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RV Q&A



TRAVEL

Indiana's
First City

Idaho's Mile-
High Retreat

Nova Scotia's
South Shore

Paradise Found!

32 Must-Haves for the
Ultimate RV Patio

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McCall, Idaho



➤ Livin' Lite's all-aluminum QuickSilver toy hauler is available in nine color choices. Page 10

Summer RV Travel Is in Full Swing

Making reservations early is the key to getting a campsite during the busiest times of the year



I have written about the phenomenal growth of RVing since the end of the recent recession, and it is exciting to see...to a point. While we love welcoming RVers to our ranks, the great number of newbies means it can be a challenge to find campsites, especially during the peak seasons of summer nationally and winter in the South. The campground industry is working hard to increase campsite inventory, and developers are trying to build new campgrounds, but the approval process can be difficult.

While the industry is making strides, RVers must learn to plan ahead to get the sites they want, when they want them. Sometimes that means making reservations a year in advance for the most popular spots, during the most popular times, whether at privately owned campgrounds or national and state parks. For full-timers who need a place to stay every night of the year, this is particularly challenging, and many find that booking well in advance makes their travels more stress-free. Finding sites in July can be especially tricky, as they fill up with families on summer vacations and RVers making the most of the long Independence Day weekend.

For those spending the Fourth of July in the Midwest this year, George Rogers Clark National Historical Park in Vincennes, Indiana, is a great place to visit. As America celebrates its 241st year, Pamela Selbert travels to the former Fort Sackville (page 56), the British outpost that was the site of a 1779 battle that "assured United States claims to the frontier, an area nearly as large as the original 13 states," according to the National Park Service. Then Emily Fagan takes us to the south shore of Nova Scotia for another lesson in North American history (page 64), as Canada commemorates its 150th year with a celebration of its own.

For this month's cover story, Kevin Livingston tours the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada range towing the new Lance 2375 with the Nissan Titan XD Pro-4X with the Cummins turbo-diesel powerplant (page 18). This well-suited pair takes luxury and ruggedness to a whole new level. Crossing California to the coast, Donya Carlson reviews the Airstream Classic 30, another adventure in luxury (page 38).

Wherever the road takes you, the Good Sam Club has some useful travel-planning resources. The annual *RV Travel & Savings Guide*, the Good Sam website (www.goodsamclub.com) and the associated Good Sam Camping mobile app can help with finding RV sites in all areas of North America. If you're a Good Sam member, you have online access to a complete trip-routing system, powered by Rand McNally. Itineraries created on the Good Sam website can then be forwarded to your Rand McNally RV GPS.

On behalf of the entire staff at *Trailer Life*, happy Fourth of July, and may your summer be filled with memorable RV trips. 🚐

— Chris Dougherty, Technical Editor

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Keeping Up with Columbia

Thanks for "Columbia's Foundation," the great article in the May issue about Columbia, Missouri. As a lifelong resident, I know all the places Pamela Selbert wrote about. I also know she couldn't possibly mention everything we have to offer, but I would like to bring a few more to fellow readers. First, if you are on the Francis Quadrangle at the University of Missouri, you are only a stone's throw away from Shakespeare's Pizza. It is a favorite of residents as well as college students. Another local favorite is Booches with what some say are the best hamburgers around. Just a short drive east of town, off I-70, is Serenity Valley Winery. Columbia is home to several microbreweries as well. And lastly, located at the intersection of I-70 and U.S. Route 63 is Pine Grove Village, a Good Sam Park.

Kent Bower, Columbia, Missouri

Stars in Their Eyes

We love your magazine and generally read it from cover to cover. Many of the park and exploration articles have enriched our wanderings, and the technical articles capture my husband's attention.

Since we live in eastern Washington, specifically Pullman, home of the WSU Cougars, we are very familiar with the Columbia River Gorge described in Bobbie Hasselbring's May article, "Simply Gorge-ous." We have driven through the gorge on both sides of the Columbia River and have visited Oregon's Crown Point and many of the waterfalls listed in the article, as well as Washington's Maryhill State Park, Maryhill Museum of Art and Stonehenge.

Also on the Washington side in that general area is a small state park in Goldendale that has one of the only public astronomic observatories in the United States. The park's original 24½-inch Cassegrain reflecting telescope was built and donated to the city by some avid recreational astronomers and opened to the public in 1973. In 2016 the telescope was renovated and updated to a Newtonian scope, which is better for visual and photographic use. There is also a telescope for solar viewing. We have visited the park a number of times. It is an experience that is not to be missed.

Dot Newkirk, Pullman, Washington

After upgrading its impressively large public telescope last year, Goldendale Observatory State Park is now renovating the rest of its facilities, with new exhibits expected to open next spring. In the meantime, the park is open Friday through Sunday, with astronomy shows at 4 p.m. (solar) and 8:30 p.m. (night sky) running through September. For details, go to www.goldendaleobservatory.com. — Editors



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANHEUSER-BUSCH



I enjoyed Pamela Selbert's article on Columbia, Missouri. Our daughter lives there, and we visit frequently. It is a lovely town. One highlight that was missed is Warm Springs Ranch, about 20 miles west of Columbia. It is owned and maintained by Anheuser-Busch, and is the breeding ranch for the company's Clydesdales. We were fortunate to see a newborn Clydesdale on our visit. The facility is first-class. Tours are heavily booked, so plan ahead or hope for a cancellation. Yes, tasting and souvenirs are available at the conclusion of the tour.

Dennis Herling, Seabeck, Washington

Pamela Selbert enjoyed her tour of Warm Springs Ranch so much that

she devoted a separate article to it. See "Horsin' Around in Missouri" in June's Around the Bend section or on www.trailerlife.com. — Editors

Clean Fuel, Happy Customer

Thank you for "Clean Fuel, Happy Engine," Bill and Jenn Gehr's great article on the Ford 6.7-liter engine and associated water problems in the December 2016 issue. After reading the article, I ordered a DieselSite water separator and filter kit. I had corrosion problems with the valves on the bowls, and after contacting DieselSite, they are sending replacement parts. This is a great company, and the people are very helpful, understanding and professional. The customer service is by far the best that I have dealt with.

Gary Mohr, Monroe City, Missouri

Searching for Slideouts

Do you know of a website that allows you to search for RVs by length and slides? I'd like to buy a used RV, but it is difficult to find one as short as I need with at least one slide.

Jeanne Griffith, Oxford, Nebraska

The RV Buyers Guide website, www.rvbg.com, produced by Trailer Life and MotorHome, allows users to search for RVs by type, make, price, length and year, going back to 2003. Although slideouts isn't a search field, linked floorplans for each model show the number of slides, their position and length. — Editors

TALK TO US! Write to: *Trailer Life*, 2750 Park View Court, Suite 240, Oxnard, California 93036 or email info@trailerlife.com. Please include your full name and location.



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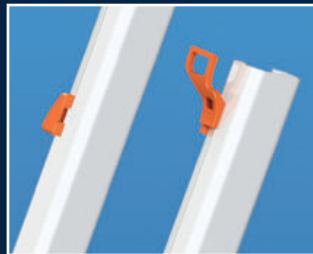
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Metal travel locks shown open (left) and closed (right).



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The Spam Museum recently moved to a 14,000-square-foot facility that offers interactive videos and hands-on exhibits (right), Spam trivia and self-guided tours.



Spam Turns 80

The Spam Museum in Austin, Minnesota, highlights the history of the meat that has fed people on every continent for the past eight decades

article by Pamela Selbert

Born of frugality, resourcefulness and a touch of genius, an American food icon turns 80 this year. In 1937, with the Great Depression still under way, Jay Hormel of Hormel Foods — a firm his father, George, had founded 45 years earlier — used his culinary wizardry to turn “meat with no flavor” into a classic.

With the plan to create a budget-friendly, shelf-stable protein, one that didn't require refrigeration, the younger Hormel blended pork shoulder (previously considered “undesirable”) with ham, salt, sugar and spices. The resulting product was a luncheon meat that would become so popular it even merited its own museum.

But it needed a name, so a competition was held. The \$100-prize-winning name “Spam” was suggested by Kenneth Daigneau, brother of a Hormel vice president. Though the tongue-in-cheek myth persists that Spam is an acronym for “Scientifically Processed Animal Matter,” the name is just a combo of “spicy” and “ham.”

Some folks like to poke fun at Spam, such as two visitors overheard at the museum:

“What's in Spam, anyway?” asked one. “Nobody knows,” menacingly quipped the other.

British comedy group Monty Python spoofed the product in a skit, but Spam takes it all with good humor, even including a clip of the skit in a museum exhibit.

Jokes aside, Spam has been called a lifesaver. In 1941, Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act to provide aid to allied forces, and soon the United States was sending Spam to Britain and Russia at the rate of 15 million cans a week. Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev credited it with keeping his army alive, and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher remembered it as a “war-time delicacy.” Spam has also famously fed American soldiers, and civilians have long enjoyed the “meat of many uses,” now available in 15 flavors.

Over its eight decades, roughly 10

billion cans of Spam have been sold, and 3.8 cans are consumed every second in the United States alone. It's sold on every continent including Antarctica, and every day 19,000 hogs become Spam, filling 396 cans per minute.

The Spam Museum moved to a new site in downtown Austin, Minnesota, last year. The 14,000-square-foot facility offers self-guided tours and dozens of exhibits, many of them interactive videos, games or hands-on, plus lots of Spam trivia. Volunteer guides, called Spambassadors, offer visitors bites of Spam on toothpicks.

Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. Admission is free.

Spam Museum

507-437-5100, www.spam.com/museum

Two RV parks are about 32 miles away in Owatonna:

Hope Oak Knoll Campground

Open April 15 to October 15
507-451-2998

River View Campground

Open mid-April until mid-October
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www.riverviewcampgroundminnesota.com

Hi-Yo, QuickSilver!

Built in Shipshewana, Indiana, Livin' Lite's all-aluminum QuickSilver toy hauler comes in flashy colors — orange, yellow, red — or subtle — silver frost, light pewter, charcoal gray — among others, in lengths from 24 feet 2 inches to 33 feet 11 inches. The QuickSilver's frame is aluminum, as are the cabinets and the tongue-and-groove floor with D-rings bolted into it for holding down your motorized toys. With no wood in the structure of the trailer, the QuickSilver is lightweight and durable, with unloaded weights starting at under 4,000 pounds, plus it's easy to clean.

A new floorplan will join the eight others this fall, all of which feature residential Trek freeze/crack-proof linoleum,



The QuickSilver 8.5x24FBA all-aluminum toy hauler can sleep up to six with the standard fold-up dinette and sofa bed. Standard is a queen bed; optional is a second HappiJac queen bed.



solid-surface countertops, a portable composite dinette table, 6-cubic-foot refrigerator, convection microwave and an all-aluminum shower surround. Dual-pane Euro windows can open at any angle, and the cabinets have airplane-style latches so they won't come open when bouncing down a back road. Off-road versions are available with larger all-terrain tires and higher clearance.

Freshwater capacity is 38 gallons in the smaller models and jumps to 63 gallons for the 28-foot 4-inch 8.5x24FBA and larger QuickSilvers. The 8.5x24FBA, for instance, has a 14-foot 8-inch garage area for toys, a claimed cargo carrying capacity of 3,944 pounds and a base MSRP of \$31,143. Livin' Lite, 800-768-4016, www.livinlite.com

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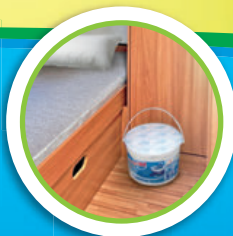
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Denver's Wild Rides

The Mile High City in the shadows of the Rocky Mountains brings together thousands of people every summer for fun bicycle rides. Cruise along downtown Denver with costume-wearing cyclists to take in the sights, enjoy the city's many parks and green spaces, and meet other like-minded people in a festive environment. Denver Cruiser Ride end locations are kept secret — just follow the leaders along the route — but expect laughter, kooky outfits and a bit of a workout. The monthly wild rides around Colorado's capital take place July 19 (Velorama Presents Rock Stars and Party Animals), August 9 (Dress Night) and September 20 (Ski Bums and Snow Bunnies). Meet-ups are from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Gin Mill at 2041 Larimer Street, with the rides starting at 8:15 p.m. Denver Cruiser Ride, www.denvercruiserride.com

Stay, Play, Splash and Swim

Lovers of water-related activities can get their fill at Jellystone Park Camp-Resorts in Mannford, Oklahoma, and Kerrville, Texas, and other parks this summer. The Oklahoma campground has added two 100-foot-long waterslides and a pair of swimming pools to its RV park on the banks of 25,000-acre Keystone Lake. A massive floating aqua-park playground is also on site with climbing structures, obstacle courses, slides and floating trampolines. Mannford, near Tulsa, is surrounded by open and wooded land, and the park will remain open until September 10 this year.

Jellystone Kerrville, with more than 200 RV sites, is in the heart of Hill Country along the Guadalupe River. An almost 20,000-square-foot water zone opened Memorial Day weekend and features three waterslides, two kiddie waterslides, two water cannons, 13 water blasters and a 750-gallon elevated Hydro Storm water tank that periodically dumps water on those who wander beneath.

Check the Jellystone website for other parks with water adventures. Tabor City in North Carolina plans to open a 10,000-square-foot interactive water-play structure this summer, and Burleson, Texas, offers neighboring Pirate's Cove, a 26,000-square-foot water-play park. For a wet and wild adventure, load up the RV and pack your swimsuits. Jellystone Park Camp-Resorts, www.campjellystone.com



Keystone Lake Jellystone Park, Mannford, Oklahoma.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KEYSTONE LAKE-JELLYSTONE PARK, MANNFORD, OKLAHOMA

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Save on Family Fun

Couponsforfun.com offers discounts and coupons for family and cultural attractions. The website's new user-friendly design makes it easier to find offers at more than 400 attractions in 22 states. Planning a family vacation? Check out savings at theme and amusement parks, zoos and aquariums, sporting and educational events, museums, balloon adventures, vintage-train rides, bicycle rides, riverboat cruises, tours, whitewater adventures and much more. New attractions are added periodically, so keep watching the website.
couponsforfun.com

Oregon's Banana Belt Festivals

One of the country's premier annual kite-flying events takes place in Brookings along the southern Oregon coast. Known for good weather, the area has scenic rivers and forests, and a wealth of outdoor activities. This year the Southern Oregon Kite Festival is July 14 to 16, and offers free admission and parking. Demonstrations by professional kite teams and displays from kite makers highlight the event. There will be gifts and craft shops, vendors and booths, kids' kite making, eats and treats, and fun for the whole family.
www.southernoregonkitefestival.com

While in Brookings, stay for another family-friendly event, the Festival of Art in Stout Park, August 5 and 6. Scheduled are booths with art displays, jewelry, pottery, metal work, music and activities for kids. A food court with microbrews and wine is open during the 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. event.
541-469-1807, www.wilddriverscoastart.com/art_festivals_and_events.html

Nearby RV Camping

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www.driftwoodrvpark.com

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www.portside-rvpark.com 🚐

NEWSWIRE

DESIGN AWARD



Auto-Inflating OPUS Camper

OPUS Camper, based in California's San Francisco Bay area, announced the selection of the Air OPUS in Good Design Australia's prestigious design awards (the winner will be announced after this goes to press). OPUS competes in the Automotive and Transport category with design icons that include the Tesla Model X. The self-inflating folding camper uses galvanized rubber inner tubes that erect it in two minutes, for a claimed total setup time of five minutes. A built-into-the-unit compressor, running off two 110Ah 12-volt batteries, fills the tubes to a pressure able to withstand 55-MPH winds.

The Good Design jury stated that the Air OPUS offered, "Genuine innovation at a surprisingly affordable price."
www.opuscampers.us

MILESTONE



Grand Design Hires 1,000th Employee

Grand Design RV, headquartered in Middlebury, Indiana, crested the 1,000th employee mark in the first half of 2017. The company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Winnebago Industries, manufactures travel trailers, fifth-wheels and toy haulers. The company entered the RV market in January of 2013 and constructed a new Plant 6 that opened its doors for production late last year.

"Our employees are what make this company thrive and are ultimately responsible for our unprecedented growth. It's such an honor to be able to make a difference in the community and have so many dedicated team members that call Grand Design home," stated Don Clark, president and CEO of Grand Design RV.
www.granddesignrv.com



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Hello? Is Anyone Listening?

Feeling ignored when the manufacturer of his fifth-wheel didn't respond to phone calls and emails, a Canadian reader reached out to RV Resolutions for help:

► I have been a reader of *Trailer Life* for many years and always take an interest in RV Resolutions. However, it never occurred to me that one day I would be submitting a request for your assistance in resolving my own warranty problem.

We purchased a new K-Z Durango Gold 370RL from Bucars RV Centre in Calgary, Alberta, in April 2015. Having barely used the trailer during 2015 because of medical issues, we finally set out on a five-week tour of western Canada in June 2016. I noted during our travels that all four tires were prematurely wearing on the outside edge, with the front passenger's side being the worst.

Upon our return, I contacted the Bucars warranty department and advised them that the trailer had only 6,500 miles on it and this was not normal tire wear. The decision was made to take the trailer to Summerland RV Centre, our local dealer in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia, rather than towing it nearly 400 miles back to Calgary.

Summerland diagnosed that the camber was out of alignment on all four points and provided this information to the warranty department at K-Z. I subsequently was advised that the manufacturer would pay a maximum of \$600 to correct the problem, presumably for one new axle and two tires. My immediate concern was that this would correct only half the problem, as all four tires were wearing on the outside edge. I expressed my concern to Summerland, and they advised me to contact the manufacturer directly. I told Summerland to proceed with the work and replace both axles.

I called K-Z's customer-service department on three occasions, each time leaving a message requesting that a representative return my call.

No calls were ever returned. I then sent an email to K-Z outlining my concern. Again, no reply was received.

Exasperated, I spoke with Summerland, and they advised me to contact Bob Carter in K-Z's warranty department, as they had sent all my information to him. I forwarded my original email to Mr. Carter. However, a response was not received. I called Bucars for further direction, and they advised contacting Mark Owens, general manager of customer service. I forwarded my note to Mr. Owens, and to date I have not received any form of communication from the manufacturer. I remain puzzled as to why the company would refuse to contact me as a customer.

