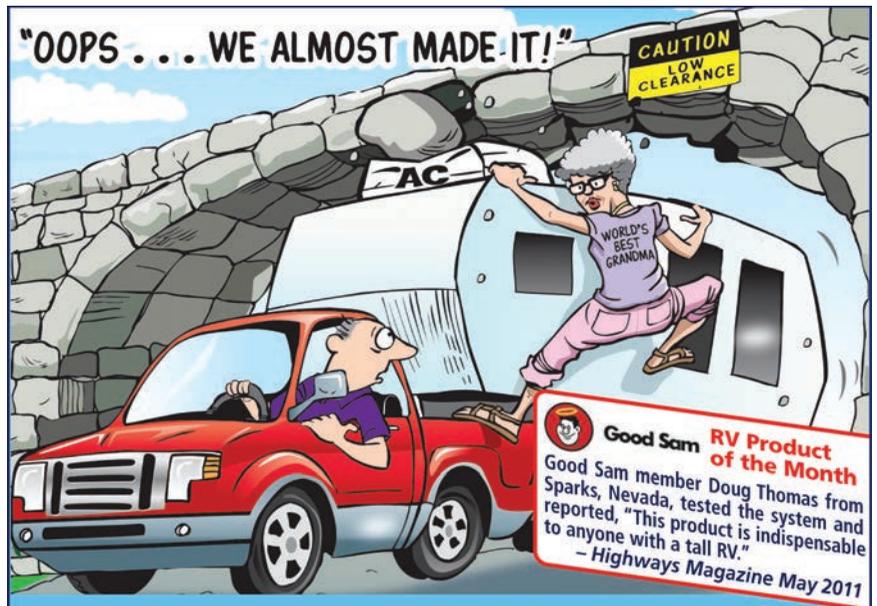
The Bedlocker Electric (pictured on opening page) is one of the top-selling hard top retractable bed covers from Pace Edwards. It's operated via remote control, opens and closes at the touch of a button in less than 30 seconds, and can be stopped at any point along the rails. All Pace Edwards Retractable Truck Bed Covers, from the original Roll-Top-Cover to the JackRabbit, Full-Metal JackRabbit, Bedlocker Electric and Retractable Utility Bed Cover provide secure storage to maximize your truck's utilitarian potential. Close and lock the covers to protect cargo and improve fuel efficiency. Covers roll and stow inside a durable, flush fitting canister behind the cab. Pace Edwards: 800-338-3697, www.pace-edwards.com.



RETRAX

RETRAX

The RetraxPRO bed cover is built from aluminum, and designed to support a distributed load of more than 500 pounds. Its sealed ball bearings allow the Retrax to retract or close easily without the use of springs, pull straps, hook-and-loop fabric or snaps. A patented low-profile design incorporates a front cover that is flush with the rolling cover, streamlining the overall appearance and providing a firm, dependable seal to help keep the bed dry. The cover rolls up in the front of the bed and can be latched or key locked in any position. Retrax: 800-206-4070, www.retrax.com



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TRUCK BED TOPPERS

TRUXEDO

TruXedo manufactures the Lo Pro QT (pictured), Deuce, TonneauTraX and Edge soft roll-up tonneau covers. Lo Pro QT is an inside-mount cover with a low-profile design for a sleek appearance. Lo Pro QT's fastening system



TRUXEDO

works with the automatic tension control, keeping the cover tight and taut, while reducing wear and tear. The Deuce is a soft roll-up, hinged tonneau cover combination. Deuce lets you easily reach cargo using the front, hinged section, or roll-up the cover completely from the back to haul large items. Installation is an easy no-drill, clamp-on process. TonneauTraX is similar to Lo Pro QT plus it has an integrated cargo management tie-down system. Adjustable cargo anchors are located on the tonneau cover rail and quickly lock into place to secure large and heavy cargo. The Edge has a distinct arched back and stylish look. The Edge mounts to the inside of the truck bed and works with most accessories. An easy-to-use one-finger release allows quick truck bed access. **TruXedo:** 877-878-9336, www.truxedo.com.



UNDERCOVER

UNDERCOVER

The Classic (pictured), SE, SE Smooth, SE Lux and Flex are all from the UnderCover line. The Classic tonneau is a textured one-piece hard cover that tilts up and is held open by a gas strut. The SE is a one-piece cover made of ribbed ABS composite material for more strength. The SE Smooth is similar, but has a smooth paintable top surface that can be color matched to your vehicle. The one-piece SE Lux is available from the factory painted to match your truck. The top-of-the-line UnderCover Flex is tri-fold hard cover that combines the security of a hard cover with the convenience of a soft cover. **UnderCover:** 866-900-8800, www.undercoverinfo.com.

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by Bill and Jenn Gehr

DIALING IN POWER



BULLY DOG'S GT GAUGE
TUNER AND RAPID FLOW
COLD AIR INTAKE LEAVE
THE GUESSWORK OUT OF
MAXIMIZING DIESEL
TRUCK PERFORMANCE



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User Guide

Contents



ER



Sitting around the campfire the topic of conversation often centers on fuel economy and optimum performance. Everyone wants to get up the grades first without sacrificing mileage. One company that specializes in making those wishes come true is Bully Dog, a leader in performance products for diesel- and gasoline-powered tow vehicles. The company's GT Gauge Tuner in conjunction with its Rapid Flow Cold Air Intake work together to create maximum torque and better airflow for diesel trucks — especially those pulling a heavy trailer.

The GT Tuner is a diminutive device that packs a horsepower punch. How can something so small and simple-to-install be so effective? The GT Gauge Tuner (model #40420) is four products in one. It's a top-quality performance tuner, monitor, multiple gauges and a comprehensive diagnostic tool. It is designed to improve towing and overall performance of your truck by increasing fuel economy, and boosting horsepower and torque. An easy-to-read monitor displays a variety of different functions and settings that inform the driver of specific, comprehensive readings to monitor the action under the hood.

Bully Dog's GT Tuner allows for quick adjustment of the settings for desired horsepower range and peak

torque. With detailed information available at the touch of a button, you can also do things such as accurately determine the best time to shut down your engine after driving when the exhaust gas temperature (EGT) cools to a safe level.

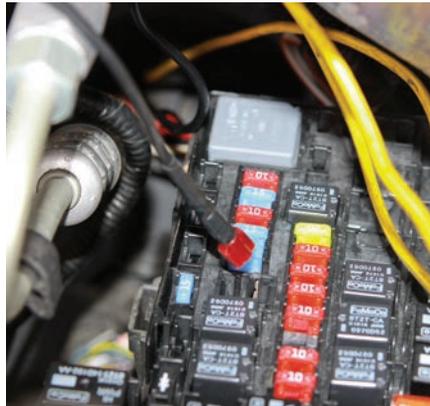
As a rule of thumb, it's best to take a look at the efficiency of a vehicle's cold air intake, too, when adding a performance tuner. Bully Dog offers a companion product, Rapid Flow Cold Air Intake (#51104) that's designed to maximize the performance of the GT Tuner. The Rapid Flow is a direct replacement for the factory air box.

The increased diameter airflow tube and the reusable, high-flow air cleaner in this kit provide increased air volume to the engine. When used with the GT Tuner, additional horsepower and torque are realized. It's best to use Bully Dog's pre-filter (#51104-9) to help ex-



Tune, diagnose and monitor your diesel or gas truck with Bully Dog's GT Tuner.





(Left) GT Tuner mounted to the windshield using the suction cup bracket. **(Center)** Adapter is plugged into the truck's OBDII connection port located below the dash. **(Right)** Power is tapped into the fuse box (located under the hood) using a special connector supplied with the kit.

tend the time between cleanings and repel water from the filter. The RFI Maintenance Kit (#229000) is used for cleaning and oiling the filter.

Don't let the advanced technology of the GT Tuner and Rapid Flow Cold Air Intake detour consideration for a do-it-yourself installation. Both these products were installed on a 2011 Ford F-350 diesel-powered truck with dual rear wheels, and the installation was very basic.

The intake install begins by removing the stock components. After preparing the Rapid Flow Cold Air Intake by assembling several retained pieces from the factory air box, it's ready to install. Figure on approximately 20 minutes for this project. If you're queasy about doing the work, install the components during normal business hours just in case you need any tech advice from Bully Dog.

The GT Tuner install time is approximately 25 minutes with five steps that are relatively well described in the owner's manual. Additional time will be needed to complete the initial download process that is automatically started once the system is in place and the key is turned to the "ON" position for the first time. This is a one-time-only procedure.

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DYNO RESULTS:

RUN #	SETTINGS	RESULTS
1	GT tuner set to Stock Mode, factory air intake	274.82 HP and 595.54 lb-ft of torque
2	GT Tuner set in Tow Mode, factory air intake	288.65 HP and 626.37 lb-ft of torque
3	GT Tuner set in Performance Mode, factory air intake	323.41 HP and 699.14 lb-ft of torque
4	GT Tuner set in Extreme Mode, factory air intake	269.88 HP and 649.71 lb-ft of torque
5	GT Tuner set in Stock Mode, Rapid Flow air intake	282.95 HP and 596.47 lb-ft of torque
6	GT Tuner set in Tow Mode, Rapid Flow air intake	303.12 HP and 634.09 lb-ft of torque
7	GT Tuner set in Performance Mode, Rapid Flow air intake	318.77 HP and 703.31 lb-ft of torque
8	GT Tuner set in Extreme Mode, Rapid Flow air intake	334.02 HP and 728.69 lb-ft of torque

Results will vary according to altitude, outside temperature and humidity. All of our runs were at 700 feet in altitude, an average of 73 degrees F ambient temperature and 25 percent humidity.

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adapter to the OBDII port in the truck. Then you simply connect the power wire to the truck's fuse box. Bully Dog made this step easy by utilizing color pictures and fuse numbers as a guide, however not all fuse boxes are listed. Mount the tuner box to the windshield with the universal suction-cup bracket, run the wire harness to the OBDII adapter, turn the key to "ON/RUN" position and select

your vehicle from the screen option to begin the download process. Note: You cannot disturb the GT Tuner while the initial download is taking place.

During the download process the GT Tuner will inquire about the specific type of fuel



It's best to use the RFI Cleaning Kit when servicing the filter in the Rapid Flow Cold Air Intake.



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your truck uses in order to properly tune for peak horsepower, optimum torque and octane/cetane settings. If you have a diesel truck, the GT Tuner will automatically load the engine tuning information. It took about 15 minutes before the GT Tuner's screen prompted us to customize other settings with display functions specific to the test vehicle. This portion of the setup process is simple and covers topics such as engine tuning and setting options before moving on to the gauge setup where the user can select speed, boost, RPM and coolant parameters (PID).

The GT Tuner's large up/down buttons are easy to operate allowing the user to scroll through the options and highlight the choices. Specific vehicle options include engine size (displacement), tire size and vehicle weight.

Once everything was buttoned up, we road tested the truck with the tuner set to the Tow Mode pulling a 16,000-pound fifth-wheel. Before the tuner and intake were installed, we recorded a consistent 9.8 MPG towing on varied terrain. After living with the new components for a while, we're now seeing 11.2 MPG after logging about 1,000 miles, with the tuner in the Tow Mode. It's hard to discern the difference between the Tow and Performance modes, but the increase in power and torque in the Extreme Mode (with the Rapid Flow intake in place) is seat-of-the-pants higher, especially when climbing hills — and confirmed by dyno testing. The exhaust gas temperatures (EGT) are noticeably higher in the Extreme Mode and quickly get to the limit when climbing steep grades, which triggers defueling. We set the parameter to defuel at 1,250 degrees F to be on the safe side (more on defueling later).