We picked up our trailer on September 19, 2016, and paid Summerland for the work. We then purchased four new Maxxis ST tires and had them installed.

When we purchased the fifth-wheel, Bucars emphasized the two-year warranty versus a one-year-warranty of other manufacturers. Disappointingly, the material promoting a two-year warranty appears to be overstated.

I respectfully request that you consider our situation worthy of your intervention.

John Enns

West Kelowna, British Columbia

THE COMPANY RESPONDS

After contacting K-Z on John Enns' behalf, we received an email from the company's customer-service



manager that contained the following reimbursement offer:

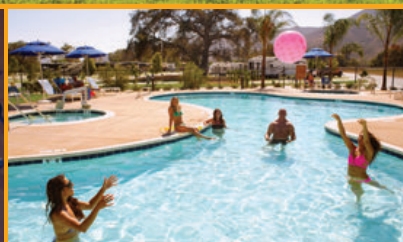
We have been in the process of resolving the issue with John Enns, who is requesting reimbursement for repair of his 2015 Durango Gold 370RL. The process of this reimbursement has taken longer than most due to all the different elements that were involved.

We normally would not participate with a diagnosis of alignment when our warranty states that this is not a covered issue. With that being said, we have taken into consideration Mr. Enns' expressed frustration with no response on several attempts to contact K-Z RV and the miscommunicating of participation from Summerland RV Centre.

As a one-time goodwill offer with the purpose of customer satisfaction, we are willing to make an exception and offer to reimburse Mr. Enns a total of \$1,190.15. A copy of this email will go to Mr. Enns, and we will assume we have come to a solution to this issue. A check will be processed within the next 30 days and mailed to Mr. Enns.

Sharrita Carpenter, Manager
K-Z RV Customer Service
Shipshewana, Indiana 📧

NEED HELP? » RV Resolutions is a forum for the settlement of conflicts between consumers and RV dealers and manufacturers, accessory suppliers and service providers. After exhausting all other resources without success, please send a typed letter to *Trailer Life* RV Resolutions, 2750 Park View Court, Suite 240, Oxnard, California 93036. Include copies of appropriate bills and correspondence as well as a self-addressed, stamped envelope.



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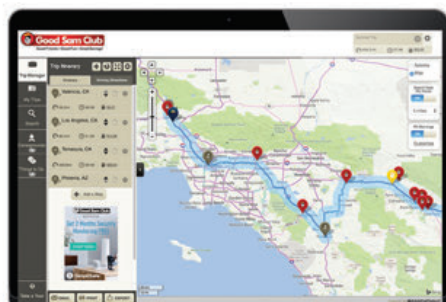
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DREAM IT, MAP IT, GO

Two travel tools tap into Good Sam's deep reservoir of trip-planning data

With travel season in full swing, members can let the Good Sam Club sweat the details on RV trips this summer and beyond. Two free travel tools, the Good Sam Trip Planner and Camping App, put the club's vast resources at members' fingertips for fun, hassle-free road trips. Both tools are easy to use and provide detailed maps, extensive campground information and access to Good Sam's exclusive RV park ratings and member discounts. Simply type in the destination and travel preferences, and Good Sam does the rest.



TRIP PLANNER

Using resources from the Good Sam Club and trusted mapmaker Rand McNally, the Good Sam Trip

Planner plots RV itineraries on the club's website. The online mapping tool harnesses Good Sam's database of 12,000-plus RV parks and services and three-tiered campground ratings, and identifies Good Sam Parks, Pilot Flying J fuel centers, Camping World SuperCenters and other locations that honor member discounts along the route. After searching for RV parks, users can scroll through campground photos, amenities and services, and plan the best route.

► **GET GOING:** From www.goodsamclub.com, select Trip Planner from the Plan a Trip menu and type in your departure place and destination. Trip Planner creates point-to-point directions, and a calculator provides the approximate cost



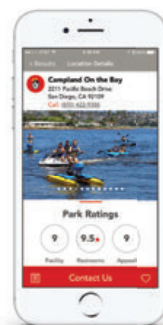
Creating vacation itineraries and making lasting memories is easy with Good Sam's online Trip Planner and mobile Camping App.

of fuel consumption. The search can be filtered to indicate low clearances and propane restrictions, and to find shopping, restaurants and festivals as far as 60 miles from the route. Click on any RV-park map pin, and a pop-up will show campground ratings and amenities. When you choose to include Good Sam Parks along your route, they are indicated by the club's halo-topped mascot.

CAMPING APP

The Good Sam Camping App puts the club's resources to work on smartphones and tablets.

► **GET GOING:** From Apple's App Store or Google Play, load the free Good Sam Camping App to your Apple or Android mobile device. To launch a campground search, enter your destination and filter the results based on preferences that include Pets OK, Swimming, Internet, 50 Amps and Open All Year. Then select an RV park and click on Map View to find out how to get there. Smartphone users can tap the phone number in each listing to call parks instantly for more information or to make reservations. To zero in on Good Sam Parks and other member-discount locations, tap on the map pins for more information.



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Camping World welcomes the season with a June 22 through 25 sales event at its more than 120 retail and service locations. Sponsored by Dometic, the four-day Salute to Summer features special offers on a variety of RV parts and accessories, outdoor gear and newly expanded lines of housewares and pet supplies. Customers receive a free pair of patriotic sunglasses with in-store purchases of \$75 or more, while supplies last. Free lunch will be served June 23 and 24 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

► Visit www.campingworld.com to find Camping World SuperCenter locations, maps and driving directions, and to shop online.

PUMP UP THE FUEL SAVINGS

Just in time for summer RV trips, Pilot Flying J has boosted its fuel discounts for Good Sam Club members. Members can now swipe their Good Sam card at the time of purchase and save 5 cents per gallon on gas and 8 cents per gallon on diesel when filling up at most Pilot and Flying J locations. That's a 2-cent increase on the previous gas savings and a 5-cent bump on the diesel savings.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What form of payment can I use when purchasing fuel?

Use your own choice of payment in conjunction with your Good Sam Club membership card to receive savings at the pump. The discount comes off the cash or credit price, depending on what form of payment you use.

Does the membership fuel discount apply to any amount of gas or diesel?

Yes. The discount applies to any volume of fuel you purchase.

Does the fuel discount apply in the truck lanes?

Yes. To save on diesel fuel when using the truck lanes, prepay inside and have your membership card scanned at the time of purchase. The 8-cent diesel savings at the truck lanes will be taken off the cash or credit price, depending on how you pay. Fuel savings are applied instantly at the pump when filling up in the RV lanes or other fuel lanes, and you do not need to go inside to pay the cashier.

Can I use the "start the pump" feature and get the fuel discount?

Yes. Tell the cashier you would like to sign up for Easy Fuel or Pump Start at the truck lanes using your Good Sam

membership card. You will be required to provide your driver's license. The next time you fill up, insert your membership card in the pump at the truck lanes and enter the store to pay the cashier after the tank has been filled.

Why isn't the fuel discount available in all states?

Laws prohibit fuel discounts in some states.

Why isn't the fuel discount available at some other locations?

Independently owned Pilot Flying and J locations can opt out of discount programs. These locations do not offer Good Sam Club discounts on gasoline, and cashiers will not accept membership cards for fuel savings. Dealer locations do offer the diesel discount at the truck lanes but only for transactions started at the pump.

Do all Pilot and Flying J locations offer RV fueling lanes?

Almost all Flying J locations offer RV lanes. About 40 Pilot locations offer RV lanes. New locations will have RV lanes and other RV amenities such as dump stations and bulk propane.

Note: Other terms and conditions may apply.

HOW TO SAVE AT THE PUMP

Step 1: Insert your form of payment at the fuel pump.

Step 2: Swipe your Good Sam Club membership card (aka "loyalty card").

Step 3: The savings are instantly applied to the fuel purchase.

PILOT FLYING J SAVINGS

Gas/U.S.....	5¢ per gallon
Diesel/U.S.....	8¢ per gallon
Gas and Diesel/Canada	1¢ per liter
Dump-Station Fees.....	\$2.50
Propane	5¢ per gallon

► Visit www.goodsamclub.com/pfj or www.pilotflyingj.com, or download the Pilot Flying J mobile app, myPilot, for more information and to find Pilot and Flying J locations that offer gas and diesel discounts and those that offer diesel discounts only. With a network of locations throughout North America, Pilot Flying J is the official fuel provider and travel center of the Good Sam Club.



Ⓢ DID YOU KNOW? Forty-five years ago, Good Sam published its first guide to RV parks, the 1972 *Recreational Vehicle Owners Directory*. Thirty-nine years later, Good Sam's annual guide merged with the Woodall's campground directory, first published in 1948. Now known as the *Good Sam RV Travel & Savings Guide*, the 2017 edition lists 11,962 RV parks and campgrounds.

Half-Ton Heaven

Achieving towing Nirvana with the lightweight Lance 2375 and the Nissan Titan XD Pro-4X

In some cultures, personal journeys are measured by spirituality and success in finding inner peace and harmony. Although not quite as thought-provoking, RV enthusiasts spend a great amount of time seeking an ideal truck-and-trailer union, especially if they have narrowed the field to the modern half-ton truck and a lightweight towable. When the right combination is selected, the result is usually a heavenly experience resulting in satisfaction and enjoyment of the lifestyle. The Lance 2375 rear-lounge trailer hitched up to Nissan's Titan truck will certainly make you a believer that not all things in life happen by accident.

Peering deeper into this nearly perfect pair reveals the nuts and bolts of the 2375, the newest and largest to date of Lance's lightweight travel trailers. From an aesthetic standpoint, the smooth and streamlined exterior lines intersect nearly flawlessly. Aside from the excellent fitment where multiple materials mate, the trailer's walls are finished with tasteful graphics and a uniquely styled rear cap and front gravel guard.

To bring this trailer to life, the Huck-bolt-assembled frame serves as a base that's destined to eliminate weak and rust-prone welds. The frame rides on rough-road-absorbing rubber-



torsion independent-suspension Dexter axles with EZ Lube bearings and self-adjusting brakes. Stylish aluminum five-point wheels wrapped with relatively standard 205/75R14 tires connect the axles to the asphalt. This combination proved to not only be roadworthy but flexed its muscles off-pavement with grace and confidence.

All the belly region areas have four-season protection with strategically placed insulation and heating of all three holding tanks and their associated plumbing parts. Rounding out the frame features are BAL electric stabilizer jacks at all four corners, an electric hitch jack and the unique Tri-Five Propane Tank. This system utilizes three 5-gallon LP-gas cylinders that can quickly and easily be exchanged at multiple locations throughout the United States, almost eliminating the need to hunt down a propane filling station. The powered stabilizer jacks are a convenient feature, but having

two locked compartment doors on either side of the trailer for housing the switches, with only one main power switch, takes orientation and a little exercise walking from side to side.

Building the home portion on the chassis takes advantage of precision alignment of an aluminum wall structure. All Lance products are subjected to stringent assembly guidelines by employing CAD- and CNC-designed and -operated cutting, bending and laminating equipment. Building in this manner ensures that the walls, cabinetry and all included interior items end up where they're supposed to be. This sort of building technique also allows for such close tolerances that both the exterior and interior walls require no tape or gap concealers, providing essentially a near-perfect fit and finish.

The same kind of detail goes into laminating the walls, substituting standard lauan for plastic-based composite Azdel, which is layered behind the outer fiberglass and on either side of the dense solid-foam insulation. The panels have three times the insulation value and half the weight of wood, and are impervious to water, so they will not rot, mold or delaminate side walls, according to Azdel. This is all processed in a state-of-the-art room that uses special

lights and heating, temperature and humidity controls driven by key sensors.

On the exterior walls, amenities are placed where they work best and look clean. Such items include a 20-foot lateral-arm Carefree electric awning with a wind sensor and LEDs, frameless dual-pane windows, slam-latch compartment doors and opposing battery boxes built into the walls. This is a good use of space, freeing up the area for the triple-LP-gas-cylinder configuration. Topping off the outer structure is a one-piece molded TPO roof backed by a healthy 12-year limited warranty.

During a weeklong trip in the lower regions of California's Sierra Nevada range, the 2375 lived up to Lance's reputation as one of America's premium truck-camper and lightweight-trailer builders. What you won't find aboard the 2375 is an over-appointed interior with gaudy decor. Instead, the trailer is thoughtfully designed and loaded with just the right amount of features — everything you need and nothing you don't for going out and creating your personal adventure.

The 2375 was fitted with the Passage decor package, which exudes a home-away-from-home atmosphere. A highlight is the optional laziness-inspiring J-couch near the entryway.



(Left) Lance's longest lightweight trailer was easy work for the Nissan Titan XD diesel-powered truck. **(Above)** The small but functional galley is nicely appointed and has ample storage for foodstuffs. A hallway leads to the front bedroom with a queen bed.

This convertible couch is made for serious lounging and has a great view of the entertainment center, but the recliner portion might work better placed in the center of the couch to allow for true reclining rather than providing an upright position with just the legs kicked out. Besides the couch, the only other seating comes in the form of a comfy dinette, nestled snugly in the single slideout and surrounded by the natural brown and gray tones of the cabinetry and countertops.

On the other side of the open floor space is a small but functional kitchen offering a selection of stainless-steel cooking appliances and a matching Norcold 6-cubic-foot refrigerator. The kitchen is outfitted with all the necessities but could benefit from a small folding- or sliding-counter extension. There's no shortage of storage here, with an ample amount of cabinetry fore and aft. Within the confines of the perfectly fit cabinet structure is the aforementioned entertainment center, housing a 32-inch, 12-volt DC Jensen HDTV and matching AM/FM/DVD/CD/USB/Bluetooth audio/video system.

LANCE 2375

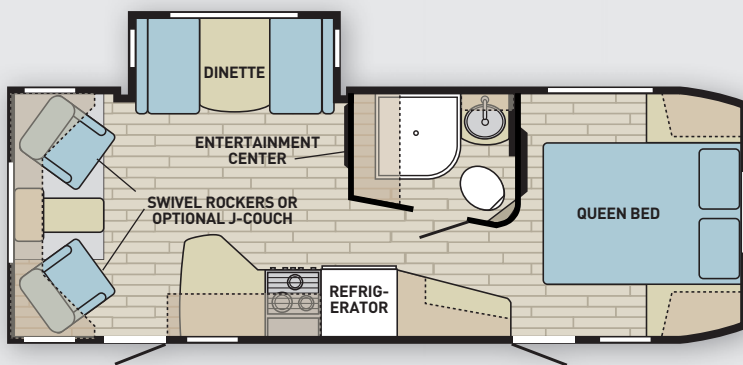


ILLUSTRATION BY BILL TIPTON

Just beyond the reach of the kitchen lies the bathroom and bedroom. The bathroom doesn't offer extravagance or massive free space, but it does provide enough room to do what's necessary. Part of this is thanks to the new curved shower enclosure, giving good looks and greater functional space. Although floor space is somewhat restricted, slight toilet repositioning could be very helpful in keeping the lid open.

Inside the master bedroom, an extra-cozy, serious-slumber-inducing queen bed is located beneath a large curved window and between flanking wardrobes. Each side is

equipped with reading lights and soft-close drawers. At the foot of the bed, near the bathroom, resides an additional lighted double-door closet and extra counter space.

Indoor creature comforts are supported by a ducted 25,000-Btu furnace and a centrally located 15,000-Btu air conditioner, both of which are controlled by the same wall-mounted digital thermostat. The wide array of LED lighting includes a dimmable fixture over the dining table.

Given the trailer's generous storage spaces and its modest, at best, 310-pound payload capacity, users will need to be aware of how much cargo

The curved shower enclosure is not only good looking but offers plenty of elbowroom. Floor space is not abundant, but there's enough room to maneuver around the toilet and sink.





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they're hauling to avoid overloading its 6,500-pound gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR).

Out on the road, it was easy to learn that Nissan's diesel-inspired Titan is not just another run-of-the-mill half-ton from Japan trying to compete against the current Big Three and Toyota trucks on the market. This is a much-acclaimed truck, and the Cummins V-8-powered Titan XD Pro-4X Crew Cab was even given the 2017 half-ton truck

(Above left) Wardrobe closets and built-in nightstands flank the cozy queen bed. (Above right) The optional J-couch, in lieu of swivel rockers, is comfortable, but the recliner is restricted by the galley counter. Windows surround the dinette and couch for an open, roomy look.

of the year title by a number of automotive publications. For a time, the rumor mill had this truck headed for extinction, but the resurgence of a top-notch drivetrain has catapulted new life into Nissan's truck entry. There are five levels of Cummins-powertrain-based Titans, and the beefy XD has all the meat

and potatoes expected by truck owners.

The Titan XD is built on a fully boxed ladder-type, corrosion-resistant steel frame. Holding the frame up is a front double-wishbone/coil-over independent suspension tied into a 36mm stabilizer bar, while out back is a multi-leaf spring pack, mounted to a solid



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axle coupled to an 18mm stabilizer bar. At all four corners, additional ride control is handled by Bilstein shocks, standard for the Pro-4X.

Also built right into the frame direct from Nissan are the optional integrated gooseneck and Class 3 receiver hitch along with a Trailer Sway Control (TSC) system. The TSC really strutted its stuff in strong headwinds and crosswinds. During these windy events, the combo maintained straight lines, demanding little effort for correction. For towing, the necessary four-way and seven-way plug receptacles are ready for use in the rear bumper. Once the trailer is plugged in, a light test can be handled by the clever optional trailer-light-check function found on the key fob.

The Cummins-prepped 4x4 Titans are rated to pull a significant 12,030 pounds when properly equipped. In addition to the well-appointed, well-designed frame and the factory towing system, Nissan offers bed-mounted options like the aluminum Utili-track cargo system with adjustable tie-down cleats and removable, lockable in-bed storage boxes that double as coolers and even have drink holders. These items only top the list of usable and realistic accessories earmarked for the truck bed. The truck is rated for a full ton of fun, thanks to its 2,000-pound payload capacity, which, of course, is dependent on accessories and options.

The truck has the first Cummins V-8 turbo-diesel made specifically for the Nissan Titan XD. The optional power plant is a beast, a smaller-scaled version of its bigger cousins. Coupled to the impressively smooth-sounding, -running and -performing 5.0-liter, double-overhead-cam turbo-diesel V-8 is an equally smooth and effective Aisin six-speed automatic transmission. Not only was the Aisin fully capable of harnessing all 310 horsepower and 555 lb-ft of road-ripping torque, it did so with finesse and plenty of optional shifting and tow modes built into the column shifter. Nissan managed to nail the placement and functions of the shift column, making it a breeze to physically move up and down through the gears using a simple fingertip touch for

SPECIFICATIONS

2017 LANCE 2375

Exterior Length	28'
Exterior Width	8' 3/8"
Exterior Height	10' 2"
Interior Width	7' 10"
Interior Height	6' 6"
Construction	Aluminum structure, laminated walls with foam insulation, one-piece tapered TPO roof
Freshwater Cap.	45 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	45/45 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	15 gal.
Water-Heater Cap.	6 gal.
Refrigerator	6 cu. ft.
Furnace	25,000 Btu
Air Conditioner	15,000 Btu
Converter	55 amp
Battery	Dealer installed
Tires	205/75R14K
Suspension	Rubber torsion
Weight (freshwater, water heater, LP-gas full; no cargo)	6,190 lbs.
Hitch Weight	760 lbs.
Axle Weight	5,430 lbs.
GVWR	6,500 lbs.
GAWR	(2) 3,500 lbs.
Cargo Carrying Cap.	310 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$38,816
MSRP, As Tested	\$47,515
Basic Warranty	2 years

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2017 NISSAN TITAN XD PRO-4X CREW CAB

MPG, Solo	18.5
MPG, Towing	13
Engine	Cummins 5.0L V-8 turbo-diesel
Horsepower	310 @ 3,200 rpm
Torque	555 @ 1,600 rpm
Transmission	6-speed auto
Axle Ratio	3.91:1
Fuel Cap.	26 gal.
Tires	LT275/65R18
Suspension, Front	Double wishbone
Suspension, Rear	Multileaf solid axle
Brakes	Disc
Tow Rating	12,030 lbs.
GVWR	8,990 lbs.
GCWR	19,450 lbs.
Weight, As Tested	7,246 lbs.
Length	20' 3 1/2"
Wheelbase	151 1/2"
MSRP, Base	\$52,230
MSRP, As Tested	\$60,250
Basic Warranty	5 years/50,000 miles

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manual gear selection.

The Cummins diesel ran without hiccup or hindrance, providing plenty of power on its own or coupled to the Lance 2375, which weighed in at 6,190 pounds wet; the truck weighed 7,246 pounds. The Titan XD not only pulled the trailer comfortably and with pure confidence, but in the handling and comfort departments, the truck was surefooted, providing plenty of stability and unparalleled ride quality. The Titan is so well-built and ideally balanced for towing, work, play and comfort that it was hard to notice the Lance was behind the truck.

(Above left) The Nissan Titan cockpit comes fully loaded and takes advantage of the latest electronics, including a backup camera for hitching the trailer. (Above center and right) The truck bed is fitted with lockable storage boxes that can double as coolers, with drink holders.

In a nutshell, it was hard to find fault with the Titan's performance. The new Cummins works and runs rhythmically and will probably do so for a long time. However, all that power and pickup were a little too reliant on the turbo to spool up enough to get things going, which meant a little more lag than preferred. The turbo lag was quickly cured by burying the accelerator a bit more, but this method will burn up your hopes for

higher mileage and a lower fuel budget.

Nevertheless, the Titan's fuel economy was pretty good. We recorded 18.5 MPG driving the truck solo at around 70 MPH, and 13 MPG while towing the Lance 2375 in adverse conditions with a steady wind and traveling at about 58 MPH. That's not bad for a half-ton truck that can lay down an impressive 13-second zero-to-60-MPH time while towing the Lance trailer.

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When it comes to comforts, the Titan XD Pro-4X will certainly impress. The cab and interior have lavish leather appointments and the most complete list of accessories we ever wanted or thought possible. For example, the powered multiposition leather seats elicited love at first sit. While comfortably cradled, it's not hard to appreciate the incredible-sounding 12-speaker Rockford Fosgate stereo that's an audiophile's dream on wheels. This was hands-down the best factory truck sound system I've encountered in terms of quality and superb acoustics, with appropriately located speakers placed by car-audio experts.

Another key interior feature is the user-friendly 7-inch touch-screen audio-and-navigation center. The operations of this screen are many, but when it comes to being usable for towing situations, the backup camera with bull's-eye accuracy makes it possible for a person who struggles with hitching a trailer to relax. From the first try, it was easy to place the ball under the coupler alone and with precision.

It wouldn't be all that tough to go on and on about the seemingly endless list of options, but the bottom line is this truck made short work out of towing the Lance and was a ball to drive. It's not surprising that the Titan XD has accumulated best-half-ton-truck status in the media.

By the same token, it's not surprising to see why the Lance 2375 has been getting accolades in its few short months on the market. Some trailers, even with all the best hitch equipment, are prone to sway, causing discomfort during towing, often requiring a person to "really drive" the combination. That's not the case here. With the Lance 2375, it was smooth sailing all the way and one of the best-towing travel trailers we have ever personally pulled, especially coupled with the Titan XD. You'll be hard-pressed to find a better-built or -equipped lightweight travel trailer for the dollar amount, and a bit more available cargo capacity would further sweeten the pot. Pairing the Lance 2375 and Nissan XD will find you in half-ton heaven. 🚚



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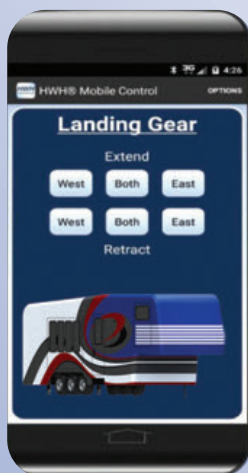
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THE BUZZ ON BUNKHOUSES

As the market for family-friendly RVs heats up, here are a dozen bunk-room floorplans — from easy-towing ultralights to a triple-slide trailer

It took us two years and 50 nights in a pop-up camper to decide that, while we loved RVing, we needed something a bit more comfortable and a lot more spacious. Thus began our search for a travel trailer that could easily sleep a family of four and be safely towed by our half-ton pickup truck. Like so many other RV buyers, we ended up with a lightweight bunkhouse model that has served our needs beautifully, even as we welcomed another baby and a dog into the family.

We're not alone. The popularity of bunkhouse trailers has exploded lately, and the range of sizes, weights and floorplans can be daunting to the first-time buyer. The trick is to narrow the search by asking three important questions:

1. How much weight can I safely tow?

We knew the maximum towing capacity of our truck and limited our search to bunkhouses with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) well beneath that. It wouldn't have done us any good to fall in love with a trailer

that we couldn't tow or use to transport our gear. Remember that the industry defines "light" and "ultralight" as RVs built with lighter-weight components, but not all lightweight trailers can be towed by the family SUV. If you are also thinking about buying a tow vehicle, it may be best to find your dream trailer first, then shop for a new vehicle that's rated to tow the rig and equipped to do so.

2. How many people do I need to sleep?

After making and unmaking beds countless times in our pop-up camper, we knew that dedicated beds were a

high priority for a new travel trailer. We did not want to be converting the dinette or pulling out the jackknife sofa every night at the campground. Making sure everyone has a comfortable place to sleep is one of the most important components of a successful family vacation. Keep in mind that kids do grow, so if your little one is looking crammed on the couch now, imagine the scene next year. Also remember that, while younger siblings might find it fun to share a double bed, tweens and teens will probably not be so flexible.

3. How much gear do I want to bring?

One of the best parts of RV travel is being able to take along all your gear. We travel with bikes, kayaks, cooking appliances, camp chairs and lots of other stuff that makes our time at the campground

Five years ago, Stephanie and Jeremy Puglisi shopped around for the perfect lightweight bunkhouse for their family of four. Since then, they've welcomed their third son and an Australian cattle dog. The selection of bunkhouse floorplans has grown as well, with more choices than ever.

more enjoyable. We also cook many of our meals in the RV, so ample food storage is a must. While shopping, we paid close attention to carrying capacity and interior and exterior storage, knowing that we would be frustrated if the new travel trailer couldn't handle our packing load.

Once you have answered these questions, it's time to start considering the pros and cons of individual floorplans. It is so easy to get swept away by kitchen islands and huge U-shaped dinettes, but often it's the less-noticeable features that have the biggest impact on your enjoyment of the family RV.

For example, few shoppers consider access to the RV when the slides are not open, but this is so important if you want to use the bathroom or prepare lunch at rest stops on the way to your destination. We never imagined that having curtains instead of doors on the bedrooms would end up driving us wild a few years into ownership, so we recommend thinking about noise and privacy concerns before purchasing. People who care deeply about keeping a trailer clean might shop for a bathroom with interior and exterior entrances, whereas people with young children might look for an exterior door that is far from the bunks.

Above all, think about livability. Can your whole family sit together and enjoy a meal or a movie? Can your kids fit comfortably in the bunks without invading each other's space? Is there a place to put the dog bed or crate? These are the things that will matter, much more than the size of the flat-screen TV or the color of the backsplash.

We have enjoyed our lightweight bunkhouse trailer for the past five years, and now there are more of them at RV shows and dealers' lots than ever. Here's a small sampling, from an easy-towing 20-footer to a 37½-foot, double-slideout floorplan with a bunk room where the kids can really stretch out. Have fun finding the perfect fit for your family.



Coachmen Freedom Express Liberty Edition ↗

The heaviest of our featured bunkhouses, the triple-slide **320BHDSLE** provides upscale features and privacy for all family members with wooden doors instead of curtains closing off the master bedroom and the bunk room. In the rear, climbing "rocks" lead to a double-wide bunk that is across from a slideout that houses a futon and a flip-up bunk. Another slide

creates more floor space in the kitchen but does limit the room outside under the 20-foot awning. Near the front, the bathroom allows access from the living area and the master bedroom. A step-in closet to the right of the entry door saves families from unsightly heaps of shoes and jackets. The outdoor kitchen is spacious, with plenty of storage. The nearly 37-foot length will limit campsite options, particularly at national and state parks, an important consideration for some families.

Exterior Length	36' 11"
Exterior Width	8'
Interior Height	6' 9"
Exterior Height	11' 2"
Freshwater Cap.	49 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	33/33 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	10 gal.
UVW, Base	7,952 lbs.
Hitch Weight	879 lbs.
GVWR	10,500 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$42,899

Coachmen RV
800-353-7383, www.coachmenrv.com



Forest River R-Pod ➡

The R-Pod line of lightweight trailers feels young and fresh with head-turning exteriors and creative floorplans that can comfortably sleep families of four while maintaining a small footprint. The 20-foot **RP-182G** comes with a wet bath, two bunks and a U-shaped dinette that converts into a master bed. Some people may find it a nuisance to turn the dinette into a bed every night and restore it each morning in time for breakfast, but for others it will be a compromise worth

making. The nearly 6½-foot ceiling height and kitchen slideout make the interior feel more spacious. The rear garage becomes a well-appointed camp kitchen with a sink, a freestanding gas grill, a TV and a pair of external speakers, all standard, along with hanging wire baskets and cargo nets for holding supplies. With a GVWR of 3,885 pounds, this is a great option for those wishing to tow with an SUV (properly equipped, of course) or stay in snug campsites at national and state parks.

Exterior Length	20'
Exterior Width	8'
Interior Height	6' 5"
Exterior Height	8' 8", 9' 7" with A/C
Freshwater Cap.	36 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	30/30 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	5 gal.
UVW, Base	2,836 lbs.
Hitch Weight	385 lbs.
GVWR	3,885 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$24,419

Forest River

866-837-6044

www.forestriverinc.com/r-pod

Heartland North Trail

The nearly 37-foot **NT KING 33BKSS** features a spacious and comfortable bunk room with two dedicated bunks (one in a slideout), a convertible futon, an entertainment center and ample storage. The rear window and two smaller ones keep the room bright and cheerful. Many families will appreciate the exterior bathroom door, which allows use of the facilities without tracking dirt through the main living area. Up front, the master bedroom has a walk-around bed with nightstands and reading lights, as well as an entertainment center that rotates from the living room. Some cooks will enjoy the double sink and pull-out faucet in the kitchen island, while others might prefer more island counter space. The kitchen slide creates a roomy interior but



limits space outside under the awning. The outdoor galley comes with a sink, a refrigerator and an optional grill.

Exterior Length	36' 10"
Exterior Width	8'
Interior Height	6' 8"
Exterior Height	11' 6"
Freshwater Cap.	52 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	42/42 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	10 gal.
UVW, Base	7,595 lbs.
Hitch Weight	695 lbs.
GVWR	9,600 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$39,500

Heartland Recreational Vehicles

877-262-8032

www.heartlandrvs.com

Highland Ridge Open Range Ultra Lite

The **UT2802BH** stretches nearly 32 feet and offers a bunkhouse floorplan that is becoming increasingly popular for families. A curtained-off bunk room with double-over-double beds stands side by side with the bathroom at the rear of the trailer, and the private master bedroom is up front, separated by a sliding wooden door. An entry door next to the bunk room and a large slideout that holds the sofa and convertible U-shaped dinette allow

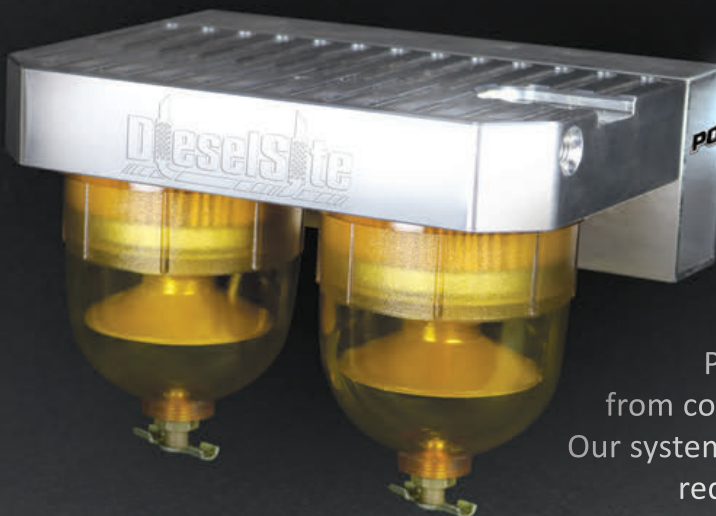
for an L-shaped kitchen that creates a wide-open living area. Families with young children and pets will particularly appreciate this spacious room (think Pack 'n Plays and dog crates). An exterior door gives direct access to the bathroom. While some people will love the extra entry to avoid tracked-in dirt, others will not appreciate the bathroom storage that is lost because of it. An exterior compartment door lifts to reveal a small refrigerator, a sink and a two-burner cooktop for easy outdoor meal prep.

Exterior Length	31' 9"
Exterior Width	8' 1"
Interior Height	6' 10"
Exterior Height	10' 11"
Freshwater Cap.	45 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	29/58 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	15 gal.
UVW, Base	5,765 lbs.
Hitch Weight	510 lbs.
GVWR	7,450 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$29,943

Highland Ridge RV

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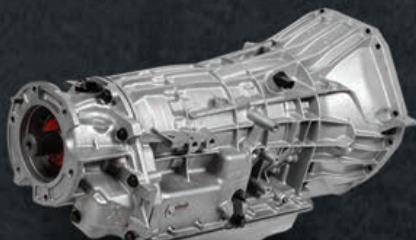
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THE BUZZ ON BUNKHOUSES

Jayco Jay Flight SLX ➡

A small footprint, nimble weight and affordable price make the 21½-foot **174BH** a popular option for those seeking an easy-towing entry-level bunkhouse. There is no slideout, but the layout still manages to feel roomy, tucking twin bunks into the rear alongside the bathroom and placing a large window in the front over the queen-size bed. The kitchen offers plenty of counter space, a microwave and a two-burner cooktop but no oven. The dinette seats two adults comfortably, so families should bring a couple of chairs or plan to eat outside



under the 10-foot awning while at the campground. Other than that, the trailer is ideally suited for a family of four but can accommodate a fifth person, as the dinette converts into an additional bed.

Exterior Length	21' 6"
Exterior Width	7'
Interior Height	6' 1"
Exterior Height	8' 11"
Freshwater Cap.	20 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	19.9/19.9 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	5 gal.
UVW, Base	2,945 lbs.
Hitch Weight	280 lbs.
GVWR	3,500 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$13,193

Jayco
574-825-5861, www.jayco.com

Keystone Bullet ➡

At 37½ feet, the **330BHS** is one of the largest lightweight bunkhouses on the market, and Keystone has made the most of that, creating sleeping spaces that truly feel like separate wings. Up front, the master suite has a laundry chute for easily transferring dirty clothes into the pass-through storage area below, and a second door offers direct access to the full bathroom, which also has a door from the living area. The bunk room contains its own half-bath, double-over-double beds, a dresser, double wardrobes and an exterior door so the kids can come and go without messing up the rest of the trailer. A large slideout houses the sofa and dinette, and the entertainment center is nicely positioned for viewing from both. A smaller slide on the opposite side holds the refrigerator, range, microwave and cabinets. The kitchen island has a double sink and more storage space yet still allows plenty of counter space for food prep.

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Exterior Length	37' 6"
Exterior Width	8'
Interior Height	6' 6"
Exterior Height	10' 11"
Freshwater Cap.	43 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	60/60 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	10 gal.
UVW, Base	6,850 lbs.
Hitch Weight	810 lbs.
GVWR	8,600 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$32,862

Keystone RV

866-425-4369, www.keystonerv.com

K-Z Connect

The 36-foot-plus **C332BHK** keeps the popular double-over-double bunks with curtains in the rear but moves the bathroom toward the front, creating a more private master suite for the parents. A slideout in the master bedroom allows for more wardrobe and linen storage. The L-shaped kitchen counter makes room for appliances such as coffeemakers and toasters, and

provides a convenient spot by the door for keys, caps and leashes. The entertainment center is placed diagonally against the bunks, and this creates a bit more privacy in the kids' bedding area while offering better TV sight lines from the slideout-housed sofa and U-shaped dinette. The entry side has a 19-foot awning, storage space and an outdoor kitchen with a small fridge, a two-burner cooktop and a sink. With



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ST235 / 80R16 - 10PR*

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THE BUZZ ON BUNKHOUSES



a base unloaded vehicle weight (UWV) of 7,200 pounds (no options, water or propane) and a GVWR of 8,800 pounds, this trailer may not allow you to pack as much cargo as there is room for, so crunch the numbers on your gear.