To dial in the performance gains more accurately, we took the truck to Lethal Performance in San Antonio, Texas, a shop equipped with a large dynamometer capable of handling a dually truck. Here we checked horsepower and torque with the truck in the stock condition, followed by seven more runs to establish gains as we added the intake and changed the modes on the tuner. Some of the numbers were a bit surprising because without the Bully Dog's Rapid Flow, the GT Tuner in Extreme Mode actually produced less horsepower than the truck in the stock configuration. This makes a strong case for the Rapid Flow intake because horsepower and torque jumped to the highest levels with the improved airflow. Of course, the Extreme Mode is not really targeted at the towing crowd.

The Bully Dog Gauge GT Tuner allows for an outstanding array of vehicle parameters. Some pyrometer (EGT) settings are specific to either gas or diesel, and not to each vehicle. Nevertheless, the GT Tuner has you covered with pyrometer temperatures, throttle position indicators, mass airflow sensors, injection-control temperatures, battery voltage levels, transmission oil temperatures, manifold absolute temperatures and much more.

Bully Dog thought of just about everything from power levels to automatic defueling in case the exhaust, coolant, transmission fluid and engine oil reach excessive temperatures. The GT Tuner automatically resets to the Stock Mode to avoid damage and a warning signal sounds indicating the tuner has made the setting change. It's the only tuner on the market with this capability.

Another Bully Dog exclusive feature is called the Driving Coach Wizard. The software collects information from the vehicle sensors set up from the factory. This information is then used to help instruct the driver on the most effective driving techniques to maximize fuel economy whether towing or driving solo around town. The Driving Coach Wizard then gives you a report card grade on how well and efficiently you scored — just like in school. An "A" means you're an excellent driver and "F" means you fail. There is even an

"Epic Fail" notification if the system determines your truck is need of a serious tune up. The system is fun to use and accurately calculates wasted energy and fuel economy.

Bully Dog provides gains in performance and mileage, while giving the driver the capability of changing the power level on the fly. This system creates the power you want and gives you the tools to maximize the towing experience, and can even challenge you to

become a better driver.

The GT Gauge Tuner has an MSRP of \$699 and that includes free software updates. A Rapid Flow Cold Air Intake kit for the test truck has an MSRP of \$369. The RFI Pre-Filter is \$32.99 and the RFI Cleaning Kit has a retail price of \$16.99. Bully Dog products are sold at Camping World and other performance centers. Tech support is also offered online at www.BullyDog.com or by calling 866-285-5936. 📞

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¹ GPS device sold separately. To share your route to another GPS device you must export via a GPX file to a GPX-compatible GPS device. Not all GPS devices are supported.
² The NPD Group/U.S. Retail Tracking May 1999-March 2012.

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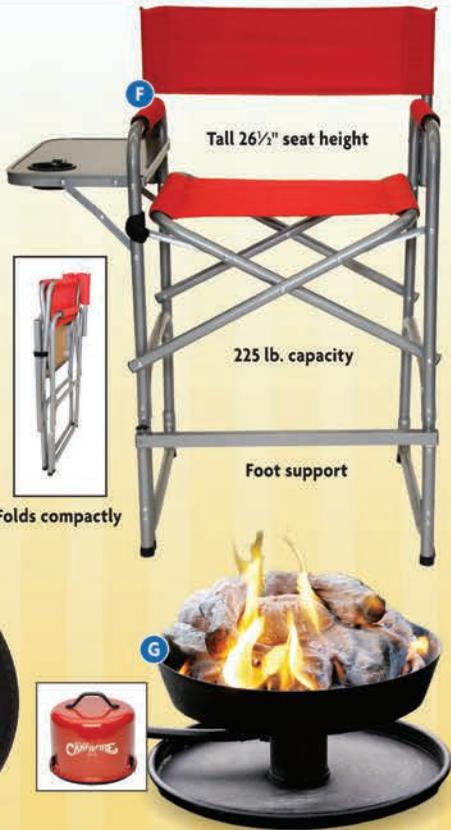
User Guide

Contents



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MSRP: \$89.99
888-297-6062, www.industrialrev.com
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MSRP: \$99.99
866-289-6686, www.motorola.com
Circle 205 on Reader Service Card.



Deluxe Stairs

HCCR RV Products and OSW teamed up to build a line of RV decks and stairs that provide secure footing, a more stylish look to your rig's exterior and more space for storage. The manufacturer claims its products improve safety, and make it easier for you and your pets to enter and exit the rig. Models include 40-by-40- and 40-by-60-inch decks and Stairlite stairs without decks. They all assemble in just a few minutes with basic hand tools, according to the manufacturer.

MSRP: \$290-\$1,200
480-837-4927, www.hofmannccr.com
Circle 206 on Reader Service Card.



Monroe Shocks – Jounce and Rebound

Drivers who demand greater performance from their vehicle often start by modifying the engine, but increased engine power often has a way of rattling loose any weak links in other parts of the vehicle such as tired or ill-performing chassis components. Fortunately, there are a multitude of choices in this arena and improving ride quality and handling on your tow vehicle is very easy and reasonably priced.



Monroe, a familiar name in the shock absorber arena, delivers a variety of products for improving the ride quality of your tow vehicle, trailer or slide-in truck camper hauler. The company even makes products to fit motorhome applications.

Monroe offers a number of shocks that are well-suited to trailering and hauling applications, but its premium Sensa-Trac products are designed to adjust rapidly with changing road and weight conditions, delivering enhanced control and ride comfort.

The Sensa-Trac truck shock absorber features PSD (position sensitive damping) technology that combines exclusive precision tapered grooves in the pressure tube with application-engineered valving and Fluon-banded pistons to improve the ride, handling and safety characteristics for optimum light-truck ride control. All-weather fluid contains special modifiers to reduce friction and ensure smooth rod reaction in a wide range of temperatures.

Monroe's Max-Air air-adjustable shock absorbers are for vehicles that occasionally haul heavy loads or tow trailers. Large-volume air chambers are designed to maintain level vehicle height. They can be inflated or deflated as needed from 20 PSI up to 150 PSI with the vehicle loaded and are deflated for

normal driving. A pair can maintain ride height when up to 1,100 pounds of additional weight is loaded. They can be adapted for most vehicles equipped with automatic leveling systems. Packed in pairs, they include air lines, air fittings and an air-fill kit.

Monroe also makes a variety of other shocks, including the Reflex, Gas Magnum and Monroe-Matic Plus, and additional products including steering stabilizers, Max-Lift gas charged support for lifting hatch lids and camper shell doors, and shock absorber retrofit kits for trailers. Visit www.monroe.com or call 734-384-7809 for additional information.

Study States Tire Problems At Fault In 5 Percent Of Crashes

Research by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) using crash data from 2005-07 determined that 5 percent of the crashed vehicles had tire problems. These were mainly underinflated or poorly main-

tained tires, and vehicles with tires underinflated by 25 percent were three times as likely to be involved in a crash related to tire problems. Tires with worn-out treads showed a large increase in crash involvement. Inclement weather further raises the risk of crashes. In the study more than 11 percent of the accident-vehicles had tire-related problems during bad weather, compared to almost 4 percent in good weather.

All 2008 model year or newer passenger cars, light trucks and vans with a gross vehicle weight rating less than 10,000 pounds are required to be equipped with a tire pressure monitoring



Monroe's Max-Air shocks are fully adjustable and can maintain proper ride height with up to 1,100 additional lbs added.



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system (TPMS). These systems detect and warn drivers when tire pressure drops below 25 percent of the recommended level. However, with a heavily laden vehicle 25 percent under-inflation is dangerous, and there are millions of older vehicles on the road without TPMS. Therefore perform frequent checks when towing to ensure tires are inflated to the proper pressure and check treadwear.

More Details Leaked on GM's Next Trucks

As development continues on the next generation of General Motor's full-size pickup trucks — expected to go on sale in 2014 — leaked information suggests that the eight-speed Hydra-Matic automatic transmission announced earlier will not be ready for the launch of the next-gen trucks. The 2014 Silverado and Sierra trucks will be available initially with six-speed automatic transmissions with the eight-speeds offered on certain models at a later date.

Evolutionary design changes, rather than a radical departure from the current shape and footprint, will focus on reduc-

ing weight with lighter materials and plastics. Additional information leaked suggests the trucks will offer updated small-block V-8 engines with direct injection, an updated combustion system design and will be E85-compatible.

Black Boxes Coming in 2015?

The U.S. Senate passed legislation (in Section 31406 of S.B. 1813) that could require the installation of "black box" data recorders, beginning with new 2015 model year vehicles. Such devices (which record vehicle speed, throttle position and brake application) could benefit law-enforcement agencies and insurance companies investigating crashes, but black boxes pose several issues including privacy and cost. The law states that vehicle owners have ownership of their black-box data, unless the owner/lessee consents to share it, a court subpoenas it, or there's a life-threatening accident. The Secretary of Transportation must report on black box cost in two years, but by then 2015 model year vehicles will almost be in production. 📡

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A Better Charger

Optima's Digital 1200 employs multi-stage electronics and unique messaging for greater battery performance and longevity

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1 2 3 4 5

TIME TO COMPLETE

NO ASSEMBLY

TOOLS NEEDED

NONE

Keeping batteries charged in an RV that's equipped with a standard-type power converter can be an exercise in futility. While many owners think they are doing the right thing by plugging their rig into 120-volt AC power, the typical converter/charger in RVs will never condition batteries properly. Most simply provide a float charge that gives owners a false sense of security that the batteries are being handled effectively.

Optima Batteries, a company well known for its AGM starting and deep-cycle batteries has introduced a portable charger driven by sophisticated electronics that helps keep 12-volt DC power flowing. The Digital 1200 Battery Charger is compact enough to be stored in just about any compartment and has a number of features that make the device user friendly.

The heart of the system is its multi-stage charging circuitry that initially allows the user to analyze battery condition. When pushing the "Pre-Charge Battery Status" button, the unit will display the state of charge on the digital readout that mimics a fuel gauge. This is particularly useful in determining how far the batteries have been de-



pleted, which should not go deeper than 50 percent. From here, you use the Quick Set controls to choose the type of battery and let the device automatically do the rest. The charger is designed specifically to handle the requirements of AGM batteries but can also be used to charge large and small flooded-cell batteries.

Internal controls regulate amperage and voltage output, depending on battery condition, and move the process sequentially to a conditioning mode that completes the charging procedure. It then goes into an auto-maintain mode, which provides a float charge. In the maintain mode, the charger is programmed to automatically recondition the batteries every 30 days for three hours. Throughout the entire process information on the "fuel gauge" message center will keep the user apprised of mode and sequence.

There are two ways to connect batteries. Red and gray clamps with very strong springs put a secure bite on the terminals. There's even a work light built into the red (positive) clamp that will illuminate as long as the charger is

plugged into 120-volt AC power. A cable can also be hardwired into any battery bank and then plugged into the side port of the charger. The cables are stored neatly inside a compartment that pops open from the back, and the power cord is wrapped around a specially designed molding in the case. A 5-watt USB port is even built into the side of the case to allow charging of electronic devices such as phones and cameras.

The message center in the bottom section of the status gauge will also alert the user to reverse polarity and other faults that will prevent the charger unit from working properly. A number of LEDs built into the top panel augment the Quick Set buttons and status gauge/message center.

Optima's Digital 1200 has a rated output of up to 12 amps via the clamps (4 amps through the aforementioned auxiliary port), which is on the light side for many RV applications, but considerably more effective than the standard factory converter in most RVs. The charger retails for \$199.99. 🚚

Optima Batteries: 888-867-8462, www.optimabatteries.com



EASIER MAINTENANCE » The Optima Digital 1200 Battery Charger is specifically designed to take care of the maintenance requirements of AGM batteries, but it can handle flooded-cell batteries, too.