Exterior Length	36' 8"
Exterior Width	8'
Interior Height	6' 6"
Exterior Height	10' 11" with A/C
Freshwater Cap.	40 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	32/64 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	10 gal.
UVW, Base	7,200 lbs.
Hitch Weight	950 lbs.
GVWR	8,800 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$33,778

K-Z RV

866-472-5460, www.kz-rv.com

Lance 2185 ➔

The 2185 offers something practically unheard of in the industry: three single bunks in a lightweight trailer that is well under 30 feet. Located in the rear, the bunks fold up for transporting bikes or other big gear. This model has a lot of the desirable features available in larger bunkhouses. For example, it has two exterior doors, one up by the master bedroom and one toward the rear. The bathroom has a good-size shower and a separate sink near the rear entry door. Some people will like being able to brush their teeth when the shower or toilet is occupied, but others may prefer doing so in private. Housed in the single slideout, the huge U-shaped dinette converts to a bed



for two. For those who miss having a couch, the walk-around queen bed can be exchanged for an optional sofa sleeper. The holding tanks are large for a trailer this size, making this a good fit for families looking to boondock.

Exterior Length	25' 8"
Exterior Width	8' 3/4"
Interior Height	6' 6"
Exterior Height	10' 2"
Freshwater Cap.	45 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	45/45 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	10 gal.
UVW, Base	4,380 lbs.
Hitch Weight	730 lbs.
GVWR	6,000 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$35,481

Lance Camper

661-949-3322, www.lancecamper.com

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Northwood Nash ➡

The **25C** bunkhouse has a similar floorplan to the Lance 2185 but without the third bunk in the rear. Other differences include an extended kitchen counter, a lower price point and 3 more feet in length. As with the Lance, the sink is outside the bathroom, and the master bedroom is closed off from the main living area by a curtain. Again, like the Lance, there are two exterior doors, one toward the front and one toward the rear, and the U-shaped dinette is in a deep slideout and offers plenty of seating room. Note that it may be difficult to see the entertainment center from some of the seats, so keep that



in mind if TV-viewing is a priority. Both the master bedroom and bunk room have designated wardrobes, and the entire bunk and bathroom area can be curtained off for privacy. For camping year-round, the trailer comes with cold-weather insulation, heated and enclosed holding tanks, and optional thermal-pane windows.

Exterior Length	28' 8"
Exterior Width	8'
Interior Height	6' 6"
Exterior Height	11' 6" with A/C
Freshwater Cap.	40 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	35/42 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	14 gal.
UVW, Base	5,145 lbs.
Hitch Weight	555 lbs.
GVWR	8,000 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$29,712

Northwood Manufacturing
800-766-6274, www.northwoodmfg.com

Starcraft Autumn Ridge ⬇

Approaching 32 feet, the **289BHS** features one of the more popular bunkhouse floorplans. Curtained-off double-over-double bunks with a convenient ladder are in the rear, and a master bedroom is up front with an optional pocket door. The sofa and U-shaped dinette are housed in a slideout that creates a large, open area. Options are available for ordering a jackknife sleeper sofa or a trifold hide-a-bed to boost the sleeping space. An extending countertop is a nice feature, creating more working space in the kitchen, and the pantry and wardrobe provide ample storage. Outdoor living is enhanced by an 18-foot awning, and an exterior refrigerator keeps cold food and beverages at hand.



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Toward the rear, an exterior door offers access to the bathroom, a feature that will be appreciated by some parents but not by others.

Exterior Length31' 9"
Exterior Width8'
Interior Height6' 9"
Exterior Height11' 3" with A/C

Freshwater Cap.....62.6 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap..... 32.5/32.5 gal.
LP-Gas Cap..... 15 gal.
UVW, Base 6,527 lbs.
Hitch Weight 675 lbs.
GVWR..... 8,500 lbs.
MSRP, Base Around \$38,000

Starcraft RV

800-945-4787, www.starcraftrv.com



Venture RV Sonic Lite

The **SL169VBH** comes with a convertible Murphy bed, a feature that is growing in popularity for good reason. The pull-down bed allows this 21-foot-plus bunkhouse trailer with no slideout to comfortably sleep a family of four and provide ample living and dining space during the daytime. In the morning, the 60-by-75-inch bed folds up into the trailer wall, converting the space into

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THE BUZZ ON BUNKHOUSES

a flexible area with a couch, a couple of chairs and a freestanding table. The two bunks in the back stretch across the full width of the trailer, and a rear hatch allows for easy loading of cargo, including bikes, into the bunk area. The full bathroom with a tub is another family-friendly feature, along with ample wardrobe and pantry space for a trailer of this size. With a GVWR of 4,000 pounds, this is one of the lighter bunk models on the market.

Exterior Length	21' 4"
Exterior Width	7' 6"
Interior Height	6' 10"
Exterior Height	9' 5"
Freshwater Cap.	38 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	30/30 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	5 gal.
UVW, Base	2,990 lbs.
Hitch Weight	410 lbs.
GVWR	4,000 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$19,350

Venture RV

888-988-8440, www.venture-rv.com



Winnebago Minnie Plus

The 30½-foot 27BHSS boasts a bunkhouse floorplan, but the real story is its distinctive styling, inside and out. Winnebago has chosen to ignore industry norms and offer bold exterior color options like red, orange, yellow and green. Inside, the layout feels light and airy, thanks to a domed ceiling, light wood decor and neutral fabric choices.

The master bedroom features a residential queen-size mattress, a standout feature in the lightweight trailer market. The layout also places the entertainment center directly across from the sleeper sofa and dinette for comfortable viewing. This single-slideout floorplan is similar to the Highland Ridge UT2802BH but without the exterior bathroom door, which gains storage and counter space. An outdoor kitchen and a large 20-foot awning contribute bonus living space.



Exterior Length	30' 7"
Exterior Width	8'
Interior Height	6' 8"
Exterior Height	10' 10"
Freshwater Cap.	50 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	28/69 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	15 gal.
UVW, Base	6,500 lbs.
Hitch Weight	640 lbs.
GVWR	8,800 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$37,113

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RV CLOSE-UP



CUTTING-EDGE CLASSIC

Time-honored Airstreams may look the same on the outside, but step inside the Classic 30 to modern luxury complete with Ultraleather furniture, radiant heating and a welcoming floorplan

Like many Americans, Airstream trailers take me back to my childhood. I can clearly remember piling into the back of the family station wagon with my sisters and our dog, and a 16-foot Aristocrat in tow. As our parents took in the passing scenery, we kids made a game out of who could spot the next Airstream — “Turtles,” as we called them. Turtles were fascinating to us and somewhat of an anomaly (of course, we didn’t know the word “anomaly” back then), so we’d bombard my dad with questions: “Why do they look like that?” “What are they like on the inside?” “Can we get one?”

“Are we there yet?”

Whether or not you’re a fan of the Airstream’s iconic all-aluminum finish, there’s no disputing its aerodynamic, wind-cutting design. The company claims that it hasn’t strayed from its original concept of making travel trailers that are fuel-efficient and easy to tow since they first came on the scene 86 years ago. I know I feel a tug of nostalgia when I see an Airstream trailer, so when given an opportunity to review one, I jumped at the chance. Full disclosure: We did not tow this particular trailer, as Airstream had provided a test unit for us that was already placed at Ocean Mesa at El Capitan, a campground with RV hookups on the outskirts of Santa Barbara, California.

I arrived at Ocean Mesa, where the Airstream was set up at an

The Airstream Classic 30 has a cheerful feel with its well-lit galley, light Sandalwood Corian countertop with uncrowded work space, warm-toned Cognac Maple cabinetry and overall spacious living area that made us feel right at home.

ocean-view site. I carried in supplies, bedding and way too much food. After all, I wanted to be prepared, since my two guests would be checking in at different times. A couple of nights would be spent with my husband, Bill, who would then be replaced by my friend Jill. A 31-foot, 3-inch Classic 30 awaited, glinting in the sun. The Classic series (30 and 33), which Airstream redesigned in 2015 and describes as having “the richest history of any Airstream travel trailer,” is available in two lengths with sleeping accommodations that include a queen bed or two twins.

Setting foot inside the Airstream via the curved entry, we noted the three hooks where you can check your coat by the door, a nice feature. We opened the adjustable pleated day/night shades, which smoothly glided around curved windows, to get a better view of the elegant, homey and now-bright interior. A rich-looking Ultraleather sofa in Chestnut takes up the front wall of the spacious living area, while cabinetry in Cognac Maple complements the Sandalwood Corian galley countertops and aluminum walls.

Rivets grace the Classic’s ceiling (6 feet 7½ inches at center) and all areas of aluminum that aren’t covered by cabinetry and such. One of our favorite features was the master digital panel that controls all the excellent LED lighting (together or individually, interior and exterior), as well as the patio awning, water pump, tank heater and monitors, bed lift, powered dinette table and even the bathroom fan.

The inviting galley with an expanse of countertop between the Dometic three-burner range and large single-basin stainless sink made me want to whip out a chef’s knife and prepare something fun and tasty. With the sink covers in place and the flip-up counter extended, the large continuous countertop is perfect for setting up food buffet-style. There’s a gap behind the counter to accommodate the Alde hydronic heating system (new for 2017), so even though there’s a lip to prevent things from falling over the edge,



There’s no mistaking the aluminum-clad Airstream. While this icon’s exterior hasn’t changed much since its debut in the 1930s, inside are state-of-the-art appliances and amenities.

you still need to take care not to lose smaller items.

Below the range are three drawers, which can be replaced with an oven at no charge, should you decide to forgo the extra storage. Interior

lighting automatically comes on when opening the cabinets, and that saying about an Airstream’s curved cabinets not fitting a cereal box is true! Cabinets are plentiful, however, and there is lots of storage space,

AIRSTREAM CLASSIC 30

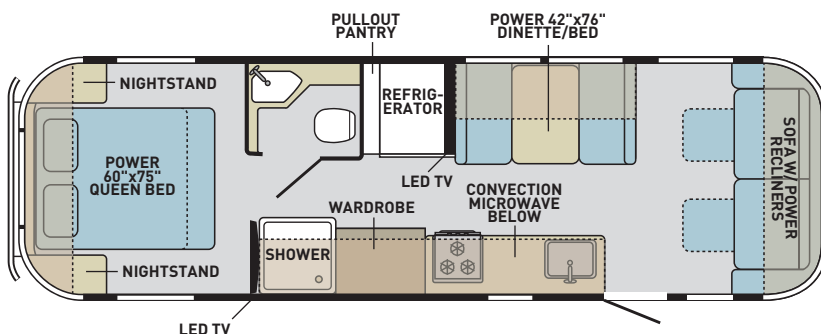


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Dual tempered, tinted windows over the dinette allow occupants to enjoy the view while dining. The dinette converts into a bed via the telescoping table with the press of a button.

including a pullout pantry with wire shelving for cans and another cabinet with a wire rod to keep items in place during travel.

A Cuisinart microwave-convection oven with a grilling feature is mounted below the counter (at kid level), which made it handy to monitor food when sitting at the dinette. Jill arrived ready to bake double-chocolate brownies and eyed the Cuisinart apprehensively, but the convection feature baked them so perfectly that she whipped together another batch the following evening. (Obviously, we weren't dieting on this trip.) A two-way, 9-cubic-foot refrigerator with a digital display takes up the wall opposite the range.

Another feature we really liked

was the Infinity woven-vinyl flooring (with a 10-year warranty). The marine-grade flooring looks like a high-quality indoor/outdoor mat and was easy to sweep clean. A waste bin under the sink keeps trash out of sight.

Over the dinette and grouped by the master panel is the control for the heating system (housed under a dinette bench) and Polk stereo. Since the DVD player and controls for the trailer's two air conditioners are housed in an overhead cabinet, it might make more sense to swap the stereo and A/C controls so they're grouped by category, but that's a nit-pick. Beginning with the 2016 travel-trailer line, the air conditioners feature what Airstream calls Quietstream, a

(Below left) Powered footrests add more comfort to the plush Ultraleather sofa. Cushions for the dinette bed are stored in the sofa's armrests. (Below right) Windows surround the walk-around queen pillow-top memory-foam mattress. Controls raise and lower the head of the bed.



ducted climate-control system with integrated ceiling vents for reduced interior noise. The Alde hydronic heating system works off electric and LP-gas for quiet operation, plus it heats the trailer's water.

The Airstream's tempered, tinted windows (solar protection on the front window) open outward and have a double-cam latching system. Figuring out the various open-and-close detents took some practice to position in the highest open position, but once in place, a nice cross-breeze cooled the interior considerably, with help from the Fan-Tastic Vent with thermostatic control and a rain sensor.

Turning on the stereo, we relaxed in the living room on the plush Ultra-leather sofa and kicked up our feet via powered footrests. USB ports are inset into the power-control buttons for the footrests, and a push-button panel operates the lights (with dimming feature). The lights can also be turned on independently. Speakers are incorporated next to the overhead cabinetry (as they are in the bedroom, as well). The sofa's center fold-down table safely held our array of snacks and drinks, but the back of the sofa is fixed against the wall so it does not recline. From our tranquil seating, there was a clear view to the 32-inch Samsung smart HDTV over the dinette.

Cushions for transforming the four-place dinette into a bed are stored out of the way in the sofa's armrests, though getting them out was easier than putting them back in. The best way was to sit on the floor and use my bare feet to stuff the cushions in place. It was worth the work, because the bed was pretty comfy, plus it was a breeze to set up with the telescoping table that moves up and down with the press of a button.

For an even more comfortable sleeping experience, the bedroom has a walk-around pillow-top memory-foam queen bed surrounded by large windows. I loved sitting up in bed in the morning and looking outside. Controls to raise and lower the head of the bed and for lighting are located under the overhead cabinet for easy

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RV CLOSE-UP

reach. There's lots of headroom, so 6-foot-4-inch Bill didn't have to worry about knocking his noggin on the cabinet when sitting up.

The Classic's second HDTV, a 24-incher, is at the foot of the bed, and there's a USB port and GFCI receptacle on the wall by one of the nightstands. The nightstands have storage and are contoured to match the Airstream. The day/night shades work well to darken the inside during daylight hours, so those who like to catch a quick nap during the day will appreciate them.

Additional storage is provided by drawers underneath the bed or by lifting the mattress platform via hydraulic struts for access. A portion of the underbed storage is also accessible from the outside. Hanging clothes are accommodated by a cedar-lined wardrobe in the galley area that features automatic lighting and a safe in the floor. Also housed here are two camp chairs that come standard with the Classic.

An accordion privacy screen closes off the bathroom and bedroom from the galley, making a good dressing area and offering privacy when going back and forth between the bathroom and shower across the aisle. The roomy bathroom features a large skylight (with shade), plenty of lighting and space to spread out lotions, potions and towels on the countertop. There is good storage here as well, including a tilt-out laundry-hamper, and luxuries such as a heated towel bar and floor, courtesy of the Alde system. Seams and rivets stand out on the aluminum walls, and with a full-size mirror on the door and a large wall mirror, our colorful towels reflected all around.

The bathroom's curved aluminum wall, combined with a single non-opening elongated window, is how I picture the inside of a space shuttle to look. We made it a habit to wipe down the area around the sink where water splashed up on the aluminum wall and mirror to avoid water spots. The shower, with a heated floor, is a bit tight and has only about 6 feet of headroom, but features

MANUFACTURER'S SPECIFICATIONS*

2017 Airstream Classic 30

Exterior Length	31' 3"
Exterior Width	8' 5½"
Exterior Height (with A/C)	9' 9½"
Interior Width	8' 1"
Interior Height	6' 7½"
Construction	Semi-monocoque construction, aluminum skin riveted to aluminum frame; fluorocarbon-treated UV-protected aluminum exterior; temperature-reducing one-piece aluminum roof; thermal barrier protection between interior and exterior; 5/8" tongue-and-groove wood subfloor
Freshwater Cap.	54 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	39/37 gal.
LP-Gas Cap. (2)	10 gal.
Water-Heater Cap.	3 gal., continuous operation, integrated into Alde hydronic system
Refrigerator	9 cu. ft.
Furnace	34,000 Btu
Air Conditioner (2)	15,000 Btu/13,500 Btu with heat pump
Converter	50 amp
Battery (2)	Group 27 12 volt
Tires	LT225/75R16
Suspension	Torsion axle
Dry Weight	7,760 lbs.
Dry Hitch Weight	773 lbs.
GVWR	10,000 lbs.
GAWR	7,788 lbs.
Base MSRP	\$135,600
As-Tested MSRP	\$137,800
Basic Warranty	24 months

Airstream

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*Provided by Airstream

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an opaque glass door so it doesn't feel so claustrophobic. An integrated seat and handheld removable Kohler showerhead are pluses.

Evenings were spent outside under the huge powered awning with LED lighting that runs almost the full length of the trailer. The porch light offers an inviting ambience, and the lighted handrail is probably the niftiest

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RV CLOSE-UP



The roomy bathroom has a heated towel bar, a tilt-out laundry hamper and a stylish Corian countertop with room to spread out bath accessories. A shower is across the hall.

one I've seen. During the day, manual awnings over the windows, front and rear, and on the driver's side help keep the interior cooler, and the Classic looks welcoming with all the awnings out.

The test unit had two Zamp Slim Line 80-watt solar panels (\$2,200 option). Two 10-gallon LP-gas cylinders are housed on the A-frame under an aluminum cover, forward of the Classic's stainless-steel rock guards. The trailer has power stabilizing jacks at each corner. Sixteen-inch Michelin tires ride on rubber torsion axles.

All these years later, I finally got to experience a "Turtle" for myself. I admit to being enamored with this Airstream because it reminded me of happy camping adventures with my family. That aside, we were impressed with the Classic's spacious and inviting living accommodations, room-to-spread-out kitchen and storage aplenty. With just the right mix of charm and elegance, the Airstream Classic 30 has a relaxed and friendly style where you can feel comfortable kicking back and putting your feet up on the furniture. 🐢

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For many RVers, summer vacations are highlights of the year, time to slow the pace, get back to nature, and reconnect with family and friends. When the sun comes up, anything goes, but twilight almost invariably draws everyone back together for dinner and drinks outdoors. With vacation season in full swing, we've assembled 32 of our favorite al fresco furnishings for living large and making merry under the awning on those sultry midsummer nights. From portable cookers and cozy camp chairs to mood-setting essentials, these are the things that transform an RV vacation into a celebration.

TAMING THE FLAME



Barbecue grills are icons of summer, and the portable **Weber Q 1200** (\$219) takes the show on the road in fun colors that add sizzle to your campsite. Ours is bright blue, but lime green, purple and fuchsia are flashier options. The go-anywhere grill runs on LP-gas, pumps out 8,500 Btu an hour, and boasts a cast-aluminum body and fiberglass-reinforced frame. Push-button ignition and a lid thermometer make the chef's job easier, and a surprisingly large grate sears everything from burgers to kabobs. A pair of fold-out side tables holds sauces, serving dishes and other BBQ basics.



Induction cooking is revered by RVers for fast heating and precise simmering. The portable **Fagor 2X Induction Cooktop with Skillet** (\$99.95) can move those benefits from the kitchen to the patio. Plug it in, and the 120-volt AC cooker heats only the base of the provided 9½-inch skillet or other induction-ready pan and shuts off when no cookware is detected, leaving the surface cool to the touch. A digital display shows the temperature and eight power levels.



The **GCI Outdoor Slim Fold Cook Station** (\$85) answers the question of where to put your portable grill or induction cooktop and all the fixins'. Topped by a heat-resistant-aluminum table, the one-piece cook station has a steel frame with locking support hinges that click into position right out of the box. Four side tables fold out for condiments, serving platters and liquid refreshments (hence, the molded-plastic cup holders). The bottom rack stows a cooler or other sizable commodities, and corner hooks keep tongs and trash bags at the ready.



Flipping burgers is a breeze with the right utensils. Camping World's **Four-Piece BBQ Tool Set** (\$21.99) keeps things simple with a quartet of the most-popular grilling implements tucked inside a space-saving roll-up case. The 17-inch-long stainless-steel spatula, tongs, fork and basting brush are fitted with loop ends for hanging and wooden handles that keep their cool under fire.

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SIPPING AND SUPPING



Picnic-table staples since the 1970s, Corelle dishes are popular with RVers for good reason. The lightweight laminated-glass plates, bowls and serving pieces hold up to the rigors of road travel and are microwave and preheated-oven safe. The only original style still in production, **Corelle Winter Frost White Livingware** adds a touch of class to outdoor meals. Camping World carries a wide range of this affordable classic, from dinner plates and salad bowls to a 24-piece set (\$6.99 to \$54.99). Additional pieces can be found at discount chains, department stores and online, not to mention estate sales.



Inviting the neighbors to outdoor potlucks is part of the fun of RVing, but insects aren't on the guest list. To shield the main course and side dishes from crawling and flying pests, Camping World stocks a three-pack of **Round Food Covers** (\$14.49). After dessert, the pop-up mesh covers collapse for compact storage and stay flat with elastic straps.



Tervis made a name for itself in 1946 with a technology that keeps hot drinks hot and cold drinks cold. Today, the company supplies its insulated drinkware in everything from lidded tumblers and toddlers' sippy

cups to water bottles and wine goblets. We toasted our good fortune with the 9-ounce **Tervis Wine Glass** (\$19.99), available in Clear and Blue Infusion. Camping World offers these virtually indestructible vessels in dozens of designs that include Happy Camper and Home Is Where You Park It.



Few things are more satisfying at the end of a blazing-hot summer day than a frosty brew. The double-insulated, powder-coated **Hydro Flask Growler** (\$64.95) keeps 64 ounces of beer or other libations cold and carbonated for hours. Even the colors are cool. Pour a tall one into the **True Pint** (\$24.95), Hydro Flask's similarly insulated 16-ounce guzzler, or the 10-ounce **Rocks Glass** (\$29.95), with a spill-proof lid, and you're set for happy hour.



Savvy RV owners have onboard water-filtration systems, but what about safe drinking water when you're really on the go? Icon Technology Systems offers a portable solution to potable water: an easy-to-carry bottle with a filtration system of its own. The **Lifesaver 4000UF** (\$149.95) has a more powerful filter than you'll probably ever need, capable of removing viruses, bacteria and cysts from even murky or muddy sources. Purification is simply a matter of dipping the bottle in a creek, river or lake, or pouring the questionable H₂O directly into the bottle, and then pumping the water through the filter.



BigMouth's red, white and blue inflatables range from a super-size American-flag swimming-pool float to a three-pack of **Patriotic Stars Beverage Boats** (\$11.99). Available from AlwaysFits.com, the blow-up "boats" keep drinks afloat in the pool and make festive decorations on the picnic table for the Fourth of July and Labor Day. Let the patriot games begin!

EASY LIVING



Camping World's 9-by-12-foot **Reversible Patio Mat** (\$79.99) transforms any campsite into a Perfect Patio. Available in a variety of colors and patterns (ours is deep gray with decorative swirls), the expansive polypropylene mat resists fading, mold and mildew, and "breathes" to protect grass and vegetation. Reinforced edges rule out unraveling, and corner loops allow easy stake-down. Because it's reversible, the mat can be flipped over for a fresh start.



Because some like it hot, the **Mr. Heater Big Buddy Portable Heater** (\$151.99) takes the edge off cool evenings, warming up to 400 square feet, outdoors or in. The lightweight appliance has a blower fan and three temperature settings, and connects to

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the RV's LP-gas supply or disposable 1-pound cylinders. Bonus features include quick-connect assembly, push-button ignition, and safety shutoffs for low-oxygen conditions and accidental tip-overs.



Available at Camping World, the **Portable Outdoor Fire Pit** (\$94.99) not only radiates warmth, it creates a gathering place for after-dark socializing and stories told around the campfire. The fire pit features iron construction and comes with a chrome grill grate, a metal-mesh cover and a carrying case for mess-free transport. With legs that fold for compact storage, it stows easily and goes almost anywhere.



Products that do double duty make the most of RV storage space, including this pair of battery-operated lanterns. Both a light source and a bug deterrent, the **Thermacell Scout Mosquito Repeller Camp Lantern** (\$39.99) drives off biting insects with a butane cartridge and repellent mat. To keep bigger intruders at bay, the sensor-equipped **Bright Path LED CampGuard Perimeter Security Lantern** (\$69.99) doubles as a nighttime security system, sounding an alarm and shining a beacon when it senses movement within a 35-foot perimeter.

KICKING BACK



Folding camp chairs are RV essentials, and few soothe tired muscles better than a zero-gravity recliner. These laid-back lounges cradle the body and elevate the feet to reduce pressure on the back. Camping World stocks a generously sized portable version, the **Stone Peaks Zero Gravity Recliner** (\$155.99), that supports up to 300 pounds. Once you find your comfort zone, a locking mechanism secures the position. A pillow supports the head, neck, back, knees or ankles, and there's even a detachable drink holder.

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With the **Summit Rocker** (\$71.99), you can rock out under the stars without disturbing the RVers next door. Built on a tubular-steel frame, the folding rocking chair is amply padded and has a wide seat, a high back and molded-plastic armrests. Like the Stone Peaks Recliner, it supports up to 300 pounds and is available at Camping World.



Bolstering our seating selection, collapsible-furniture mogul Mac Sports offers its **Folding Club Chair** (\$69.99),

a plumped-up armchair that stows in a zippered case. Made of heavy-duty polyester for outdoor or indoor use, the overstuffed seat rests on a powder-coated steel frame with large footpads that won't sink into the campsite.



In the sweltering dog days of summer, your canine companions could use some creature comforts, too. Camping World's **Plush Pet Bed** (\$24.99) gives tuckered-out pooches a place to plop down and catch a few z's outdoors on the patio or inside the RV. The 27-by-36-inch cushion comes with a thick supply of batting, a soft polyester surface and a nonskid bottom. When the cover gets grubby, it zips off for machine washing and tumble drying.



Stroll through any RV park, and next to at least one camp chair you're likely to spot the Adirondack-style **Quik-Fold Side Table** (\$17.99). This campsite classic from Adams Manufacturing is just right for setting down drinks, snacks and cell phones or a laptop computer. Made of low-maintenance polypropylene, the 3.2-pound table folds flat for storage. Get a pair of them.



Here's a trick to make weathered picnic tables and splintered benches more



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appealing. Wrap them with Camping World's **Deluxe Picnic Table and Seat Covers** (\$41.99). Draw cords cinch the cheery blue-and-white-checked covers on tables and benches up to 6 feet long. Flannel padding adds a layer of softness to hard seats, and the vinyl surface means even drippy watermelon and sticky s'mores wipe off easily.

GETTING IN THE MOOD



The **King Premium RV Outdoor Speaker and Light** (\$249) doubles as an energy-efficient exterior light and high-quality speaker that streams music from smartphones, tablets and computers. Available in white or black, the all-in-one LED fixture and Bluetooth speaker

mounts permanently on the side of the RV, replacing the original porch light. An app controls the music equalizer, light dimmer and rainbow of LED colors, including bug-banishing orange.



For those who prefer compact discs and over-the-air radio, there's the **Magnavox CD Boom Box with AM/FM** (\$39.99). Powered by 120-volt AC or six C batteries, this top-loading portable CD

player has stereo speakers and a digital display for fine-tuning radio stations and navigating audio settings. Although the new boom box isn't Bluetooth enabled, it's not totally old school. With a cable plugged into the auxiliary jack, it plays music from most mobile devices.



Bronze Globe Lights (\$89.99) from Polymer Products do more than illuminate the patio. They set the tone for the evening. These classic etched



No Perfect Patio would be complete without the requisite RV. Ours is the 2017 Keystone Sprinter 324FWBHS fifth-wheel, provided by Camping World of Valencia in Southern California. A fitting backdrop for the well-equipped RV site, this three-slide bunkhouse comes with an exterior kitchen and a power awning with built-in speakers for entertaining outdoors. Catch *Trailer Life's* video walk-through of the Sprinter 324FWBHS on our YouTube channel, [TrailerLifeDIY](#).

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VINCENNES' VICTORIES

INDIANA'S OLDEST TOWN IS THE SITE OF A 79-FOOT-HIGH MEMORIAL DEDICATED TO GEORGE ROGERS CLARK, CONQUEROR OF THE OLD NORTHWEST TERRITORY, AND AN INTERACTIVE MUSEUM CHRONICLING THE LIFE OF ENTERTAINER RED SKELTON

The pages of history are filled with tales of heroes and their heroic deeds. But sometimes history is kinder to these heroes than their contemporaries had been. Such is the case with surveyor and military leader George Rogers Clark. Nicknamed Conqueror of the Old Northwest Territory and Washington of the West, Clark performed daring feats beyond the Appalachians during the American Revolution that extended the nation's frontier, winning

land from Great Britain that would later become Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and northeastern Minnesota.

Now, schools are named for Clark, statues of him have been erected, and a major bridge over the Ohio River bears his name. Since 1975, when the Indiana General Assembly designated the date, February 25 has been celebrated as George Rogers Clark Day in the state. On that day in 1779, Clark and a small army, after trudging 180 miles across

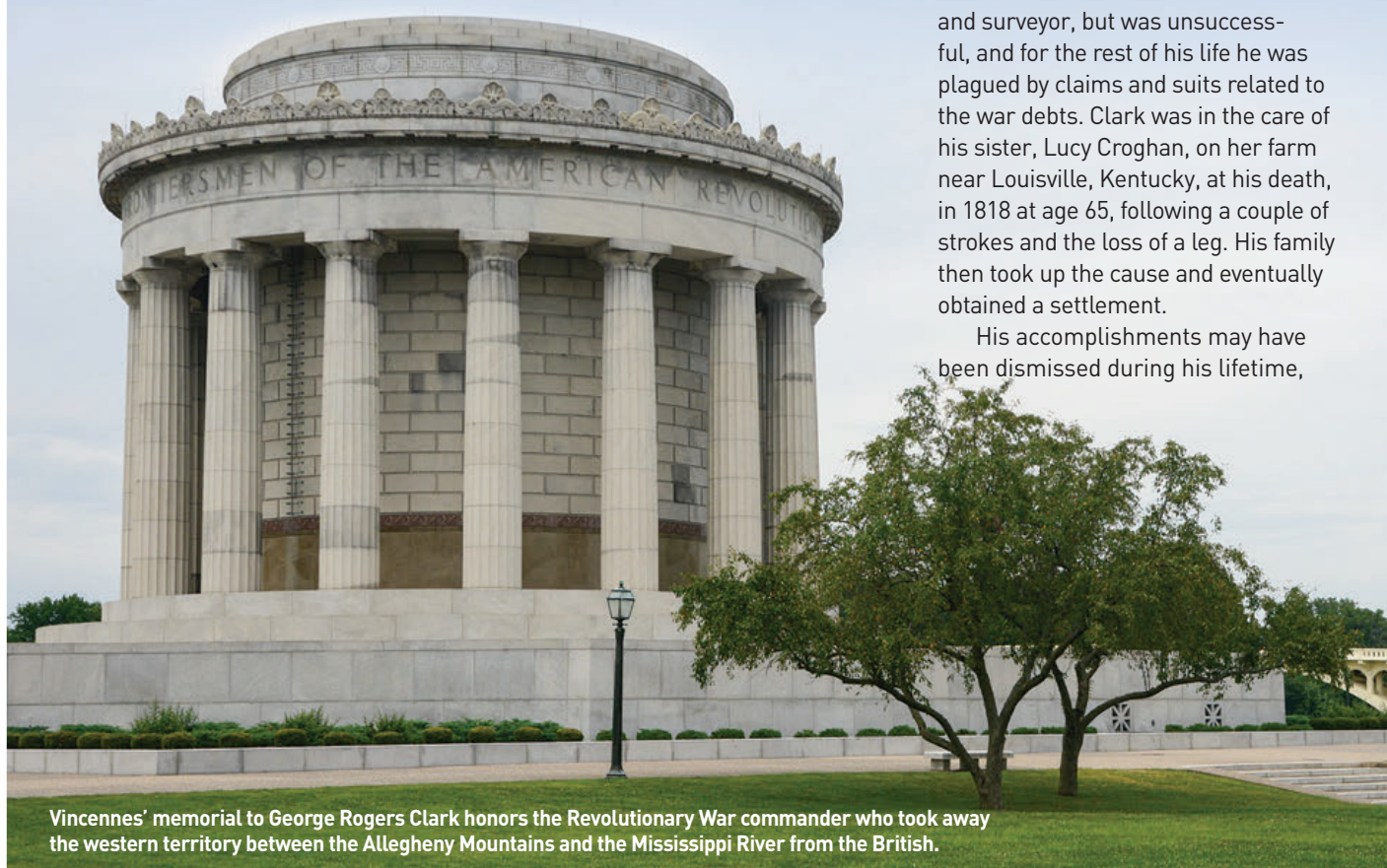
Illinois through frigid floodwater and launching a surprise attack, accepted the surrender of the British occupiers at Fort Sackville at Vincennes, Indiana.

That may have been Clark's most dramatic exploit, but it was just one of many during and after the American Revolution. Despite these feats — actually, because of them — Clark was penniless when the war ended. Just a few years later, he was slandered, disgraced, forced to resign his command and ultimately lived out his days in near poverty, having lost to creditors almost all the land — 150,000 acres — he'd been given for service in the war.

As the highest-ranking officer in the territory during the war-time campaigns, Clark had been responsible for obtaining supplies for his troops. And though he had no official support, he signed for the materials, believing that after the war ended, the government, considering his accomplishments, would assume the debt. But that didn't happen, at least not during his lifetime.

He attempted to recoup his losses with work as an Indian commissioner and surveyor, but was unsuccessful, and for the rest of his life he was plagued by claims and suits related to the war debts. Clark was in the care of his sister, Lucy Croghan, on her farm near Louisville, Kentucky, at his death, in 1818 at age 65, following a couple of strokes and the loss of a leg. His family then took up the cause and eventually obtained a settlement.

His accomplishments may have been dismissed during his lifetime,



Vincennes' memorial to George Rogers Clark honors the Revolutionary War commander who took away the western territory between the Allegheny Mountains and the Mississippi River from the British.



The elegant Basilica of St. Francis Xavier, also known as the Old Cathedral, was built in 1826 and is the fourth church on the site. It is located opposite George Rogers Clark National Historical Park.

but the role he played in American expansion is now long recognized. In 1928, President Calvin Coolidge ordered a memorial be built to the forgotten hero.

George Rogers Clark National Historical Park was created in Vincennes. In 1933 (the 150th anniversary of the Treaty of Paris, which ended the American Revolution), the classical Greek-style memorial to Clark was dedicated. It stands on the banks of the Wabash River where old Fort Sackville is believed to have been.

The massive round memorial, gleaming white granite 79 feet tall and ringed by 16 towering fluted columns, is so grand that at first glance you might think you've made a wrong turn and somehow gotten to Washington, D.C., where similar monuments dot the landscape.

The interior, of Indiana limestone and Italian, French and Tennessee marble, is no less grand. A 7½-foot bronze statue of a confident-looking Clark stands in the center of the room, and seven 28-foot-tall murals depicting his role in developing the land west of the Appalachians decorate the circular wall. The nearby visitor center, with a 30-minute film, brochures, maps and dozens of exhibits, provides a comprehensive account.

Born in Virginia, Clark was a "magnetic leader, persuasive orator and master of psychological warfare," according to the National Park Service. But in 1772 at age 20, like many others in search of new land to settle, he crossed the Appalachians into Kentucky, which was still part of Virginia, to live in the Ohio River Valley. This meant defying the British "proclamation line" of 1763, which dictated that American colonists could live only east of the mountains.

By 1777, with the Revolution under way in the East, the British at Fort Detroit were sending out Indian war parties to destroy American settlements in the west. Clark, one of Kentucky's military leaders, convinced Governor Patrick Henry to let him take the war to British-controlled posts of French inhabitants north of the Ohio River, with the ultimate goal of capturing Fort Detroit, where the British were based.