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Contents



AMP HOURS AND BATTERY CHARGING



Q I really appreciated your latest articles and advice on RV batteries. As a matter of fact, I appreciate all of your advice. I usually trailer camp where there is piped water and either pit or flush toilets but no power. I go about four days before needing a dumpsite for the gray/black water. I may go a week or more without a significant recharging from my tow vehicle, so I need to do some battery power management and recharging. I also have an 80-watt solar panel.

If I have, for example, a 200-amp-hour-rated battery that is fully charged at 12.6 volts, how many amp hours have been used when the battery is fully discharged at 11.0 volts? Also if I have one of those small gasoline generators with an internal 12-volt DC 8-amp battery charger, would I have to run this generator for 12.5 hours to recharge 100-amp hours to the battery? And the last question, if I have a 200-amp alternator in my tow vehicle, what is the average driving time at say 60 MPH to recharge 100-amp hours to the trailer battery?

Dona Kazmar, Via Internet

A A battery is not like a water tank, you can't plan on running it empty; that's a recipe for ruining it. Deep-cycle batteries should not be discharged below 50 percent, so you should think of a 200-amp-hour battery (A-h) as having a 100-A-h capacity. Also, batteries lose capacity over time and use, so realistically it's more like 80 A-h. Additionally, batteries are not 100-percent efficient; if you put 100 A-h in you don't get a full 100 A-h out.

The built-in chargers on generators are single stage and don't do a very good job of charging. Therefore, you should use a separate charger with multiple stages that will recharge the battery to a higher level and sooner. Batteries should not be charged at an ampere rate higher than 20 percent of their A-h capacity per hour. For example, a 200-A-h battery should not be charged at more than 40 amps, and if it gets hot or starts to expel electrolyte, you must reduce that rate. It's impossible to say how quickly your alternator will charge the battery, because there are many variables, including other power demands of the tow vehicle and trailer, lights, fuel pump, ignition, air conditioning, etc. Battery condition and voltage drop in the wiring will also greatly affect charging rate. Your best bet is to take voltage measurements during rest stops when the engine is off to determine charging progress. — **Ken Freund**

FIBERGLASS SURFACE CRACKING

Q While washing my six-year-old Victory Lane fifth-wheel toy-hauler I noticed that the fiberglass front cap has some spider lines beginning to appear in it, but the spider lines don't appear to be separated all the way through the material yet. I'm con-

cerned that they may start extending out. Is there a way I can stop this and seal them?

Lawrence Amidei, Sebring, Fla.

A This is a problem with the outer coating of the fiberglass, known as the gel coat. There can be a number of

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.



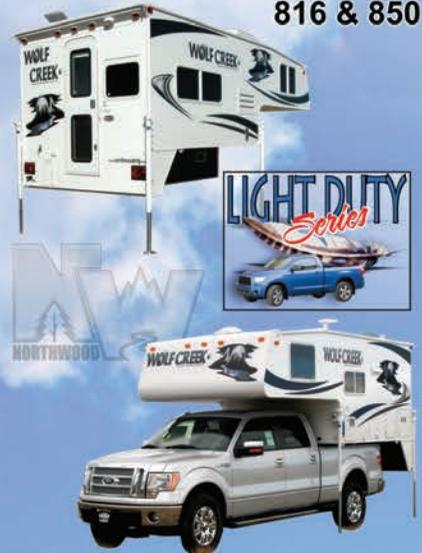
JEFF JOHNSTON: Jeff served as technical director of *Trailer Life* for 18 years and has been an RV enthusiast, mechanic and writer since he could hold a wrench.

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causes, but the most common is exposure to sun and weather — and once it begins it will get worse. I suggest you take it to an RV dealer or auto body shop that specializes in fiberglass repair. If you don't have one in your area, you might contact a boat shop or dealer, as it will have experience with fiberglass. Afterward, I suggest you use a quality RV cover on the unit when it is being stored, to protect it from the elements. — **K.F.**

TOILET REPLACEMENT

Q I completely restored a 1969 Aristocrat Land Commander and now want to replace the portable toilet with a permanent toilet such as a Thetford Aqua Magic. I'm not concerned about the water line connection, that part is easy. What I need to know is what parts

unit that comes on only when the water pump switch is turned on. I would like to make it an on-demand system, and realize I can wire in a demand pump and leave the switch on. However, how do I choose between pump models and brands? Any help you can give would be appreciated.

Gerry Mayers, Via Internet

A You can choose any of the available demand water pumps, Gerry, based on cost and features as with any other RV product. Even the least-expensive model will successfully deliver water for your RV. The higher-cost models include more features, such as quieter operation, higher flow rates, smoother on/off pump action and so on, but the lower-cost models also work fine and are viable options if you're on a budget. As usual, though, your best bet

"I don't think there's a set of generalized toilet-swap parts and pieces instructions like you're hoping for.."

do I need to mount the unit and what parts do I need to connect it to a portable waste tank? Is there a website that has this information or should I go to an RV dealer for advice?

Leroy Kotula, Via email

A Leroy, I don't think there's a set of generalized toilet-swap parts and pieces instructions like you're hoping for because each project will be different. Each brand and model of toilet's installation instructions will detail how to connect it to an existing sewage system, probably via the 4-inch PVC pipe that would exist in many late-model RVs with a black tank. You'll need to cut the hole in the floor, install the ABS pipe and rig it with a gate valve and termination under the trailer's floor for fastening the dump hose in place. If in doubt, a trip to a qualified RV tech center might be in order. — **Jeff Johnston**

WATER PUMP UPGRADE

Q The water pump in my old Layton 28-foot travel trailer is a manual

is to stick with the name brands such as SHURflo or Flojet.

You may need new plumbing connections, but the existing electrical feed should be fine for your new pump. — **J.J.**

ROOF FAN REPLACEMENT

Q My 2007 Springdale 26-foot travel trailer has a Comfort Air Platinum exhaust fan mounted in the bedroom ceiling. This unit has been flaky during the five years I have owned the trailer; the remote would stop working in hot, muggy weather, which could be fixed by placing the remote in the refrigerator. Believe it or not, the remote would stop working intermittently requiring the reset process to be done over and over again. Finally the fan unit has stopped working completely and I have decided to replace it with a manual fan, which I hope will not be as prone to bugs.

Since the trailer is out of warranty, the RV dealer where I purchased the Springdale would charge more to replace the Comfort Air with a less automatic one than what I paid five years

ago. I have gone through all the old *Trailer Life* magazines I have saved with helpful repair articles and have not found one on removing an old roof fan and installing a new one. Would such a project be beyond a do-it-yourselfer with many years of home repair skills?
Alton Verity, Underhill, Vt.

A Replacing a standard roof fan with another similar model should be an easy job for a handy do-it-yourselfer, Alton. It's a simple matter of removing the old roof fan and installing the new one, following the directions packaged with the new fan. All of these devices fit the standard 14-inch opening in your RV's roof. Be sure to have the proper caulk or sealant on hand that's designed for your kind of roof before you start the job.

You may need to remove a trim ring inside, detach the wiring, and check for retaining screws visible from underneath. There may not be any, so you'll need to climb on the roof, remove any sealant on the screw heads, and remove the screws holding the fan to the roof by its flange. Pry the old fan loose without damaging the roof material. Clean the mounting area, apply the sealant or gasket material that's supplied with the new fan, and install it with new screws, again, per the instructions. Reattach the wiring, add the new trim ring and you're set. In a nutshell, that's it. Follow the kit instructions and you should be fine. — J.J.

DUMP VALVE FAILURE

Q My RV is a 2003 Trail Lite fifth-wheel 5260. Due to the cold weather we have here in Ontario, all water systems were winterized prior to winter storage. When overhauling the unit this spring I found that both waste valves seem to be stuck in a permanent open position. When flushing the tanks I opened the 3-inch retainer cap to connect the discharge hose and even though both valves were in the closed position all the water from both tanks came out. When winterized in the fall the valves were fine. I have access hatches that were installed previously and when I checked the valves I could see nothing

obviously wrong. The cable system seemed to be operating the slides properly. To take the valves out to check further would be very difficult as they are in a very confined space. I think it would be easier to install a macerator system. Could I do this and leave both valves as they are in the open position or would this put too much pressure on the pump and cause leakage on the macerator

pump? I was thinking of leaving the drainage cap locked in a permanent position. If you believe this is an option, what macerator unit would be a good fit?

Del Mitton, Ontario, Canada

A All of the aftermarket macerators for sale today have adapters, such as elbows and extenders, to make them fit most any RV. We don't have a com-



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plete blueprint file of every RV model on hand so we can't specifically address the configuration of your trailer. An inquiry with your local RV parts supplier, or online, will answer that question.

It may call for some work, but you should get in to check on the status of your dump valves. If you install a macerator, you will not want to have the waste fluids in contact with the macerator hardware 24/7. The unit's instruc-

tions will explain more about that. Having both valves open all the time also means the black and grey tanks would be connected; for a variety of health reasons you absolutely do not want them joined.

It's entirely possible that your valve blades became stuck in the open position while the trailer was in winter storage. When you tried to close them by pushing on the control handles, some

part of the attachment between the cables and valves probably came loose rather than moving the valve blades. Get in there, loosen the blades, and when prepping for storage next time, be sure to use approved antifreeze with valve blade lubricant included. - J.J.

WATER PIPE NOISE

Q My water pipes rattle when I turn on the water pump. I went ahead and replaced the water pump, but the problem still remains. I run the faucets to get all the air out of the lines, but the pipes still rattle. Please help!
Mr. Karcic, Via email

A That noise is known as pipe hammering, and it happens in houses as well as RVs. It's caused by rapid starts and stops in the water flow, which results in fast pressure changes. The best solution is to install an accumulator tank in the system near the pump. The accumulator tank acts as something of a shock absorber that can smooth out water line pressure variations. It helps eliminate the hammering, and reduce pump cycling that can help extend pump life. - J.J.

BLOWN TIRES

Q I bought my 1995 Thor fifth-wheel used and it had two or three tires blow out in just the first few hundred



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miles, so I took it back to the dealer and they sent me to a place that did axle work on trailers. The shop put a jack under the center of the axles, raised the center, and got the right arch in them so the tires were running true. Then he welded a piece of angle iron from one side of the axle to the other on each axle. It must have worked because I have never had any blowouts after that.
Mr. Ladd, Harlingen, Texas

A You've discovered a trailer tire failure cause that's probably a lot more common than most realize. Misaligned trailer axles are responsible for many prematurely worn tires experienced by RVers. You were lucky to find a shop that was familiar with the problem.

It's possible excess weight on the trailer axles, caused by too much trailer weight or too small an axle, caused the center of the axles to bend down a bit. The leverage effect of the tires at the ends of the axles plus the trailer weight inboard from the tires causes the center of the axle to bow down. This causes the tire camber to be thrown out of alignment, which tilts the tires in at the top, and in turn causes faster tire tread edge wear due to uneven tread contact with the road. Bending the axle center up realigns the camber. Other readers with suspicious trailer tire wear problems might want to consider finding a local shop that knows about trailer axle alignment and have their rigs checked out, too. — J. J.

WEIGHT LIMITS

Q I bought a new 2012 Evolution 20-foot travel trailer with a dry weight rated at 4,300 pounds. Loaded, it weighs 6,100 pounds. I'm towing it with a 2010 Toyota Tacoma 4WD four-door long bed TRD pickup with a tow package. It has the 4.0-liter V-6 engine rated at 236 horsepower, a 3.90:1 rear end and six-speed automatic transmission. Loaded the truck weighs 4,870 pounds, and has a maximum gross vehicle weight rating of 5,400 pounds. Its maximum tow rating is 6,500 pounds. Is this vehicle adequate for this trailer?

James Levandoski, Via Internet

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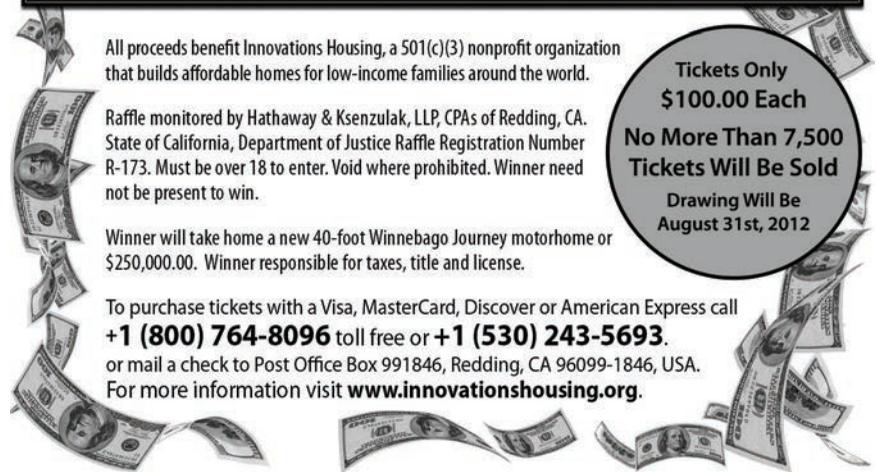
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A If the manufacturer's maximum tow rating is 6,500 pounds and the trailer weighs 6,100 pounds loaded, then technically it's within factory limits. However, you'll probably find performance to be pretty marginal, since it's so close to the maximum tow rating, not allowing much room for additional cargo and passengers in the tow vehicle, high-altitude operation, high temperatures, steep climbs and other factors. — K. F.

TRAILER TIRE ROTATION

Q We have a three-axle toy hauler trailer. Should I be rotating the tires? If so, how often and what pattern should I be using?

John Pauley, Via Internet

A Generally, trailer tires have to be replaced because of age and sun damage (cracking, etc.) rather than tread wear. But if the front or rear tires are wearing more due to scrubbing in turns, then rotate (continued on pg. 77)

Truck Accessories Group, Circle 130 on Reader Service Card

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ADVERTISERS' INDEX

RS#	ADVERTISER	PAGE#
	Advanced Design Systems, Inc.	72
	Agri-Cover Inc.	60
143	B&D Manufacturing, Inc.	72
102	B&W Trailer Hitches	52
102	B&W Trailer Hitches	50
121	Blue Ox Towing Division	70
	Born Free Motorcoach	71
120	Bully Dog	46
119	Camping World	62-63
	Casita Travel Trailers	66
117	Chevrolet	2-3
	Coast Distribution	19
106	Cummins Power Generation	15
133	Cypress Trails	58
144	Delsand LLC	52
127	Direct Satellite TV	61
123	Dish Network	12
124	Dish Network	13
126	DRV	54
	Essex Credit Corporation, Inc.	35
125	Geico	23
	Giraffe G4 Systems, LLC	53
	Good Sam Club	27
	Good Sam Roadside Assistance	47
	GS Media & Events	55
115	Hellwig Products	71
116	Hensley Mfg. Inc.	53
114	Honda Generators	9

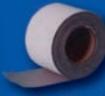
142	Innovation Housing	73
	Keystone RV Company	39
110	Lippert Components	28
111	Lippert Components	66
109	Microsoft Corporation	59
108	MORryde	42
112	New Horizons	34
107	Northwood Manufacturing	69
141	NuWa Industries	48
137	Outdoors Insight, Inc.	43
105	Pace Edwards	14
104	Progressive Insurance	7
	Reader Choice Awards	98-99
113	Roadtrek	33
	RV Buyer's Guide	77
	Starcraft Recreational Vehicles	100
103	Thetford Corporation	68
	Trailer Life TV	77
101	Transfer Flow	73
130	Truck Accessories Group	74

EDITORIAL PRODUCT INDEX

RS#	ADVERTISER	PAGE#
201	Winnebago	37
202	Space Craft	41
203	LiquiFix	64
204	Industrial Revolution	64
205	Motorola	64
206	Hofmann RV Products	64

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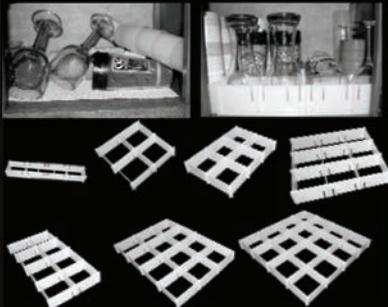


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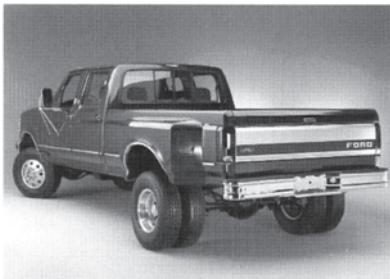
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(continued from pg. 74) the center-axle tires on the same side to the ones that show the most wear. – K.F.

LONG-TERM CHARGING

Q Regarding last October's RV Clinic "Take (Float) Charge", if keeping your RV plugged in can lead to excessive battery water use, how do those who go south for the winter and stay plugged in at an RV park for months at a time manage to not overcharge their batteries? I've found no way to have electrical power to my coach without going through my coach batteries. When I disconnect my coach batteries using the battery disconnect switch by my door, I end up with no electrical power to the coach. Could my disconnect switch be defective?

Ronald Gjeston, Bozeman, Mont.

A The disconnect switch is designed to electrically disconnect the battery from the coach during storage, to prevent it from becoming discharged by parasitic draws, so it is doing what it is supposed to do. It is not designed to disconnect the battery from the charging circuit. Having a battery in the circuit helps "smooth out" the AC ripples from the converter's output. This helps ensure that circuit boards and other sensitive devices get the smooth DC power they need to operate reliably. The problem is that not all converters are designed with multi-stage charging circuits and as a result they tend to overcharge the batteries and cause them to use excessive water. The solution, if you have a single-stage converter and are having problems with batteries, is to replace it with a smart converter such as a Xantrex TRUEcharge2. – K. F.

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USED 2006 Forest River SALEM 30FBSRV
WAS \$23,690 NOW \$14,988 SAVE
 \$8,702 (888) 386-5187 Houghton Lake, MI
 STK# HL5991A



USED 2007 Gulf Stream KINGSFORT 320TB
NOW \$14,995 (888)
 828-9906 Lowell, AR
 STK# LOW18329



USED 2007 Coachmen SPIRIT OF AMERICA 29TBS
NOW \$14,995
 (888) 828-9906 Lowell,
 AR STK# LOW20033



USED 2004 Northwoods ARTIC FOX 295T
WAS \$30,000 NOW \$14,995 SAVE
 \$15,005 (888) 848-7312 Columbia, SC
 STK# COL17129



NEW 2012 Dutchmen DUTCHMEN 255RB
MSRP \$24,260 NOW \$14,995 SAVE
 \$9,265 (888) 905-0490 Anthony, TX STK#
 LC15907



USED 2008 Forest River WILDWOOD 26TB
WAS \$23,079 NOW \$14,995 SAVE
 \$8,084 (888) 848-7312 Columbia, SC
 STK# COL21138



USED 2007 Keystone OUTBACK SYDNEY 27 RLS
WAS \$27,900 NOW \$14,999 SAVE
 \$12,901 (888) 489-5784
 Louisville, TN STK#
 KNOX19647



USED 2011 Gulf Stream CONQUEST 28RR
WAS \$22,999 NOW \$15,030 SAVE
 \$7,969 (866) 648-5288 St. Augustine, FL
 STK# JAC39694



USED 2008 Dutchmen DUTCHMEN 29XRV
WAS \$21,888 NOW \$15,499 SAVE
 \$6,389 (888) 672-5049 Syracuse, NY STK#
 SYU72147



NEW 2012 Crossroads ZINGER SE 27BHS
WAS \$22,242 NOW \$16,773 SAVE \$5,469
 (866) 502-8238 Bath, NY STK# BAT70744



USED 2006 Forest River WILDWOOD 26FK
NOW \$15,950 (888) 480-3175
 Sacramento, CA STK# SAC20660A VIN#
 6C039490



USED 2006 Forest River WILDCAT 28RK
NOW \$15,995 (888) 668-6715 Katy, TX
 STK# KAT10102A



USED 2001 R-Vision TRAIL HARBOR 527RKSS NOW \$15,995 (888) 641-0925 Kaysville, UT STK# KY40710



NEW 2012 Crossroads SUNSET TRAIL 20CK WAS \$28,259 NOW \$15,995 SAVE \$12,264 (866) 610-5049 Akron, OH STK# SRV18914



USED 2007 Keystone COPPER CANYON 3121SLS WAS \$25,900 NOW \$15,999 SAVE \$9,901 (888) 489-5784 Louisville, TN STK# KNOX19658



USED 2007 Keystone VR1 305FKS WAS \$27,995 NOW \$15,995 SAVE \$12,000 (866) 754-7302 Greenwood, IN STK# GRW326320



USED 2009 Gulf Stream KINGSPORT 250RKS WAS \$22,995 NOW \$15,995 SAVE \$7,000 (877) 371-2412 Flagstaff, AZ STK# FLG19381



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CTS260BH WAS \$27,864 NOW \$16,495 SAVE \$11,369 (888) 674-0275 Gulf Breeze, FL STK# GB39989



USED 2007 Gulf Stream MAKO 28FRBH NOW \$16,380 (888) 903-5066 St. George, UT STK# SGU22302



USED 2006 Fleetwood ADVANTAGE 295RLS NOW \$16,455 (888) 853-4034 Redding, CA STK# REDZ1013 VIN# 62316043



USED 2008 Dutchmen DUTCHMEN 28BGS WAS \$24,995 NOW \$16,985 SAVE \$8,010 (866) 673-0250 Statesville, NC STK# STA126202



USED 2006 Jayco EAGLE 308FBS NOW \$16,987 (888) 614-5201 Draper, UT STK# ABRV39241



USED 2011 Keystone BULLET 215RBS WAS \$25,715 NOW \$16,990 SAVE \$8,725 (877) 458-3214 Jacksonville, FL STK# JAX19913



USED 2009 Skyline ALJO 210 NOW \$16,995 (888) 480-3175 Sacramento, CA STK# SAC16932A VIN# 9A000423



USED 2006 Keystone LAREDO 26RK WAS \$26,877 NOW \$16,995 SAVE \$9,882 (888) 672-5049 Syracuse, NY STK# SYU69590



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT265BHS WAS \$25,542 NOW \$16,995 SAVE \$8,547 (888) 475-5918 Robertsdale, AL STK# RD40124



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT265BHS WAS \$25,542 NOW \$16,995 SAVE \$8,547 (888) 475-5918 Robertsdale, AL STK# RD40123



NEW 2012 Dutchmen ASPEN TRAIL 2710BH MSRP \$23,928 NOW \$16,995 SAVE \$6,933 (877) 371-2412 Flagstaff, AZ STK# FLG17170





NEW 2012 Heartland NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL RUNNER 22RBQ WAS \$23,872 **NOW \$16,995** SAVE \$6,877 (877) 439-7857 Conway, NH STK# CNW24261



USED 2006 Carriage CAMEO F35SLQ WAS \$47,997 **NOW \$39,979** SAVE \$8,018 (877) 439-7857 Conway, NH STK# CNW23247