On Independence Day in 1778, Clark and a small army of patriots took Kaskaskia without firing a shot, and subsequently Cahokia, both in Illinois country. Then, at the urging of Father Pierre Gibault, vicar general of the Territory of Illinois, the people of Vincennes on the Wabash also swore allegiance to the patriots.



Fur trader Francis Vigo, Clark's spy in Vincennes, traveled to Kaskaskia to inform Clark that Fort Sackville was undermanned and vulnerable. Vigo also participated in the founding of Vincennes University.

1747 FRANCIS VIGO



(Above, from left) The state historical site across from Vincennes University includes the well-preserved red-clapboard territorial capitol. The second of three Fort Knox locations that protected the city from Indian attack has a fence of short logs where the palisade once stood.

When the news reached the British at Fort Detroit, Lieutenant Governor Henry Hamilton and a small army headed south for Vincennes and were joined along the way by hundreds of Indians still loyal to the British. The size of the force convinced those at Vincennes to renounce their allegiance with the United States, and once again Fort Sackville was in British hands.

But in early 1779, Clark learned that Hamilton had sent most of the

Indians and French militia home for the winter, and while still in Kaskaskia, he assembled 170 Virginians and Illinois French volunteers, and set out on the daunting trek across Illinois' "drowned country." For 10 days they waded through sometimes-shoulder-deep floodwater and reached Fort Sackville on February 23.

The British held on till Clark threatened to storm the fort and give no quarter, then agreed to the

RIVER CITY

Located in the southwestern part of the state at the junction of U.S. routes 41 and 50, historic Vincennes sits on the lower Wabash River. Vincennes, Indiana's first city, was under British rule until after the American Revolution and later served as the capital of the Indiana Territory from 1800 to 1813. The more-than-500-mile-long Wabash River forms the southern Indiana-Illinois border. Several U.S. Navy warships are named after the Wabash or the numerous battles that took place on or near the river between the Siege of Fort Sackville and the War of 1812.



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VINCENNES' VICTORIES



(Above, from left) The boyhood home of comedian and favorite son Richard "Red" Skelton. Beautiful Ouabache Trails State Park has an excellent campground just 2 miles north of the city. (Right) Visitors admire the heroic statue of George Rogers Clark inside his memorial.



surrender, which was formalized on February 25. The Union Jack would never again fly over Fort Sackville, but with reinforcements unavailable, Clark was unable to proceed to his ultimate goal, Fort Detroit.

When the Treaty of Paris ended the Revolution in 1783, Britain ceded the Old Northwest Territory to the United States, and due in large part to Clark's war-time efforts, the size of the country was nearly doubled. But Indian raids on American settle-

ments continued. In 1786 Clark led an expedition against villages along the Wabash, but before victory could be won, supplies ran low, and his 300 men mutinied. Then, rumors spread that he had often been drunk on duty.

Joe Herron, chief of interpretation at the park, explained that this may just have been jealous slander, but no inquiry was ever held. Nonetheless, Clark, by this time a brigadier general, was forced to resign. With the opening of George Rogers Clark National

Historical Park, the hero whose history had been largely ignored for nearly a century and a half finally got his long-deserved recognition.

Vincennes, which had been founded by French fur traders in 1732, became Indiana's territorial capital on July 4, 1800, and served until the capital was moved to Corydon in 1813. Indiana became a state three years later, and in 1825 the capital was moved to Indianapolis.

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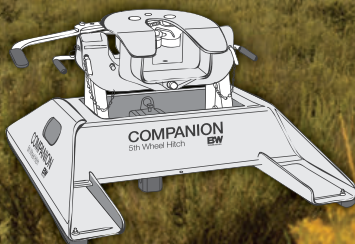
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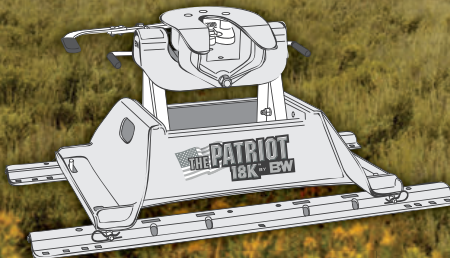
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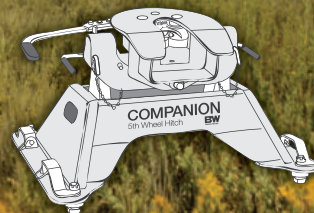
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VINCENNES' VICTORIES

But the original Indiana Territorial Capitol remains and can be toured, along with several other historic structures located a dozen blocks east of the national historical park. Walking tours, led the day of our visit by Program Director John Mays, begin at the visitor center, a replica of an 1850's log cabin (1 W. Harrison Street), where books, maps and brochures are available. The well-preserved capitol, a plain two-story clapboard structure

painted ruby red, is furnished with benches and chairs, as it would have been more than two centuries ago.

The complex also includes Jefferson Academy, Indiana's first public school, founded in 1801. Mays explained that girls as well as boys, ages eight to 14 or 15, attended the school, which was taught in French, Latin and English. In 1806, it was incorporated as Vincennes University, one of only two colleges in the country

founded by a U.S. president (in this case a future president, William Henry Harrison; the other is the University of Virginia, founded by Thomas Jefferson). Also at the complex is a replica of the Elihu Stout Print Shop, the territory's first newspaper, the *Indiana Gazette*, established in 1804.

Harrison's home, Grouseland (3 W. Scott Street), is nearby. Harrison was governor of the Territory of Indiana from 1803 to 1812, and elected ninth president of the United States in 1840. Completed in 1804 and designated a national historic landmark in 1961, the elegant Georgian/Federal-style mansion is now a museum and open for guided tours.

Other historical attractions include Old French House (509 N. First Street), a French Creole-style building that was built in 1809 and home to French fur trader Michael Brouillet. Furnishings are typical of the early 19th century.

The collection of artifacts at the Indiana Military Museum (715 S. Sixth Street) is considered one of the best in the Midwest. The 6,500-square-foot museum, with exhibits indoors and out, displays vintage vehicles, weaponry and uniforms from every major American conflict, Civil War through Desert Storm.

Loveliest of the town's historic buildings is the Old Cathedral (Basilica of St. Francis Xavier, 205 Church Street), a short, grassy stroll from the Clark monument. The Greek Revival-style cathedral, the fourth church to stand on the site (the first was built around 1748), dates from 1826. A statue of Father Gibault, Patriot Priest of the Old Northwest, stands in front.

Inside, the basilica is lavish with exquisite paintings, Doric columns that are yellow poplar trees plastered and painted to resemble marble, and vibrantly hued stained-glass windows that were installed in 1908. Across the courtyard from the church is the oldest library in Indiana, containing some 10,000 rare volumes, some of which date to the 14th century.

For another look at early-American history, drive 3 miles northeast of town on Lower Fort Knox Road to Fort Knox



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II, near Ouabache Trails Campground, where we stayed.

The U.S. Army had built Fort Knox I in Vincennes in 1787. It was moved to the present site in 1803, becoming Fort Knox II, with a stockade and blockhouse, store and powder magazine. The old fort, on a level plain high over the chocolate Wabash River (*Ouabache* in French), is no longer there, but its outline is marked in the grass with short posts. On 13 bronze placards, visitors read about the history of the area, such as the trouble between settlers and Indians, and Harrison's 1811 victory at the Battle of Tippecanoe, which later prompted the slogan "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too" that swept him into the presidency.

Secretary of War William Eustis removed the garrison from Fort Knox II in 1812, and its timbers were floated downriver to be reassembled in Vincennes as Fort Knox III. Five years later, that facility would be dismantled, as struggles between Indians and European culture east of the Mississippi had come to an end.

For our last stop in town, we turned from serious history to the whimsical — the Red Skelton Museum of American Comedy (20 Red Skelton Boulevard). Clown, comedian, actor and mime Richard "Red" Skelton was born in Vincennes in 1913. The museum, which opened on the an-

niversary of his 100th birthday, is a wealth of exhibits, many of them interactive, that chronicle his life and 70-year career as an entertainer.

Although Skelton is best known as a "clown," a term he preferred to "comic," because a "clown uses pathos," he was also a prolific writer of short stories and music (some 8,000 songs), and enjoyed a second career as a talented painter. Visitors watch amusing clips of him as Freddie

the Freeloader, Clem Kadiddlehopper and others, and learn about his commitment to public service, and that all was not laughter in Skelton's personal life (he was divorced twice; his son died of leukemia at age nine).

There's also a gallery of his artwork. Most of the paintings are of clowns, but that's not surprising. Skelton said, "A clown is a warrior who fights gloom." He believed his purpose in life was "to make people laugh." 🗨

WHERE TO STAY

We recommend the county-owned campground at **Ouabache Trails Park**, which includes 35 RV sites, all with water, electricity, picnic tables and fire rings. The pet-friendly campground offers showers and laundry facilities. A dump station, firewood and ice are available. Ouabache Trails Campground is open from April 1 through the first weekend in November. 812-882-4316 www.knoxcountyparks.com

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One of three Maritime Provinces in eastern Canada, Nova Scotia is a vast peninsula on its western flank with islands to the east. Its most famous and rugged coasts rise out of the Atlantic with a raw, powerful and sometimes wistful beauty. The dramatic Bay of Fundy is known for its massive tide swings, while the famed Cabot Trail on the province's largest island, Cape Breton, winds past stunning windswept cliffs.

In contrast to those better-known areas, the coastline on Nova Scotia's south shore is an endless ripple of rocky peninsulas and narrow waterways. Several of the well-protected coves are home to quaint villages that are bright, colorful and utterly picturesque. As my husband, Mark, and I towed our 36-foot fifth-wheel trailer into the province, we debated which coast to head toward. In the end, the charm of those historic seaside settlements on the south shore lured us there first.

PEGGY'S COVE

Our first stop was Peggy's Cove,

a classic fishing village that is picture-postcard perfect. It is a tiny hamlet of just a few simple, pastel-colored homes that are perched on grassy hillsides around a very small harbor. Ever since the area was settled in the late 1700s, the villagers have made their living by harvesting the bounty of the sea. A few lobster boats were tied up at the dock, and their bright blue, yellow and red reflections undulated lazily in the silky water.

As we walked down the narrow lane that meanders alongside the harbor, we passed a lobster boat that had been pulled up on the shore and watched two men busily painting it a vivid red. A

lemon-yellow building across the street that housed a coffee shop was practically the only commercial establishment in the village. Traditional wooden lobster pots with rounded tops were stacked up on the small pier, while an abandoned rowboat with peeling paint and rotting wood quietly disintegrated nearby, its days on the water long over.

On a hillside above the town, an artist was seated on a granite boulder painting the tranquil scene, his paintbrush slowly bringing the harbor to life, as a small crowd watched from behind him. Although this is a working fishing community, it is also a popular tourist destination, and the handful of villagers going about their daily lives are vastly outnumbered by camera-wielding tourists. In a distant parking lot, rows of luxury tour buses disgorged hundreds of visitors every hour into this town of 640 residents.

DE OF CANADA

POSTCARD SETTING ON A ROAD TRIP TO NOVA SCOTIA'S SOUTH SHORE



Peggy's Cove is most famous for its graceful lighthouse, and we wandered away from the harbor out onto the wide, flat granite boulders where it stood facing the open ocean. Three windows decorated its front, like a row of buttons.

Suddenly, the plaintive tones of a bagpipe filled the air, and we saw a man in a kilt near the lighthouse with a donation box at his feet playing his heart out. The mournful song of the bagpipe was beautiful and haunting, evoking the danger of this craggy shore, the fragility of boats at sea, and the thin ray of hope and guidance that a flash of light gives sailors in the dark of night.

Later in the day, as the sun began to fall in the sky, we witnessed one of the most dramatic sunsets we have ever seen. Huge dark storm clouds gathered and turned black above us,

while the sun began to slip out of sight below the horizon. It then burst into a brilliant yellow fireball, casting a golden glow between the clouds and sea. All the tourists that had been scrambling around on the rocks stopped to stare, in awe of this magical sunset.

As joyful and glorious as that moment was, a far different and heart-breaking tragic moment is memorialized forever on another outcropping of waterfront boulders just a few miles away. There, a stark group of engraved granite slabs tells the somber story of the crash of Swissair Flight 111 into the cold Atlantic, killing more than 200 people on board back in 1998. A thick blanket of wet fog covered the shore, as we walked among the stones and pieced together our hazy memories of that news story from long ago, and realized

how deeply it affected the people of this distant shore.

LUNENBURG

Peggy's Cove had given us a glimpse of life in an isolated cove on Nova Scotia's south coast, but we found the nearby town of Lunenburg was abuzz with activity. The fishing shacks, shipyard and boathouses along this sizable harbor were all painted bright red, and a wide variety of sailboats and fishing vessels bobbed at anchor in the harbor. Many of the sailboats were antique wooden schooners and ketches from an earlier time. On the town streets, the clip-clop of hooves grew loud, as a horse-and-buggy tour of the town's historic architecture approached us.

The region was settled primarily by the Scottish (Nova Scotia means

Brooding storm clouds bring drama to a brilliant sunset at Peggy's Point Lighthouse, just south of the fishing community of Peggy's Cove.



THE QUAIN T SIDE OF CANADA

GETTING THERE

From Calais, Maine, it is a 200-mile drive across New Brunswick to Nova Scotia via NB Route 1 and the Trans-Canada Highway. Amherst is the first community you enter after crossing into Nova Scotia. From there, it is another 150 miles to the heart of the quaint villages on the south shore.

We had visions of slowly circumnavigating the peninsula with our truck and trailer, visiting every cove and hamlet. However, we quickly discovered that this coastal route and most of the other smaller and more interesting roads are not suitable for big RVs, as there are no shoulders and many twists, turns and potholes. The best way for RVers to tackle Nova Scotia is on the highways that crisscross the province (routes 101, 102, 103 and 104), leaving the trailer in base camps and doing all the scenic drives, explorations and village visits with the tow vehicle.

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"New Scotland" in Latin) and the French, and these two heritages are evident throughout the province. Some towns lean more toward their Scottish roots, and others celebrate deeper French roots. Lunenburg, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is unique because its history includes German and Swiss immigrants.

Until the mid-1700s, most Nova Scotia settlements were French, but the British wanted to solidify their presence, so they recruited German and Swiss Protestants, who they hoped would be sympathetic to the British crown, by offering them free land around Lunenburg. The European farmers seized upon this opportunity, and the town was named after the British king of that era who had once been the duke of Braunschweig-Lüneburg.

The colorful homes surrounding Peggy's Cove come to life on an artist's canvas. Set on picturesque St. Margarets Bay, the village is a popular spot for artists and photographers.

By the 1860s, the town had a thriving economy based on farming, fishing and trade with the Caribbean islands of the West Indies. Wealthy merchants built elegant homes on the hillside that rises above the harbor. The vibrant and colorful architecture is what gives Lunenburg its immense charm, and we were told that the best view of the town is from the golf course on the far side of the harbor.

As we walked along the water's edge to the other side of the harbor, we passed an imposing piece of concrete with broken edges and discovered it was a piece of the Berlin Wall. The Kinley family, who



Peggy's Cove offers a glimpse of a bygone era when fishermen harvested the bounty of the sea.



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has owned the local Lunenburg Industrial Foundry since the mid-1800s, also owned a Volkswagen franchise that was the first importer of the Beetle in Nova Scotia in the 1970s. On a business trip to Germany, CEO J. James Kinley saw the Berlin Wall as he crossed into Soviet-occupied East Berlin through the Friedrichstrasse border crossing (aka Checkpoint Charlie). When the wall fell some years later, he was eager to acquire a piece of it and display it as a symbol of freedom and democracy.

The view of Lunenburg from across the harbor is truly spectacular and

well worth the short walk. But perhaps the best view of the town is seen from the water. When we returned to the pier, a group of tourists was boarding a beautiful antique 48-foot wooden ketch, the *Eastern Star*, for a day sail around the harbor. Blowing a loud blast on a conch shell, the captain took his position behind the old wooden-handled helm and steered the boat with its sails flying high, the yacht cruised past the shoreline several times, creating a magical illusion of 19th-century Lunenburg juxtaposed onto 21st-century life.



Classic schooners and ketches fill the harbor at Lunenburg, settled in the mid-1700s.



(Above, left to right) Cute eateries and boutiques give Mahone Bay a special charm. In nearby Lunenburg, tourists see the sights in a horse-drawn wagon.

MAHONE BAY, BLUE ROCKS AND THE LAHAVE FERRY

The shoreline roads are more than worthy of a leisurely drive in the tow vehicle, and we enjoyed an excursion to the town of Mahone Bay and the settlement at Blue Rocks. Mahone Bay overlooks a harbor, and a quiet morning stroll took us past a handful of boutique



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THE QUAIN'T SIDE OF CANADA



shops. The curves of the shoreline were decorated with an ornate yellow church and some stately homes. There are several eateries, and we got a kick out of the Tea Brewery, a store devoted to all things tea. Coming from the intense coffee culture in America, this was a delightful switch that reminded us of Canada's strong British ties.

Further out on a craggy peninsula, in the community of Blue Rocks, we found a few scattered houses and

A trip to Nova Scotia is well worth the miles to get there. Some coastal routes are suitable for large RVs, but it's best to unhitch and take the tow vehicle on all but the main roads.

lobster shacks spread out around a rocky cove and pebble beach. Lobstermen plied their trade on small boats in the tiny bay, and a smattering of modest homes were tucked into the craggy shore. The piercing cries of seagulls punctuated the air, and the

CANADIAN CUSTOMS

Documentation

Americans may stay in Canada for up to six months without a visa. A passport or passport card is required to re-enter the United States.

Metric System

Canada uses the metric system, so temperatures are in Celsius, distances are in kilometers, and volume is in liters.

Time Zone

Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are in the Atlantic Time Zone, one hour earlier than Eastern Standard Time.

Expenses

We typically paid about 20 percent more for diesel fuel in Canada. Groceries ran about 5 to 10 percent higher for identical items in Nova Scotia than in New England. Beer and cigarettes are heavily taxed. Nova Scotia imposes a 15 percent sales tax, so before snapping up a deal,

remember that it will cost that much more than the sticker price.