USED 2007 Keystone SYDNEY 31 RQS WAS \$25,900 **NOW \$16,999** SAVE \$8,901 (888) 489-5784 Louisville, TN STK# KNOX19737



NEW 2012 Keystone BULLET 215RBS WAS \$23,776 **NOW \$17,495** SAVE \$6,281 (888) 819-7952 Longmont, CO STK# KC111936



USED 2006 Coachmen ADRENALINE 274FS WAS \$39,899 **NOW \$17,580** SAVE \$22,319 (866) 648-5288 St. Augustine, FL STK# JAC39603



USED 2007 Jayco EAGLE 328RLS **NOW \$17,629** (888) 853-4034 Redding, CA STK# REDZ1014 VIN# 71CA0096



USED 2005 Jayco EAGLE 291RLTS WAS \$24,985 **NOW \$17,895** SAVE \$7,090 (888) 681-4635 Winter Garden, FL STK# WGA24031



USED 2007 Holiday Rambler SAVOY 300BHS WAS \$25,999 **NOW \$17,955** SAVE \$8,044 (888) 471-3546 Chichester, NH STK# GRV507741



NEW 2011 Coleman COLEMAN CTS264RL WAS \$28,462 **NOW \$17,991** SAVE \$10,471 (877) 450-7415 Island Lake, IL STK# CRV5859



USED 2006 Keystone MOUNTAINEER 29BH **NOW \$17,995** (888) 801-3226 Byron, GA STK# MAC16504



USED 2010 R And S Custom FIRESTORM 21C **NOW \$17,995** (888) 668-6715 Katy, TX STK# KAT10030A



USED 2008 Keystone LAREDO 29RL WAS \$24,895 **NOW \$17,995** SAVE \$6,900 (888) 860-8684 Strafford, MO STK# STR21040



USED 2005 Holiday Rambler SAVOY 29SKD WAS \$21,995 **NOW \$17,995** SAVE \$4,000 (888) 568-2177 Burlington, WA STK# FRV10876



USED 2007 Gulf Stream SEDONA 30RLF WAS \$35,900 **NOW \$17,999** SAVE \$17,901 (866) 289-0113 Chattanooga, TN STK# CH6444



USED 2005 K-Z DURANGO 280FL WAS \$20,900 **NOW \$11,999** SAVE \$8,901 (888) 489-5784 Louisville, TN STK# KNOX19694



USED 2007 Komfort KAMPSITE 278 **NOW \$18,467** (888) 614-5201 Draper, UT STK# ABRV39289



NEW 2012 Dutchmen DUTCHMEN 265BHS WAS \$25,290 **NOW \$18,495** SAVE \$6,795 (888) 450-7060 Dothan, AL STK# DOT39261



USED 2007 Jayco EAGLE 288RLS NOW \$18,637 (888) 853-4034 Redding, CA STK# REDZ1010 VIN# 71CR0186



NEW 2012 Heartland NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL RUNNER 25SLE WAS \$28,544 NOW \$18,699 SAVE \$9,845 (888) 868-1486 Raleigh, NC STK# RAL21856



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT265BHS WAS \$26,098 NOW \$18,895 SAVE \$7,203 (888) 865-1507 Hamburg, NY STK# BUF71113



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT317BHS WAS \$28,929 NOW \$18,795 SAVE \$10,134 (888) 865-1507 Hamburg, NY STK# BUF71144



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT317BHS WAS \$28,928 NOW \$18,795 SAVE \$10,133 (888) 865-1507 Hamburg, NY STK# BUF71142



USED 2005 Keystone COUGAR 314BH WAS \$29,995 NOW \$18,959 SAVE \$11,036 (888) 692-9016 Myrtle Beach, SC STK# MB126593



USED 2006 Keystone OUTBACK 29FBHS NOW \$18,979 (888) 331-1595 Santa Clarita, CA STK# AMRV22840 VIN# 66917823



USED 2007 Forest River WILDCAT 28 RKBS WAS \$28,140 NOW \$18,992 SAVE \$9,148 (888) 484-3906 Spartanburg, SC STK# GR125999



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT265BHS WAS \$28,074 NOW \$18,999 SAVE \$9,075 (877) 458-3214 Jacksonville, FL STK# JAX19787



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT250GS WAS \$27,382 NOW \$19,209 SAVE \$8,173 (888) 868-1486 Raleigh, NC STK# RAL25422



USED 2004 Glendale TITANIUM 33E38TS WAS \$27,895 NOW \$19,900 SAVE \$7,995 (888) 681-4635 Winter Garden, FL STK# WGA22990



USED 2003 Keystone MONTANA 3295 NOW \$19,987 (888) 614-5201 Draper, UT STK# ABRV40370



NEW 2012 Keystone SPRINGDALE 292RLSSR WAS \$31,245 NOW \$19,988 SAVE \$11,257 (888) 386-5187 Houghton Lake, MI STK# HL6069



USED 2004 Fleetwood WILDERNESS ADVANTAGE 365FLTS WAS \$37,856 NOW \$19,995 SAVE \$17,861 (888) 860-8684 Strafford, MO STK# STR15757A



USED 1999 Teton PRESTIGE 32 FLAGSTAFF WAS \$37,500 NOW \$19,995 SAVE \$17,505 (866) 820-0335 Council Bluffs, IA STK# CBI17237



USED 2007 Sunnybrook TITAN 31RLDS WAS \$34,988 NOW \$19,995 SAVE \$14,993 (888) 475-5918 Robertsdale, AL STK# RD40398





USED 2010 Keystone BULLETT 250RKS
 WAS \$32,254 **NOW \$19,995** SAVE
 \$12,259 (877) 371-2412 Flagstaff, AZ
 STK# FLG13122



USED 2003 Forest River CEDAR CREEK 30RLBS WAS \$29,995 **NOW \$19,995** SAVE \$10,000 (866) 754-7302 Greenwood, IN STK# GRW326359



USED 2007 Keystone COPPER CANYON 3121SLS WAS \$28,995 **NOW \$19,995** SAVE \$9,000 (888) 682-3036 Churchville, NY STK# CHU68788



NEW 2012 Forest River MAVERICK 2902 WAS \$28,977 **NOW \$19,995** SAVE \$8,982 (866) 415-9726 Golden, CO STK# KC511708



USED 2007 Keystone SYDNEY OUTBACK 31FRKS WAS \$29,998 **NOW \$19,999** SAVE \$9,999 (877) 554-3516 Lakewood, NJ STK# LAK8509



USED 2007 Gulf Stream SEDONA 29RKFW WAS \$46,999 **NOW \$21,920** SAVE \$25,079 (866) 648-5288 St. Augustine, FL STK# JAC38696



USED 2006 Forest River SIERRA 315BHTS WAS \$38,380 **NOW \$21,995** SAVE \$16,385 (888) 461-1123 Asheville, NC STK# ASH22496



USED 2007 Forest River CARDINAL 29RK WAS \$39,988 **NOW \$21,995** SAVE \$17,993 (888) 475-5918 Roberts-dale, AL STK# RD40424



USED 2004 Forest River CEDAR CREEK 36 **NOW \$21,925** (888) 479-3568 Vacaville, CA STK# VAC17720A VIN# 4P188221



USED 2007 Monaco STARWOOD M-29RKD WAS \$31,824 **NOW \$21,995** SAVE \$9,829 (877) 458-3214 Jacksonville, FL STK# JAX20585



USED 2004 Forest River CEDAR CREEK 34RLBS WAS \$30,690 **NOW \$21,995** SAVE \$8,695 (866) 610-5049 Akron, OH STK# SRV19145



USED 2009 Palomino SABRE 28RBFWS WAS \$34,900 **NOW \$21,999** SAVE \$12,901 (888) 489-5784 Louisville, TN STK# KNOX19693



NEW 2011 Keystone SPRINTER 255RKS WAS \$33,259 **NOW \$22,604** SAVE \$10,655 (866) 648-5288 St. Augustine, FL STK# JAC38547



USED 2007 Gulf Stream SEDONA 34FSBW **NOW \$22,857** (888) 641-0925 Kaysville, UT STK# KY36139



NEW 2012 Heartland NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL RUNNER 26SLE WAS \$33,613 **NOW \$22,889** SAVE \$10,724 (888) 868-1486 Raleigh, NC STK# RAL21860



USED 2002 Keystone MONTANA 2955RL WAS \$34,140 **NOW \$22,895** SAVE \$11,245 (888) 692-9016 Myrtle Beach, SC STK# MB126583



NEW 2011 Keystone SPRINTER 277RLS MSRP \$32,435 **NOW \$22,995** SAVE \$9,440 (888) 815-7523 Woodstock, GA STK# WDS15901



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT-F267BH WAS \$37,685 **NOW \$23,685** SAVE \$14,000 (888) 242-0293 Madison, WI STK# MAD16062



USED 2009 Fleetwood PROWLER 250RLS WAS \$38,995 **NOW \$23,889** SAVE \$15,106 (866) 755-9604 Charleston, SC STK# CHN126466



USED 2006 Americamp SUMMIT RIDGE 327RRK WAS \$34,995 **NOW \$23,995** SAVE \$11,000 (866) 996-3140 Calera, AL STK# CLE18948



USED 2007 Forest River CARDINAL 33TBH **NOW \$23,995** (888) 815-7523 Woodstock, GA STK# WDS17480



USED 2007 Forest River PALOMINO 29F0S **NOW \$18,600** (888) 331-1595 Santa Clarita, CA STK# AMRV23099 VIN# 83000914



USED 2007 Franklin RANCHWAGON 336FRL **NOW \$24,000** (888) 614-5201 Draper, UT STK# ABRV39399



USED 2006 Crossroads RV PARADISE POINT 365K **NOW \$24,281** (888) 480-3175 Sacramento, CA STK# SAC18208 VIN# 6A003109



USED 2002 NuWa HITCHHIKER 35LK-TGE WAS \$35,995 **NOW \$24,561** SAVE \$11,434 (888) 474-1330 Bartow, FL STK# DCW8187A



USED 2007 Weekend Warrior WEEKEND WARRIOR 3505 **NOW \$24,750** (888) 903-5066 St. George, UT STK# SGU22301



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT-F259RE WAS \$41,192 **NOW \$24,895** SAVE \$16,297 (888) 865-1507 Hamburg, NY STK# BUF69774



NEW 2012 Crossroads CRUISER 27RLX WAS \$38,392 **NOW \$24,988** SAVE \$13,404 (888) 386-5187 Houghton Lake, MI STK# HL5970



USED 2007 Keystone RAPTOR 299 MP **NOW \$24,995** (888) 828-9906 Lowell, AR STK# LOW24548



USED 2005 Keystone MONTANA 2980RL WAS \$39,995 **NOW \$24,995** SAVE \$15,000 (888) 450-7060 Dothan, AL STK# DOT41677



NEW 2011 Keystone SPRINTER 255RKS LIST PRICE \$35,385 **NOW \$24,995** SAVE \$10,390 (877) 834-0429 Bakersfield, CA STK# SLV21977 VIN# B1533234



USED 2007 Keystone MOUNTAINEER 344RET WAS \$34,988 **NOW \$24,995** SAVE \$9,993 (888) 475-5918 Robertsdale, AL STK# RD40348



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT-F259RE MSRP \$34,033 **NOW \$24,995** SAVE \$9,038 (888) 801-3226 Byron, GA STK# MAC16075



NEW 2012 Keystone HIDEOUT 20RD
MSRP \$27,783 **NOW \$16,777** SAVE
\$6,006 (888) 727-2952 North Little Rock,
AR STK# LIT17650



USED 2004 Carriage CARRIAGE
35CKQ WAS \$39,423
NOW \$24,998 SAVE
\$14,425 (888) 457-
4801 Colfax, NC STK#
CFX4118



NEW 2011 Coleman COLEMAN CT-
387DQDS MSRP \$34,287 **NOW \$24,998**
SAVE \$9,289 (877) 371-2412 Flagstaff, AZ
STK# FLG13897



NEW 2012 Dutchmen KOMFORT 2410RK WAS
\$36,659 **NOW \$25,995** SAVE \$10,664 (888) 674-
0275 Gulf Breeze, FL STK# GB41032



NEW 2011 Keystone COUGAR 278RKS
MSRP \$38,632 **NOW \$25,987** SAVE
\$12,645 (888) 614-5201 Draper, UT STK#
ABRV37214



NEW 2012 Crossroads ZINGER 30RL
WAS \$38,240 **NOW \$25,995** SAVE
\$12,245 (888) 860-8684 Strafford, MO
STK# STR17794



USED 2007 McKenzie Towables MEDALLION
37 **NOW \$26,064**
(888) 903-5066 St.
George, UT STK#
SGU22305



USED 2007 Forest River WILDWOOD
336BHBS WAS \$42,668
NOW \$26,145 SAVE
\$16,523 (888) 461-1123
Asheville, NC STK#
ASH22490



USED 2009 Forest River SALEM LA
326RBDS **NOW \$26,900** (888) 844-
1758 New Braunfels, TX STK# SW10164A



USED 2012 Keystone LAREDO 303TG
NOW \$26,995 (888) 801-3226 Byron, GA
STK# MAC17150



USED 2008 Heartland BIG COUNTRY
3250TS **NOW \$26,995** (888) 617-
5406 Oakwood, GA STK# ORV15957



USED 2009 Heartland BIG COUNTRY
3490BHS WAS \$47,865
NOW \$26,995 SAVE
\$20,870 (888) 674-0275
Gulf Breeze, FL STK#
GB40596



NEW 2011 Starcraft LEXION S-LITE
2569KU WAS \$37,336 **NOW \$26,995**
SAVE \$10,341 (888) 568-2177 Burlington,
WA STK# FRV9665



USED 2006 Keystone EVEREST 366T
WAS \$36,690 **NOW \$26,995** SAVE \$9,695
(866) 610-5049 Akron, OH STK# SRV19489



NEW 2012 Keystone PREMIER 28RL
WAS \$38,665 **NOW \$27,400** SAVE
\$11,265 (866) 820-0335 Council Bluffs, IA
STK# CBI15836



NEW 2012 Keystone SYDNEY 275FBH
WAS \$45,620 **NOW \$27,533** SAVE
\$18,087 (866) 755-9604 Charleston, SC
STK# CHN125265



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT-
F259RE MSRP \$38,227 **NOW \$27,862**
SAVE \$10,365 (888) 696-2165 Savannah,
GA STK# SAV17016



NEW 2012 Keystone PREMIER 27RB
 WAS \$40,552 **NOW \$27,972** SAVE
 \$12,580 (888) 903-6787 Harrisburg, PA
 STK# HAR70034



USED 2008 McKenzie LAKOTA ESTATE
36REQ WAS \$46,900 **NOW \$27,999** SAVE
 \$18,901 (866) 289-0113 Chattanooga, TN
 STK# CH6948



NEW 2012 Keystone SPRINTER 275FWBHS WAS
 \$40,707 **NOW \$29,950** SAVE \$10,757 (888) 859-
 6653 Hillsboro, OR STK# HIL40212



USED 2008 Keystone MONTANA 3295RK
 WAS \$39,750 **NOW \$28,988** SAVE
 \$10,762 (888) 896-2801 Albuquerque, NM
 STK# ARV15985A



USED 2007 Keystone MONTANA 3475
 WAS \$44,995 **NOW \$29,858** SAVE
 \$15,137 (888) 254-9145 Meridian, ID
 STK# MER18377A



USED 2008 Heartland Bighorn 3055RL WAS
 \$41,337 **NOW \$29,988** SAVE \$11,349 (888) 896-
 2801 Albuquerque, NM STK# ARV15517A



USED 2008 Heartland BIG COUNTRY
3490BH **NOW \$29,995** (888) 668-6715
 Katy, TX STK# KAT10133A



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT-
F267BH WAS \$42,273 **NOW \$29,995**
 SAVE \$12,278 (877) 289-0812 Las Vegas,
 NV STK# LVN40038



NEW 2012 Dutch-
men DENALI 270FK
 LIST PRICE \$42,053
NOW \$29,995 SAVE
 \$12,058 (888) 331-
 1595 Santa Clarita, CA
 STK# AMRV22625 VIN#
 CD312046



USED 2006 Coachmen SOMERSET
358RLTS WAS \$41,585 **NOW \$29,995**
 SAVE \$11,590 (888) 348-5909 Avondale,
 AZ STK# AVO14591



NEW 2012 Keystone COUGAR 276RLS
 WAS \$41,024 **NOW \$29,995** SAVE
 \$11,029 (866) 502-8238 Bath, NY STK#
 BAT69928



USED 2006 Holiday Rambler PRESIDEN-
TIAL 36RLQ **NOW \$29,998** (888) 815-
 7523 Woodstock, GA STK# WDS16737



USED 2007 Alpenlite VOYAGER 31CK
 WAS \$49,900 **NOW \$29,999** SAVE
 \$19,901 (866) 289-0113 Chattanooga, TN
 STK# CH6868



USED 2010 Keystone MONTANA 347THT
 WAS \$44,995 **NOW \$30,998** SAVE
 \$13,997 (888) 457-4801 Colfax, NC STK#
 CFX3828



USED 2009 Heartland
BIG COUNTRY 325TSL
 WAS \$46,050 **NOW**
\$32,988 SAVE \$13,062
 (888) 850-5575 Wood
 Village, OR STK#
 POR37152



USED 2007 Keystone RAPTOR 3712
 WAS \$54,217 **NOW \$32,995** SAVE
 \$21,222 (888) 461-1123 Asheville, NC
 STK# ASH22500



NEW 2012 Heartland SUNDANCE 2900MK MSRP \$45,116 **NOW \$32,995** SAVE \$12,121 (888) 905-0490 Anthony, TX STK# LC15931



USED 2007 Alfa SEE YA 314/35RLK WAS \$57,900 **NOW \$32,999** SAVE \$24,901 (866) 289-0113 Chattanooga, TN STK# CH6952



NEW 2012 Crossroads CRUISER PATRIOT 315RE WAS \$53,912 **NOW \$33,995** SAVE \$19,917 (866) 610-5049 Akron, OH STK# SRV19095



USED 2006 Heartland LANDMARK GOLDEN GATE WAS \$59,999 **NOW \$34,810** SAVE \$25,189 (866) 648-5288 St. Augustine, FL STK# JAC38916



USED 2006 Sunnybrook SUNNYBROOK 39SURV WAS \$49,500 **NOW \$34,877** SAVE \$14,623 (888) 474-1330 Bartow, FL STK# DCW7974A



NEW 2012 Keystone MOUNTAINEER 290RLT WAS \$50,738 **NOW \$34,895** SAVE \$15,843 (888) 682-3036 Churchville, NY STK# CHU70000



USED 2008 Keystone MONTANA 3295 WAS \$53,779 **NOW \$34,995** SAVE \$18,784 (888) 672-5049 Syracuse, NY STK# SYU70404



USED 2005 Fleetwood TRIUMPH 395RL WAS \$47,695 **NOW \$34,995** SAVE \$12,700 (888) 692-9016 Myrtle Beach, SC STK# MB125365



USED 2008 Coachmen CHAPARRAL 331RLTS WAS \$48,897 **NOW \$35,995** SAVE \$12,902 (888) 682-3036 Churchville, NY STK# CHU70644



USED 2008 Alfa SEE YA 35RL WAS \$49,888 **NOW \$35,999** SAVE \$13,889 (888) 542-3819 Mesa, AZ STK# MES14497



USED 2007 Alpenlite ALPENLITE 34RL WAS \$51,277 **NOW \$36,796** SAVE \$14,481 (888) 672-5049 Syracuse, NY STK# SYU71856



USED 2006 Heartland LANDMARK GRAND CANYON WAS \$59,995 **NOW \$36,995** SAVE \$23,000 (866) 673-0250 Statesville, NC STK# STA126376



NEW 2011 Starcraft LEXION S-LITE 315BSSA WAS \$53,530 **NOW \$37,995** SAVE \$15,535 (877) 289-0812 Las Vegas, NV STK# LVN40266



USED 2008 Carriage CAMEO 35FD3 **NOW \$38,900** (888) 844-1758 New Braunfels, TX STK# SW9705A



NEW 2012 Keystone COUGAR 318SAB MSRP \$60,221 **NOW \$39,777** SAVE \$20,444 (888) 828-9906 Lowell, AR STK# LOW17686



USED 2010 Heartland Bighorn 3670 **NOW \$39,995** (888) 668-6715 Katy, TX STK# KAT9900B



USED 2009 Heartland Bighorn 3600RL WAS \$62,900 **NOW \$39,995** SAVE \$22,905 (888) 860-8684 Strafford, MO STK# STR20098



USED 2007 Peterson Industries EXCEL 35RSE WAS \$59,382 **NOW \$39,995** SAVE \$19,387 (888) 896-2801 Albuquerque, NM STK# ARV15748A



NEW 2012 Keystone MONTANA HIGH COUNTRY 323RL WAS \$56,460 **NOW \$39,995** SAVE \$16,465 (866) 673-0250 Statesville, NC STK# STA126010



NEW 2012 Crossroads CRUISER PATRIOT 325CK MSRP \$63,736 **NOW \$44,900** SAVE \$18,836 (888) 844-1758 New Braunfels, TX STK# SW10157



NEW 2012 Keystone MONTANA 3000RK WAS \$63,802 **NOW \$43,988** SAVE \$19,814 (888) 386-5187 Houghton Lake, MI STK# HL6146



USED 2008 Holiday Rambler PRESIDENTIAL 36RLT **NOW \$43,995** (888) 331-1595 Santa Clarita, CA STK# AMRV23087 VIN# 8E176877



NEW 2011 Coleman COLEMAN CTF340RL WAS \$71,881 **NOW \$44,995** SAVE \$26,886 (877) 554-3516 Lakewood, NJ STK# LAK8690



NEW 2012 Keystone FUZION 302 MSRP \$67,452 **NOW \$44,995** SAVE \$22,457 (888) 542-3819 Mesa, AZ STK# MES16400



USED 2006 Carriage CARRI LITE 36XTRM5 WAS \$62,995 **NOW \$45,995** SAVE \$17,000 (866) 775-0682 Roanoke, VA STK# ROA13811



NEW 2012 Keystone MONTANA 3150RL WAS \$66,826 **NOW \$46,895** SAVE \$19,931 (888) 682-3036 Churchville, NY STK# CHU69995



NEW 2012 Dutchmen INFINITY 3000RL WAS \$80,992 **NOW \$47,495** SAVE \$33,497 (888) 819-7952 Longmont, CO STK# KC112196



USED 2010 Keystone MONTANA 3075RL **NOW \$47,995** (888) 853-4034 Redding, CA STK# RED26430 VIN# A4700315



USED 2005 Forest River DAY DREAMER 37 **NOW \$48,851** (888) 480-3175 Sacramento, CA STK# SAC24473 VIN# 5P192603



NEW 2012 Dutchmen INFINITY 3520MS WAS \$75,817 **NOW \$48,995** SAVE \$26,822 (888) 819-7952 Longmont, CO STK# KC112172