Bank Fees

U.S. banks generally impose a 3 percent fee for credit-card and debit-card transactions in Canada; some credit cards waive the currency-exchange fee. Notify your financial institutions ahead of time that you will be making purchases in Canada.

Cellular Service

If you have a U.S. cellular plan, you will likely pay a higher rate for voice and data service in Canada. Check with your provider about Canadian roaming options before crossing the border. Free open-access (no password) Wi-Fi is readily available in Nova Scotia, from town halls to visitor centers, RV parks and coffee shops.

Weather

Summer temperatures can be in the 80s Fahrenheit, but during our visit, we had a lot of rainy days in the 60s. Be prepared for a little bit of everything on the coast.

seaweed on the rocks swished back and forth with the swell.

Another way to get out on the water in this part of Nova Scotia is to take a ferry. South of Lunenburg, a lovely coastal road runs right along the shoreline of the LaHave River, a tidal waterway. At the mouth of the river, where it opens up to the ocean, the LaHave ferry zips back and forth between the two shores all day long. Tickets are first-come, first-served, and you simply drive up to the dock, wait for the ferry to land, drive aboard and enjoy a five- to 10-minute ride to the other side. The cost is just a few dollars.

We got a kick out of seeing a small Class C motorhome being ferried across the bay. Small trailers are OK on the ferry and narrow coastal roads. Larger trailers and fifth-wheels would be difficult to navigate through the tight turns and busy town streets.

These images of Nova Scotia's south shore will remain forever in our memories. It's not a short jaunt for most visitors to reach this remote corner of the continent, but it is well worth the towing miles to take your RV there and settle in for a while. 🚐

Completed in 1887, the elegant St. James church makes a striking image on the shores of Mahone Bay in the harbor town named for the waterway.



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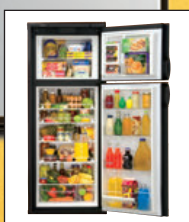


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POWER PROTECTORS

PORTABLE AND HARDWIRED PRODUCTS DESIGNED TO PREVENT DAMAGE TO ELECTRICAL COMPONENTS IN RVs

Most of our favorite RV parks have one thing in common: great location. They were built in the remote corners of our continent, far from urban centers. For the rare older RV park that hasn't been upgraded or where regular maintenance is somewhat deferred, electrical anomalies can occur. Add to this the wear and tear from storms, maintenance work in the park and the sometimes quirky nature of the power grid in remote areas, and you have a recipe for some serious voltage and shock problems.

Damage to your RV is possible from power surges and over-voltage and under-voltage conditions. Other electrical issues, such as a hot-skin condition, where electrical current is flowing through the body and chassis, can pose some real dangers to you and anyone touching your RV. These conditions are why a dedicated segment of the RV aftermarket has devoted its energies to protecting RV owners from a variety of power-supply problems, with both portable and hardwired surge protectors and electrical management systems.

The problems that cause these conditions are numerous and include "damaged wiring, damaged receptacles, miswired systems, insufficient grid capacity or plugging into [240 volts AC]," according to Bobby Raatz, national sales manager for Southwire Company. Southwire owns Technology Research Corporation, a manufacturer of electrical safety products.

Joe Casale of Progressive Industries, manufacturer of surge protectors, electrical adapters and connectors for the RV market, adds that problems are also posed by "some simple electrical conditions including open ground, open neutral and reverse polarity."

These dangers are why Southwire, Progressive Industries and similar companies make products designed to handle a lot more than just power surges. The products come in two basic configurations, portable and hardwired, with functions ranging from simple surge protection to sophisticated analysis and power cutoff for a wide variety of conditions. Some even make the process seamless with automatic reset on power restoration.

Portable units plug in at the pedestal or power source and usually provide warnings about anomalies even before you plug your RV into the protective device. Portables have the advantage

Discourage power-protector nabbers from taking off with portable devices by using a cable lock like this PowerGrip one from Camco. The heavy-duty braided steel cord is 60 inches long and has a durable PVC lock head.



POWER PROTECTORS

of not needing installation and can be used, or not, as you see fit. On the downside, they can be awkward to deploy and store. Portables are exposed to the elements and therefore may be targeted for theft, so buyers should take these factors into account.

Hardwired units are mounted permanently onboard your RV and are in operation each time you plug in. They are protected from weather and theft, but they are not as easy to service or replace. Some hardwired protectors include a digital display that can be wall-mounted inside your RV for easy monitoring.

Power-protection devices are not designed to be used in conjunction with other protection devices including power-cord adapters. Most are offered in 30- or 50-amp models, so get the amperage level appropriate for your RV.

Watch for features that address various electrical problems, including over or under voltage, open ground, open neutral, reverse polarity and accidental connection to a 240-volt AC

power source. Also, note the distinction between "detection" and "protection." A device may be able to detect a power problem but not the capacity to protect (interrupt the power) while the problem exists. For devices that do interrupt power, note that some require manual input to resume, while others automatically resume connection when the power problem is resolved.

For portable devices, look for features that make them easier to operate (automatic reset and easy-pull handles) and provide protection from weather (seals, guards or covers) and theft (locking brackets and available accessories).

All units that are designed to act as surge protectors will have a joule rating. A joule is a unit of energy, and for simplicity purposes, the higher the joule rating, the more energy the unit can absorb from a surge event. It is usually higher for 50-amp devices, because there are more conductors in the incoming cable, and the conductors are larger, allowing for higher spikes.

CAMCO

Camco's PowerGrip Power Defender Voltage Protector

(\$299/30-amp; \$399/50-amp) helps protect RVs from damaging low- or high-voltage levels, power spikes and surges. The voltage protector monitors incoming power and automatically disconnects when dangerous voltage levels are detected. It automatically reconnects when levels stabilize between 102 and 132 volts AC. A reconnect delay protects sensitive equipment from rapidly cycling power. The water-resistant unit incorporates diagnostic lights for visual indication of faults for reverse polarity, open neutral and other power-pedestal wiring issues.



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- **Light Weight & Compact** - 44 pounds, 2.2 cu.ft. size is easy to store and transport.
- **Smart Throttle** - Load sensing rpm control that allows greater fuel efficiency and noise reduction by automatically adjusting engine speed to match the load. Runs up to 10.5 hours at ¼ rated load on a tank of gas.
- **Gasoline Petcock** - Lets you shut off the gas to run the carb dry for storage and helps prevent stale gas problems.
- **Fuel Gauge** - Allows fuel level to be seen at a glance.
- **Twin Tech (Parallel generator operation)** - If you need extra power the EF2000iSv2 has you covered—a convenient parallel function lets you connect two generators to deliver up to 30 amps.

*A second Yamaha EF2000iSv2 is recommended to use the full capabilities of this model. Read Owner's Manual before operation. Specifications subject to change without notice. ©2017 Yamaha Motor Corporation, U.S.A. All rights reserved.
Yamaha Outdoor Power Equipment, Circle 160 on Reader Service Card





The **Power Defender Voltage Analyzer** (\$69/30-amp) features diagnostic lights to indicate wiring faults before the 30-amp electrical cord is connected. The compact, weather-resistant voltage analyzer also includes integrated surge protection.

The **PowerGrip Dogbone Circuit Analyzer** (\$104.99/30-amp; \$139.99/50-amp) is designed to protect electrical equipment from improperly wired electrical boxes and features diagnostic lights to indicate faults. The weather-



resistant device provides surge protection up to 2,100 joules for the 30-amp version and up to 4,200 joules for the 50-amp model. The PowerGrip handle makes plugging and unplugging safer and easier.

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PROGRESSIVE INDUSTRIES

Progressive Industries' **EMS-LCHW30** (\$258/30-amp) and **EMS-LCHW50** (\$349/50-amp) hardwired electrical management systems indicate mis-

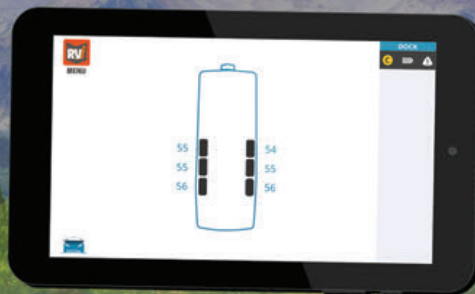


wired pedestals and provide RV surge and electrical protection against adverse power conditions. Functions include detection and protection for over and under voltage, open ground,



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POWER PROTECTORS

open neutral, reverse polarity and accidental 240-volt AC protection. The units feature an adjustable time delay, a continuously scrolling digital display and thermal protection.

The **EMS-HW30C** (\$299/30-amp) and **EMS-HW50C** (\$410/50-amp) hardwired units provide the same functions as the EMS-LCHW30 and EMS-LCHW50 but also come with a remote digital display. All of the hardwired units have a lifetime warranty, are field-serviceable, and are UL Listed to U.S. and Canadian safety standards.



The **EMS-PT30X** (\$326/30-amp) and **EMS-PT50X** (\$453/50-amp) portable systems are designed for outdoor use and offer the same detection and protection benefits as the hardwired units. They feature an amperage meter display and come with tough Lexan housing, All Weather Shield Assembly and a security locking bracket. The lifetime warranty covers everything but the All Weather Shield Assembly. Like the hardwired models, the portable EMS units have surge suppression up to 1,790 joules for 30-amp units and up to 3,580 joules for 50-amp units.

The compact, portable **SSP-30XL** (\$116.65/30-amp) and **SSP-50XL** (\$151.85/50-amp) provide surge and thermal protection and detection for miswired pedestals, over and under voltage, open ground, open neutral and reverse polarity. Designed for outdoor use and equipped with rugged pull handles and bright three-color

LED indicators, these units have a lifetime warranty and are UL Listed to U.S. and Canadian safety standards. Total joules rating is 825 for the SSP-30XL and 1,650 for the SSP-50XL.

Progressive Industries, Division of Power Products
919-267-6948
www.progressiveindustries.net



TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH CORPORATION

TRC's **Surge Guard 34830** (\$219.97/30-amp) and **Surge Guard 34850** (\$299.97/50-amp) portable surge protectors provide full electrical protection with easy-to-read LCD displays that show textual information that does not require code interpretation. Real-time voltage and amp draw are continuously displayed on the screen. Power is automatically disconnected when any of the following conditions are present: under or over voltage, open ground, open neutral, reverse polarity and overheating in the plug. Continuous monitoring allows the Surge Guard units to automatically reconnect when acceptable power resumes. LED lights indicate if the device's surge protection has been activated due to a large surge or multiple small surges. The 34830 provides 2,450 joules of surge protection, and the 34850 provides 3,850 joules.

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A Better Hose

Dumping holding tanks using Thetford's Titan Premium RV Sewer Kit System eases the pain

All sewer hoses are not created equal. Leakage and spills caused by abrasion and poor-fitting connectors are often responsible for unsightly and unsanitary conditions at the RV site or dump station, not to mention frustration on the part of the owner. Thetford, a highly recognized company specializing in RV-sanitation products, has developed the Titan Premium RV Sewer Kit System, which was designed to resist penetration and crushing, two of the most common maladies experienced by end users.

The Titan hose is billed as “the toughest, longest-lasting hose,” and it is indeed a huge step above common sewer hoses that are typically provided in kits supplied by dealers or found on the bargain table. The hose is made of proprietary thermoplastic elastomer (TPE), which supplies the heft needed to withstand the rigors of continued use and extreme temperatures.

Beyond its overall durability, the hose has an ergonomic ExtendGrip fitting on the business end, a big benefit for those with arthritic hands. Connecting to the RV's exit pipe is precise and takes little effort. The other end of the hose is attached to the company's Revolve universal sewer adapter, another unique feature of the system. The base of the adapter has stepped



1) Provided in the kit is a 15-foot hose with fitted and sealed ends, the Revolve sewer adapter and handle, and a pair of end caps. Titan 20-foot kits with two connecting 10-foot hoses are also available. **2)** The proprietary ExtendGrip fitting is permanently connected to the end of the hose and offers an ergonomic design that provides a positive grip that is particularly beneficial for those with arthritic hands. **3)** Caps are used to seal the hose ends and prevent dripping when stored in the RV's utility bay or exterior compartment. Using these caps during long-term storage, rather than connecting the ends of the hose together, helps prolong seal life.

threads and a handle, so it can be threaded easily into sewer outlets. The revolving design allows the integral elbow to be positioned in any direction, facilitating a direct flow into the sewer. The elbow is translucent, allowing users to see when the tank is empty.

When it comes time to store the hose, it's

rinsed and drained in normal fashion, and the ends can be sealed with tight-fitting end caps that eliminate dripping and provide more sanitary conditions while storing in the RV's utility bay or exterior compartment.



REMEMBER THE TITAN » Thetford's proprietary thermoplastic elastomer (TPE) resists leaks caused by crushing and withstands frequent use and extreme temperatures, prolonging the life of the sewer hose.



4) The handle is molded to the stepped threads; the elbow connector revolves in the sewer outlet to allow for straight-line alignment of the hose when attached. 5) Once the adapter is in place, the hose can be easily attached using the bayonet fittings.

Using the caps is preferred, since connecting the ends of the hose for long-term storage can lead to premature seal failure.

The kit is packaged with a 15-foot length of hose, the universal adapter and two end caps; the other fittings are permanently connected and sealed to the hose. While the hose is tough and the build quality is superb, the price is fairly reasonable. Street price is around \$36 for the 15-foot hose kit. Camping World also sells a multilength kit with two 10-foot hoses for around \$57. Thetford offers a few accessories for the hose kit including a 10-foot extension hose, the universal adapter, replacement caps and fitting seals.

While dumping holding tanks will never be an owner's favorite activity, having a high-quality, workable sewer hose like the Titan will certainly ease the pain. 🚚

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No-Strip Stabilizer

I replaced the front landing jacks on my fifth-wheel because the gears were stripped. To keep from stripping the new jacks, I painted a red line on each one when they were fully retracted. I then painted a 1-inch yellow line above the red line as a reminder to slow down before hitting the red line.

Bruce Felty, Holdrege, Nebraska

Antenna Fit for a King

After purchasing a King Tailgater satellite antenna, I thought of a way to mount it to a tripod from a previous antenna. At a local home-supply center, I purchased a 24-inch section of 1½-inch PVC pipe, a 2-inch metal flange and a threaded PVC fitting to accept the flange. I cut the PVC pipe to 10 inches and cut four 5-inch-long slices in it so the pipe would fit over the tripod post using a hose clamp to hold it in place. I then traced the perimeter of the Tailgater on a piece of ¾-inch plywood and cut it out with a jigsaw. I mounted a 6x6-inch block to the underside of the plywood and screwed the flange to it.

Now when I arrive at a new campsite, it's just a matter of spinning the Tailgater to the fitting on top of the tripod. I also drilled larger holes in the feet of the tripod so I can easily secure it to the ground with tent spikes.

Jim Burlingame, Lino Lakes, Minnesota



QUICK FIX

Fire-Safety Tips

As a fire official, I felt compelled to provide some information to consider after reading 10-Minute Tech ideas about using foam products to insulate various portions of RVs, including habitable and sleeping areas.

In any instance where polyurethane, polystyrene or other foams (or other insulating products, for that matter) are used, you should ensure that the material is inherently flame-retardant or at least fire-retardant treated, which in some cases you can do yourself. Untreated flammable-foam products present a significant fire-hazard and safety risk, and many of these foams are restricted in their use in normal building construction.

Untreated foam products generally have higher rates of heat release when ignited (they burn hotter), produce significantly higher amounts of toxic products of combustion when burning (thick, black, soot-laden smoke) and burn at a faster rate when compared to traditional construction materials. Ensuring that the foam product is inherently flame-retardant or treated with an approved flame-retardant solution that is suitable for the material can mitigate the risks these types of materials present.

Good housekeeping can also mitigate some of the risks including keeping the foam (or other flammable and combustible materials) away from potential ignition sources (both in use and in storage), having working smoke and carbon-monoxide alarms, having a charged ABC-rated portable fire extinguisher and, most importantly, having a practiced exit plan using the emergency-escape windows.

By having an awareness of these issues, readers may take steps to prevent unnecessary emergencies or tragedies and be able to enjoy their RVing experiences even more.

Justin Beal, Clovis, California 🚚

To send your submission, write to 10-Minute Tech, 2750 Park View Court, Suite 240, Oxnard, California 93036 or email 10minutetech@trailerlife.com. Please include an illustration or photo, if applicable. *Trailer Life* will pay \$35 for original 10-Minute Tech ideas. All payments require an SSN or FEIN.

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¹According to TopConsumerReviews.com, available on TopConsumerReviews.com published on 9/22/2016.

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The Back 40

Stretching mileage between fill-ups is an important concern for many diesel pickup owners. Transfer Flow's 40-gallon in-bed auxiliary fuel tank can cut those stops at the pump in half. The compact tank is designed to fit any full-size diesel truck, including Ram 2500/3500s equipped with the RamBox cargo carrier and trucks with utility beds and factory-installed fifth-wheel prep packages. Because of its low height, the tank also fits under most standard tonneau covers. Utilizing Transfer Flow's TRAX 3 automatic-transfer technology, it pumps fuel to the main tank at predetermined levels while the vehicle is in operation. The USA-made tank is easy to install, according to the company.

MSRP: \$1,299.89

800-442-0056, www.transferflow.com

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Patch Things Up

A damaged awning can be an expensive fix, as even a small tear can lead to a complete replacement if left unchecked. Tear-Aid patches provide a simple method of repairing holes and tears. Made from an abrasion-resistant elastomer and a strong adhesive formulated for high bond strength, the patches absorb force on impact and return to their original shape and size, according to the manufacturer. And they're not just for awnings. Tear-Aid Type A kits are designed to work on most fabrics and have some other surprising applications such as rubber, nylon and non-oiled leather, as well as aluminum and fiberglass. Type B kits are for vinyl and vinyl-coated surfaces.

MSRP: From \$9.99

800-937-3716, www.tear-aid.com

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Truck-Top Bedroom

Need a little extra sleeping space to accommodate younger friends and family on your next RV outing? Bend, Oregon-based CVT/Cascadia Vehicle Tents offers a full line of expedition-style roof-top tents that can be mounted on compatible crossbars or rack systems on any tow vehicle, truck canopy or off-road tent trailer. Constructed of reinforced poly-cotton ripstop canvas on a 1-inch aluminum framework, the tents set up easily, according to CVT, and offer comfortable sleeping quarters and protection from the elements for up to three occupants. An adjustable aluminum ladder is designed to provide easy access.