NEW 2012 Keystone FUZION 322 WAS \$73,788 **NOW \$49,526** SAVE \$24,262 (866) 755-9604 Charleston, SC STK# CHN127824



NEW 2011 Keystone MONTANA 3400RL WAS \$74,057 **NOW \$49,895** SAVE \$24,162 (888) 242-0293 Madison, WI STK# MAD15462



NEW 2012 Dutchmen INFINITY 3250RL WAS \$73,494 **NOW \$49,995** SAVE \$23,499 (888) 463-3995 Colorado Springs, CO STK# KC211610



NEW 2012 Keystone MONTANA 3455SA
 WAS \$80,313 **NOW \$51,965** SAVE
 \$28,348 (888) 903-6787 Harrisburg, PA
 STK# HAR69989



NEW 2012 Keystone
MONTANA 3400RL
 WAS \$75,999 **NOW**
\$52,848 SAVE
 \$23,151 (888) 457-
 4801 Colfax, NC STK#
 CFX3944



NEW 2012 Dutchmen INFINITY 3850RL
 WAS \$84,551 **NOW \$52,995** SAVE
 \$31,556 (888) 819-7952 Longmont, CO
 STK# KC112165



NEW 2011 Keystone MONTANA 3455SA WAS
 \$79,243 **NOW \$54,995** SAVE \$24,248 (877) 289-
 0812 Las Vegas, NV STK# LVN38432



NEW 2012 Keystone MONTANA 3580RL
 WAS \$79,351 **NOW \$54,896** SAVE
 \$24,455 (866) 502-8238 Bath, NY STK#
 BAT69986



NEW 2011 Coleman COLEMAN CTF340RL
 LIST PRICE \$79,740 **NOW \$54,995** SAVE
 \$24,745 (877) 834-0429 Bakersfield, CA
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COUNTRY 313RE WAS \$89,340 **NOW**
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 CO STK# KC211903



NEW 2011 Keystone MONTANA 3580RL
 MSRP \$82,193 **NOW \$57,824** SAVE
 \$24,369 (888) 614-5201 Draper, UT STK#
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FUZION 405 MSRP
 \$94,502 **NOW \$57,860**
 SAVE \$36,642 (888)
 696-2165 Savannah, GA
 STK# SAV15995



NEW 2012 Keystone MONTANA 3402RL
 WAS \$87,240 **NOW \$63,995** SAVE
 \$23,245 (877) 439-7857 Conway, NH
 STK# CNW23879



NEW 2012 Keystone MONTANA HIGH
COUNTRY 343RL WAS \$67,333 **NOW**
\$56,855 SAVE \$10,478 (877) 439-7857
 Conway, NH STK# CNW23877



NEW 2012 Dutchmen VOLTAGE 3900
 WAS \$92,895 **NOW \$64,995** SAVE
 \$27,900 (888) 865-1507 Hamburg, NY
 STK# BUF70396



NEW 2012 Dutchmen VOLTAGE 3600
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 \$30,905 (888) 668-6715 Katy, TX STK#
 KAT10137



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2007 Starcraft STARCRAFT 1900DBS	LAC21905	\$10,995	\$8,995	(888) 378-1057
2005 Keystone SPRINGDALE 189	FRV11148	\$10,995	\$8,995	(888) 568-2177
2001 Fleetwood MALLARD 24J	MER26152	\$11,995	\$9,858	(888) 254-9145
2000 Newmar KOUNTRY STAR 30RKCL	CNW23253	\$12,999	\$9,989	(877) 439-7857
1994 Weekend Warrior WEEKEND WARRIOR 18	MER23635	\$12,995	\$10,858	(888) 254-9145
2008 Columbia Northwest A-LINER EASE	CNW23255	\$14,778	\$11,977	(877) 439-7857
2004 Fleetwood WILDERNESS 270FQS	STA126384	\$15,995	\$11,995	(866) 673-0250
2003 Fleetwood WILDERNESS 31G	MER25219	\$16,995	\$13,858	(888) 254-9145
2011 Keystone HIDEOUT 26BH	FAY24942	\$18,654	\$14,995	(888) 713-4351
2010 Palomino PUMA 26RLSS	KS9330A	\$18,428	\$14,995	(888) 454-1707
2008 Flagstaff SUPERLITE 26RLS	STR17706B	\$21,250	\$15,995	(888) 860-8684
2005 Western Rec ALPENLITE 26RB	KC511998B	\$19,995	\$15,995	(866) 415-9726
2006 Fleetwood PROWLER 300FQS	HAR71183	\$19,995	\$15,995	(888) 903-8787
2006 Jayco EAGLE 308 FBS	CLE20540	\$22,545	\$16,995	(866) 996-3140
2011 Keystone OUTBACK 210RS	FAY24943	\$24,960	\$19,990	(888) 713-4351
2007 Keystone HORNET 29RLS	GRW326624	\$24,995	\$19,995	(866) 754-7302
2011 Coachmen FREEDOM EXPRESS 295RLDS	GB41591	\$26,725	\$21,995	(888) 674-0275
2011 Keystone FUZION 230	TAL41457	\$32,995	\$26,995	(888) 902-8565
2011 Keystone OUTBACK 250-RS	CHN126664	\$34,590	\$27,896	(866) 755-9604

NEW TRAVEL TRAILER TOWABLES

YEAR/MANUFACTURER/MAKE/MODEL	STOCK #	LIST	NOW*	PHONE NO.
2012 Coleman COLEMAN CTS14FD	RAL20752	\$14,890	\$10,995	(888) 868-1486
2012 Coleman COLEMAN CTS274BH	COL16292	\$19,896	\$15,995	(888) 848-7312
2012 Coleman COLEMAN CTE184	SAV16053	\$22,839	\$16,986	(888) 696-2165
2012 Coleman COLEMAN CTU183QB	LAC21665	\$22,973	\$16,995	(888) 378-1057
2012 Starcraft AUTUMN RIDGE 245DS	LIT17640	\$25,611	\$19,777	(888) 727-2952
2011 Coleman COLEMAN CTS264RL	DCW8513	\$26,419	\$19,997	(888) 474-1330
2012 MVP RV IMPACT 18SS	VAC18839	\$25,531	\$20,146	(888) 479-3568
2011 Keystone SPRINTER 255RKS	GR125408	\$26,888	\$20,492	(888) 484-3906
2011 Crossroads SLINGSHOT 23CK	GR128286	\$26,647	\$20,492	(888) 484-3906
2011 Crossroads SLINGSHOT 23CK	JAC37710	\$27,695	\$20,741	(866) 648-5288
2011 Keystone BULLET 200EXP	KY37365	\$28,508	\$21,733	(888) 641-0925
2012 Dutchmen ASPEN TRAIL 2910RLS	GRV507473	\$28,160	\$21,955	(888) 471-3546
2012 Jayco JAY FEATHER ULTRALITE 24T	KC512032	\$28,000	\$21,995	(866) 415-9726
2012 Keystone SPRINTER 272BHS	WDS16373	\$30,616	\$22,850	(888) 815-7523
2012 Keystone PASSPORT 280BH	FLG19214	\$30,227	\$22,995	(877) 371-2412
2012 Keystone BULLET 246RBS	ORV16813	\$30,550	\$23,335	(888) 617-5406
2012 Keystone SPRINTER 266RBS	GR125943	\$29,995	\$23,492	(888) 484-3906
2012 Heartland PROWLER 32PBHS	TAL40985	\$32,518	\$23,995	(888) 902-8565
2011 Keystone SPRINTER 277RLS	CB115346	\$31,955	\$23,995	(866) 820-0335
2012 Dutchmen RUBICON 1905	FTM21895	\$31,011	\$23,995	(888) 625-5187
2012 Keystone SPRINTER 277RLS	CB115825	\$32,311	\$23,999	(866) 820-0335
2012 Keystone COUGAR 24RLS	HL6057	\$31,880	\$24,988	(888) 386-5187
2012 Dutchmen RUBICON 1905	ROA15701	\$31,368	\$24,995	(866) 775-0682
2012 Keystone SPRINTER 308BHS	KC211779	\$33,434	\$24,997	(888) 463-3995
2012 MVP RV IMPACT 24FS	KC211913	\$30,703	\$24,997	(888) 463-3995
2012 Keystone PASSPORT 2910BH	KS8760	\$31,876	\$25,498	(888) 454-1707
2011 Keystone SPRINTER 277RLS	KY37403	\$34,831	\$26,980	(888) 641-0925
2013 Heartland WILDERNESS 2650BH	RAL21862	\$37,568	\$27,699	(888) 868-1486
2011 Dutchmen COLORADO 290BH	OCA19154	\$34,853	\$27,889	(877) 774-0328
2012 Keystone SPRINTER 310KBS	GRV507468	\$35,407	\$27,985	(888) 471-3546
2012 Crossroads SUNSET TRAIL 28FL	BAT70136	\$36,672	\$27,995	(866) 502-8238
2012 Keystone OUTBACK 250RS	CHN126162	\$37,310	\$27,998	(866) 755-9604

NEW TRAVEL TRAILER TOWABLES (CONT'D)

YEAR/MANUFACTURER/MAKE/MODEL	STOCK #	LIST	NOW*	PHONE NO.
2012 Keystone LAREDO 297RL	GRV507831	\$37,157	\$28,998	(888) 471-3546
2011 Jayco OCTANE ZX T29A	SLV23366	\$46,951	\$37,375	(877) 834-0429
2012 Keystone FUZION 301	FTM21931	\$58,664	\$44,995	(888) 625-5187

USED FIFTH WHEEL TOWABLES

YEAR/MANUFACTURER/MAKE/MODEL	STOCK #	LIST	NOW*	PHONE NO.
1999 Coachmen CATALINA 24RKS	HIL40476	\$12,950	\$9,988	(888) 859-6653
2003 Northwood ARCTIC FOX 29-5T	CNW23248	\$17,669	\$13,989	(877) 439-7857
2002 Gulf Stream MAKO 28FRBW	GRW326632	\$18,995	\$13,995	(866) 754-7302
2006 Jayco EAGLE 291RLTS	OCA19192	\$23,995	\$18,995	(877) 774-0328
2008 Newmar CYPRESS 29KSRE	AVO14457	\$25,988	\$19,999	(888) 348-5909
2008 Keystone COPPER CANYON 329SLS	TAL41700	\$27,995	\$21,995	(888) 902-8565
2006 Sunnybrook MOBILE SCOUT 31BWFS	AVO14593	\$29,888	\$22,888	(888) 348-5909
2005 Forest River CARDINAL PLAT 33RL	SU71324	\$31,233	\$23,495	(888) 672-5049
2007 Keystone MOUNTAINEER 342PHT	CFX4266	\$32,995	\$25,998	(888) 457-4801
2007 Fleetwood ADVANTAGE M-345BHTS	AVO14590	\$36,990	\$29,998	(888) 348-5909
2007 Heartland LANDMARK SHENANDOAH	MES13837	\$42,988	\$32,898	(888) 542-3819
2007 Jayco DESIGNER 38RDQS	POR37624	\$44,950	\$34,988	(888) 850-5575
2009 Keystone RAPTOR 3602RL	CFX3844	\$53,999	\$39,998	(888) 457-4801
2009 Keystone MONTANA 2980RL	LAK8710	\$53,053	\$41,999	(877) 554-3516
2008 Heartland BIGHORN 3670RL	MES13519	\$59,875	\$44,811	(888) 542-3819
2010 Coachmen BROOKSTONE 346SA	LAC21413	\$56,995	\$46,995	(888) 378-1057
2009 Forest River SHOCKWAVE 40QSSP	STA126187	\$57,995	\$46,780	(866) 673-0250
2012 Yellowstone RIDGELINE 36REQ	CLE19463	\$63,464	\$46,995	(866) 996-3140

NEW FIFTH WHEEL TOWABLES

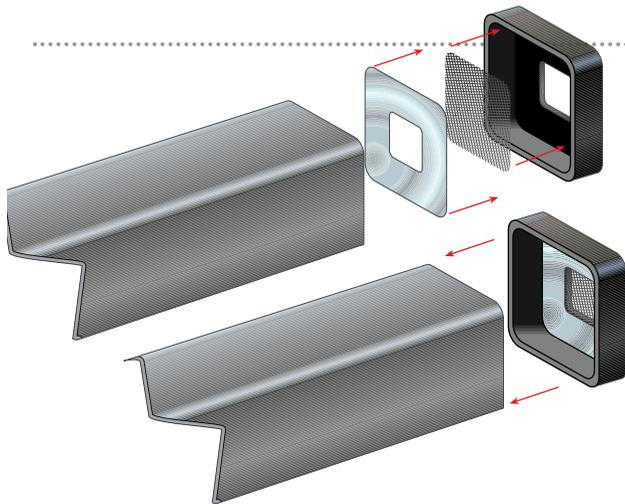
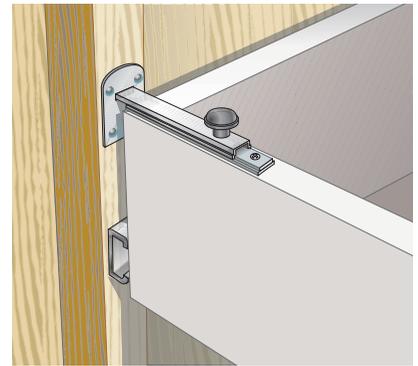
YEAR/MANUFACTURER/MAKE/MODEL	STOCK #	LIST	NOW*	PHONE NO.
2011 Coleman COLEMAN CTF267BH	WDS15684	\$34,185	\$26,688	(888) 815-7523
2012 Coleman COLEMAN CTF267BH	SAV16078	\$36,274	\$27,862	(888) 696-2165
2012 Keystone SYDNEY 275FBH	SAV15609	\$36,989	\$27,869	(888) 696-2165
2011 Coleman COLEMAN CTF267BH	VAC17595	\$37,591	\$28,888	(888) 479-3568
2012 Keystone SYDNEY 275 FBH	KS8217	\$37,517	\$29,995	(888) 454-1707
2012 Coleman COLEMAN CTF325RL	HL6014	\$41,614	\$30,988	(888) 386-5187
2012 Winnebago LITE FIVE 28FWBHS	GB40803	\$38,995	\$30,995	(888) 674-0275
2012 Keystone COUGAR 246RLSHE	LAK8733	\$42,002	\$31,999	(877) 554-3516
2012 Coleman COLEMAN CTF259RE	SLV22037	\$43,884	\$33,923	(877) 834-0429
2012 Keystone LAREDO 316RL	GRV507256	\$45,585	\$34,887	(888) 471-3546
2012 Heartland SUNDANCE 3200RE	LC15932	\$50,000	\$36,995	(888) 905-0490
2012 Dutchmen DENALI 278RKX	AMRV22627	\$48,643	\$36,995	(888) 331-1595
2012 Keystone LAREDO 324RL	GRV507261	\$51,529	\$37,955	(888) 471-3546
2012 Keystone COUGAR 28SGS	LOW20644	\$50,467	\$40,777	(888) 828-9906
2012 Keystone SYDNEY 349FRL	MAC17694	\$54,050	\$43,500	(888) 801-3226
2012 Dutchmen KOMFORT 3130FRL	SW10078	\$59,555	\$44,900	(888) 844-1758
2013 Heartland GREYSTONE 30MK	RAL21843	\$67,551	\$51,889	(888) 868-1486
2012 Keystone MONTANA 3150RL	FAY25425	\$71,408	\$53,600	(888) 713-4351
2012 Jayco PINNACLE 36REQS	KCS11751	\$71,784	\$54,995	(866) 415-9726
2012 Dutchmen INFINITY 3520MS	SW10011	\$75,439	\$55,900	(888) 844-1758
2012 MVP RV DESTINY 325RL	LVN39308	\$71,342	\$57,995	(877) 289-0812
2011 Keystone RAPTOR 4014LEV	LVN41225	\$78,959	\$59,995	(877) 289-0812
2011 Keystone RAPTOR 3812TS	LVN41224	\$77,353	\$59,995	(877) 289-0812
2012 Keystone RAPTOR 3912LEV	MB125611	\$75,675	\$59,995	(888) 692-9016
2012 Heartland BIGHORN 3455RL	DOT41497	\$81,462	\$64,995	(888) 450-7060
2012 Dutchmen VOLTAGE 3905	KAT9646	\$92,066	\$69,900	(888) 668-6715

*Government fees, state taxes, title, license and dealer fees as applicable will be added to comply with state vehicle codes. Sales tax not applicable in OR. In Arizona, prices plus doc. fee of \$399 and pre-delivery inspection. In California, prices not inclusive of government fees and prep charge, finance charge, or emissions testing charge. Freight costs vary by state. Not applicable in CA, OH, AR, TX or OR. In Arizona, Texas and Arkansas, 'List Price' is equal to 'MSRP'. Inventory and floorplans vary by location. VIN numbers posted at dealership. Advertised inventory available at time of printing. Void where prohibited by law. Offer valid at any Camping World RV Sales or FreedomRoads dealer only. Dealer not responsible for typographical errors. See dealer for details. Offers expire 8/31/12. FRO18631-0612

Drawer Tamer

We have two drawers in our travel trailer that acted as a battering ram on the cabinet door that conceals them while traveling on winding mountain roads. On our last outing the drawers successfully knocked the door off the cabinet, ripping the door off at the hinges. To fix this problem I installed slide locks on the top left corners on both drawers (I bought these at Home Depot). These slide locks come with a small metal plate that attaches to the wall and the latch fits snugly inside the plate. I used wooden match sticks to fill the holes where the hinge screws once were, and was successful in reinstalling the hinge screws in their same location.

Ken Steele, Lakewood Calif.



Bee Blocker

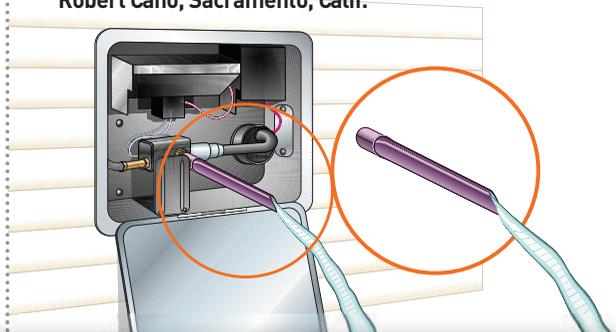
To keep bees and other nest-building insects out of my bumpers, I designed a bumper cover that's an effective barrier against bees, wasps and hornets. I took a piece of rain gutter cover and cut it into four 3-by-3-inch pieces. Placing a small screen inside, I used Loctite Construction Adhesive and glued the gutter inside to attach to the bumpers. I then sprayed them black. The cost is less than \$10, and it works.

Thomas J. Carter, Sumter, S.C.

Draining Under Control

We like to drain our hot water tank often, but we don't like the water splashing all over the ground and onto the unit's components. I used to make a funnel out of a plastic milk carton or bleach container to direct the water. One day, while my wife was vacuuming, I got the idea to use the corner attachment to aid in the hot water tank draining procedure. The round end of this long, plastic attachment (to connect to the vacuum hose) fits perfectly over the drain in the water heater. The attachment is installed after removing the plug. Some water will flow at first, but the greater flow will follow after opening the pressure-relief valve. This simple vacuuming tool allows us to direct the draining water to the ground without making a huge mess, and the attachment is always clean.

Robert Cano, Sacramento, Calif.



QUICK FIX

A Dry Idea

For 20 years we have been RVing around the country, and like so many we have been in that situation of asking ourselves, "What do we do with a wet raincoat, soggy beach towels, etc.?" A very simple solution we found has been to install a spring-tension type curtain rod temporarily in the shower stall to hang these wet items up so they can drip dry in the shower. I have noted that in some new trailers and motorhomes a place for a rod such as this has been installed just for that purpose and it should be a standard feature. **Jim Wright, Goldendale, Wash.**

To send your submission, write to: 10-Minute Tech, 3300 Fernbrook Lane N, Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN 55447 or email: 10minutetech@trailerlife.com. Please include an illustration or photo if applicable. *Trailer Life* will pay you \$35 for original 10-Minute Tech ideas.

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Western Stars

Rising Fast and Bright



Mounted on a stone pedestal beside State Route 79 in Arizona is a black-iron silhouette of a rider-less bronco. It marks the spot where Tom Mix — star of silent movies and a noted circus performer — was killed. In 1940, 17 miles south of Florence, Ariz., Mix was driving alone and apparently ignored a warning sign that the bridge over the gully was out. He stopped fast and the aluminum suitcase he positioned in the backseat went flying forward hitting him in the back of the head as he crashed through a road barrier. He was 60 years old. The 1937 Cord he was driving ended upside down in a gully that's now called Tom Mix Wash.

I came upon this site 10 years ago en route to Tucson. It's hard to miss. The road here is long and flat, surrounded by desert scrub and an occasional cactus. The iron statue even has several bullet holes in it.

Seeing this marker — count it among the discoveries we make in our travels — was like walking in at the end of a movie. It leaves us with more questions than answers.

While standing in the Tom Mix Museum in Dewey, Okla. I would think that a namesake museum should rightly be where the guy grew up. Not so. Tom Mix grew up in Pennsylvania. This is where his third wife, Olive Stokes, grew up. He came here in 1909 and was the town marshal for a while. A man who lived fast and restlessly, he had five wives and may well have had more, if he lived longer.

Mix made his living with horses throughout his life. He started out as a cowboy working all over the West, and later lived here in Oklahoma. A life-sized likeness of his most famous horse, Tony, is the centerpiece of the museum.

One display tells of his stint in the Army, serving in the Spanish-American War. It says eventually "he left without telling Uncle Sam good bye."

"The Army still lists him as a deserter," Dwane Price, secretary of the museum's board, told me.

Leaving the army without notice makes it hard to enter a community leadership role, so it's strange that Mix was ever given the position of marshal.

"That was 1912. Guess you'd say the information age never caught up with him. Actually the marshal job was kin to being a security guard."

"He made 339 movies between 1910 and 1935, all but



A life-sized likeness of Tom Mix's famous horse, Tony, is a focal point at the Tom Mix Museum. A bullet-punctured black-iron rider-less bronco stands in Arizona, where Mix died in 1940.

five or six were silent films — mostly 'one-reelers' that ran about 15 minutes. When 'talkies' came in, he bowed out. Some say he was self-conscious about his voice. Actually, it was a matter of ill-fitting dentures. They often clicked unpredictably when he talked."

With his movie career over, he became a circus performer. During the 1930s, he organized Tom Mix's Circus and Wild West Show.

"People who visit the museum now say they remember the Tom Mix radio show and its 'Straight Shooter Club,'" Price recalled. "An actor played Tom, but Tom did make public appearances promoting the show and its sponsor, Ralston Purina."

Mix has a place in American history, he defined a genre of cowboy movies and was the first of the megastars in Hollywood westerns.

When an injury caused football player John Wayne to drop out of USC, it was Tom Mix who got Wayne a job moving props on the back lot at Fox Studios. And we know how the rest of that story goes.

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