MSRP: \$1,595 to \$2,295

541-312-8368

www.cascadiatents.com

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Stow, Go and Glow

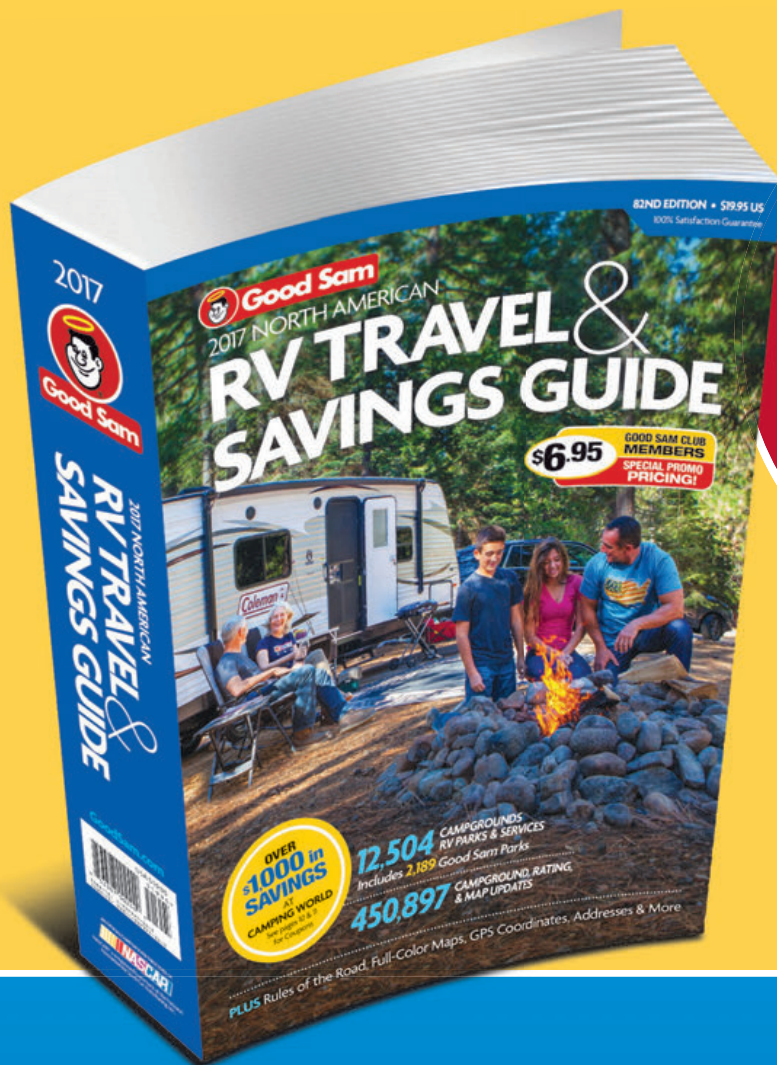
Fold-up entry steps in truck campers can be a real nuisance. Some even need to be secured in place with a rope or bungee, or removed and stored inside the camper for transit. Torklift's Stow N' Go steps do away with those issues by mounting to the bumper or back of the truck camper with a specially designed snap-lock step bracket that allows them to stay firmly collapsed and in place, ready for immediate use. Made of air-grade aluminum with glow-in-the-dark corners for nighttime visibility, the scissor-style steps come with All Terrain Landing Gear that adjusts the level to any terrain. The Stow N' Go is available in three- to six-step versions with nonslip steps that can be added or removed when the stairs are placed on a different camper. Torklift's GlowSteps products include the illuminated GlowGuide handrail, the theft-preventing GlowStep Lock and the paw-protecting SafeStep barrier for pets. For owners of the original truck-camper GlowSteps, Torklift sells its new mounting brackets separately.

MSRP: From \$402.99. 800-246-8132, www.torklift.com

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER



TRAILER LEVELERS

Q I have always used blocks of wood, 2x4s and 2x6s to level and chock my 26-foot dual-axle trailer, but it's a pain carrying all those chunks of wood. I've recently seen ads for the Andersen Camper Leveler. It seems like a product that could simplify my life, but the trailer tires in the pictures look kind of precarious sitting on those smallish blocks. Have you had any feedback on this type of leveler and chock?

I also see dual-axle trailers leveled with only one wheel. The other just hangs down. The axles are torsion-bar type. My trailer, an Evergreen Element STRK26, is fairly light, but I've always lifted it using both wheels on each side.

Michael Morin, Los Osos, California

A Michael, keep supporting both tires, regardless of which type of leveling device you use, because that equalizes the loading on the trailer suspension components and prevents overloading of one tire.

The Andersen Camper Leveler seems well designed, and although we haven't done an in-depth product evaluation, it probably works as advertised. Seeming precarious might just be your perception. I'd be more concerned about the load-bearing-surface width relative to the tire-tread width. The tire-tread width should be fully supported, without a portion of the tread hanging over and bulging down past the leveling device surface. Use of a support that is too narrow can damage the tire tread or sidewall. Measure your trailer's tires and compare them to the levelers to be sure it's OK in that regard.

TOILET REPLACEMENT

Q I have a 1995 32-foot Jayco travel trailer that is in good shape. The potty, an old Thetford Aqua-Magic IV, started giving me problems and really has never been satisfactory, mainly because it's too darn low and the seal always needed attention. And it would not hold water in the bowl. I can't believe I put up with it this long.

State Trailer, a major trailer-supply dealer in Salt Lake City, advised me that a Dometic 310 would be compatible and fit right in. I liked the Dometic because it has a porcelain bowl and a foot flush, it's supposed to be easy to change the bowl seal, and it had decent reviews. I had no problem with the installation except that the bottom of the toilet did not seal well. Later, I discovered water leaking around the base of the toilet. There was not a good seal around the flange. If I keep tightening the bolts, I am sure I will crack the base, and still the base will not be flush with the floor.

I am not experienced enough to change the flange and worry about messing it up. I had the impression that flanges were flanges and standard in the industry. I have thought about putting a wax ring on the flange, but I've never heard of anyone trying one.

Bill James, Tooele, Utah

A You're right, Bill, "flanges are flanges" and they're a fairly universal-fit component. The sealing gasket, base flange and hold-down bolts are commonly sized parts across several manufacturer product lines.

If the old gasket you removed looks about the same as the new one, and the hold-down bolts fit the base on the new toilet, you should be able to bolt the new toilet in place. If it's not sealing, it indicates there must be something wrong with the way the gasket was installed, or perhaps there's some type of obstruction that snuck in there and is preventing a tight seal. You'll probably

need to remove the new toilet, recheck the seal and flange area, and try again.

Wax seals shouldn't be used in a mobile environment because of temperature swings (high heat will melt the wax), and the movement can cause the wax to lose its seal eventually. Stick with the foam seals.

FOUL WATER SMELL

Q We have a foul smell in the hot-water line in the bathroom sink. In the past two weeks, I have run a bleach-and-water solution through the water system twice. The smell is eliminated briefly but soon returns. We don't detect the odor anywhere else but the bathroom sink and only in the hot water. Can you give me some guidance to solve the issue? I did install a filter on the hose, but I have noticed no change.

Monte Bender, Kalamazoo, Michigan

A It seems that you may not have put enough of the bleach disinfectant solution in the water heater, Monte, or that you didn't leave it in the heater long enough. The water heater is the main source of that sulfur smell in the water,

TECH EXPERT



JEFF JOHNSTON: Jeff served as technical director of *Trailer Life* for 20 years and has been an RV enthusiast, mechanic and writer since he could hold a wrench.

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as conditions inside the tank are just right for producing the stinky but harmless bacteria that makes the smell.

Start by adding the bleach solution to the water system, then run every hot-water faucet in the RV until the water starts to smell like bleach. That indicates the bleach solution has circulated through the water heater. Leave it there overnight, then drain and flush the system as before. That should eliminate the smell you've been encountering.

FIFTH-WHEEL HITCH QUESTIONS

Q I just purchased a 2017 Ford F-350 4x4 and 2017 Grand Design Reflection 337RLS fifth-wheel, and am contemplating using the Andersen hitch.

I have two concerns: First, lining up of the truck and trailer will have to be more exact to allow the ball to drop into the socket versus the standard hitch, which helps guide the pin into the hitch. Second, because of the lightness/shape of the Andersen hitch, it would appear to me that it would buckle during a frontal collision of the tow vehicle with a vehicle in front of it. Is there any third party testing of this hitch?

Rick Lightheart
New Westminster, British Columbia

A We aren't aware of any third-party testing on this product, Rick, and it's on our radar. Yes, the coupling design is such that it may require a somewhat more precise lineup for hitching, but that's just one common characteristic of that type of hitch. Each hitch design has advantages and drawbacks, and that's just one of them.

As for the hitch performance in a crash situation, we are not certified mechanical engineers with chassis and collision experience, so you'd need to glean that kind of information directly from the manufacturer. The manufacturer designs, tests and certifies a hitch for a given load under a given set of operating conditions to make sure it will do the job as advertised, but the crashworthiness is another matter altogether. Contact the manufacturer for more information along those lines.

TOW RIG PLUGGED IN?

Q On a recent trip, I was preparing for an early-morning departure with my truck and travel trailer when a fellow RVer noticed that I had my trailer plugged into my truck. The person suggested I not leave the truck and trailer wiring plugged in overnight, saying that this situation would discharge my truck's battery. I have stopped overnight at rest stops and left the plug attached to the truck and had no problem.

I'm always learning something new and valuable from other RVers, and would appreciate it if you could shed some light on this issue.

Louise Miller, Potter Valley, California

A As a rule, Louise, I unplug the trailer from the tow rig for the duration each time the setup is parked, to avoid the chance that the trailer's power use may draw down my tow rig's battery. If your tow vehicle has an aftermarket brake control with added wiring, the power wire that charges the trailer battery may be run directly from the tow-rig battery. In that case, as you use the trailer battery, it's also drawing down the tow-rig battery. If you own a late-model tow vehicle with an integrated factory-installed brake control, there may be a power relay in the charging line designed to prevent this type of plugged-in discharging.

Here's an easy test you can do with a multimeter or a test light to see if your truck and trailer batteries are connected when the truck is off. With the truck running but all lights off, touch the negative cable or spring clip of the test light to a ground source, like the hitch itself. Then touch the positive lead to the plus-12-volt DC pin on the plug on your vehicle, which, if the notch of the seven-way plug is facing up, is the top-right terminal or 1 o'clock position. If you get no power, the battery is isolated. Now, turn the truck on and try again, and you should see plus-12 volts there. If you don't, a fuse might have blown. This is also a good test to do if you find your trailer battery is dying while you're driving, which indicates that it's not getting a charge from the tow vehicle.

If this is beyond the scope of your

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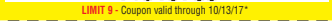
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RV CLINIC

electrical experience, and/or you don't want to visit an RV mechanic to have it checked out, just unplug/plug in the trailer each time you tow it. If nothing else, it's a good part of your pretow safety checklist.

TROUBLE-FREE TRAILERS?

Q I have read a number of letters in RV Clinic where new trailers have multiple problems. In my business, I travel to many states, and having a breakdown could be a major problem in meeting my obligations. Is there a fifth-wheel manufacturer that produces reliable trailers? I am tired of living from hotel to hotel, and pulling a fifth-wheel will fit the bill. I know nothing is 100 percent, but I could sleep better not having to worry about major breakdowns.

Jim Babeshoff, via email

A This kind of question calls for a far more detailed answer than we can give in this space, Jim. In general, don't buy the cheapest trailer you can find, and you'll have fewer problems. Search the online owners' forums for recommendations and brand suggestions. Visit campgrounds and talk to owners of trailers of the general type in which you're interested, and I think you'll find the average RVer is not shy about discussing the good and bad points of a particular RV. Keep notes, and you'll see patterns emerging about preferred brands and so forth. It will be time well spent.

In regard to the type of breakdowns that could impact your travel schedule, that would involve multiple tire failures or a catastrophic suspension failure, which can happen to a trailer of any price range. Both of those occurrences could be mostly avoided by exercising diligent maintenance and inspection procedures.

FIBERGLASS CLEANUP REDUX

Q We have a 2014 Rockwood fiberglass travel trailer that we purchased new. When we got it, it had a very nice sheen. Two years have passed, and areas where the Florida sun hits the trailer have become chalky looking with oxidation. I have a friend who purchased

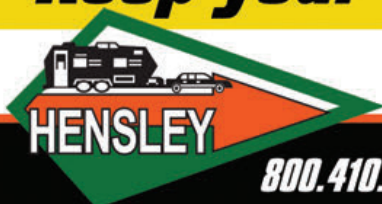
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While every effort is made to maintain accuracy and completeness, last-minute changes may occasionally result in omissions or errors.

a new travel trailer (a different brand) around the same time we purchased our Rockwood, and his looks worse than ours. What is the best way to try to get the sheen back on the fiberglass? I have searched online and saw ideas from other RVers and different products, but I don't want to waste money and manpower on a product that may not work.

Marlyn Demeter, Okeechobee, Florida

A There's no secret to restoring an oxidized fiberglass finish on an RV, Marlyn, as you've likely discovered through your research. To do it right, you first need to rub out the oxidation, buff the finish to a high sheen and wax it to protect the surface. There are products advertised for "one-step finish restoration," and those work to some extent, but not as well as doing the complete three-step process.

Use of a powered buffing tool makes the job a lot faster and should result in a more consistent finish. If you go this route, be sure to use an orbital buffer as opposed to a rotary type, as they are easier on the finish.

There are numerous products, such as Meguiar's Marine/RV Fiberglass Restoration System (product number M4965), that can do a good job with your RV. Be sure to follow the instructions for both the product and the buffer, and you can get your trailer glowing again.

TIRE-SPEED RATINGS

Q I'm confused about the tire chart in February's RV Clinic letter from Vinny Rizzo, "ST Tire Trouble." The description printed in blue above the chart states, "For tires without a service description in operation at speeds above 65 MPH, loads and inflation pressures are adjusted as follows." The chart does not seem to address those tires with a 65-MPH service description. So, does this chart refer only to ST tires without a service description (i.e.: 65 MPH)? If so, does that infer that these tires without a service description are somehow stronger to better withstand higher speeds, higher pressures and higher temperatures? Are those tires with a service description still limited to the stated 65 MPH, regardless

of increased pressures? Or does this chart apply to all ST tires, regardless of imprinted service description?

Charles Beauparlant
Farmington, New Mexico

A That note about trailer tires without a speed rating, or “service description,” applies specifically to tires without the rating, Charles. For other tires that have a rating, such as 65-MPH maximum, the possible change in tire-speed capability and tire pressure are handled on a case-by-case basis that varies with each manufacturer. To learn the specifics about your brand of tires, you’ll need to inquire with the manufacturer, although your local dealer for that brand will likely have that information available.

TRUCK AND TRAILER BOUNCE

Q I have a 2012 GMC Sierra 1500 pickup with the Z60 suspension package and tow a 2014 Forest River Wildwood X-Lite travel trailer. There’s a lot of bounce when driving through dips or over bumps in the road. Is there anything that can eliminate or reduce the bouncing felt in the truck? The trailer weight does not exceed 7,000 pounds.

Robert Barnes, Punta Gorda, Florida

A This kind of truck and trailer bounce can be caused by several things, Robert. Narrowing it down also depends on where the bounce is experienced — for example, the front of the truck, the back of the truck or the trailer axles. Usually, you can feel one part of the vehicle reacting more than others. Your truck and trailer are new enough that worn-out shock absorbers, for instance, aren’t a problem (if your trailer even has shock absorbers), but we always tell people to inspect every part of the suspension to ensure there’s not some type of mechanical failure that’s aggravating the bounce. Check tire-inflation pressure for the weight being carried by consulting the manufacturer’s load/inflation tables (if available). Too much or too little pressure can affect bounce.

If it seems the front of the truck moves through the dip or bump OK, then the back of the (continued on page 97)

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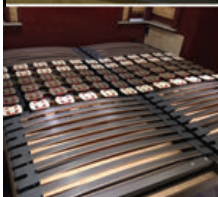
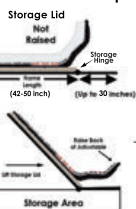
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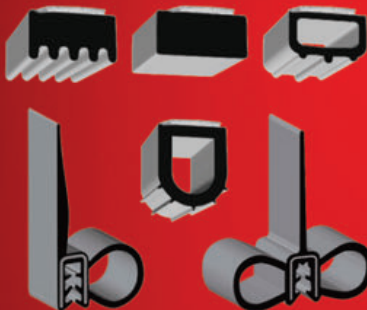
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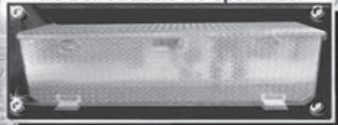
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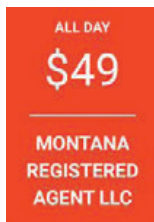
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(continued from page 93)

truck gives an extra kick, it may mean the spring bars on the weight-distributing (WD) hitch are adjusted too tight. The bars could also be too high a weight rating for the trailer, which would make them too stiff for the setup. Try driving through a known spot that causes the bounce, then adjust the spring bars, and try driving the route again. You may also need to adjust the WD hitch head height to keep the setup on an even keel with the adjusted spring bars. This is not an exact science and will call for some experimenting.

TRAILER-TIRE WEAR

Q In "Trailer Tire Alignment" in April's RV Clinic, Tom Carver had concerns about tire wear on his trailer's right front tire. I have had this same problem on three different fifth-wheels and numerous tandem- and triple-axle trailers I have owned. Having worked in the trucking industry, I figured out that during right-hand turns on a hard-surface road or street, the load on this right front tire can almost double.

The trailer tends to lean on this wheel as it is being pulled sideways. The load on the left rear is lessened as the trailer pivots on the right rear and the left front. Left turns are a longer, wider-radius turn that causes less scrub of the tires. I put 14-ply LT tires on my trailer, and these tires have a higher inflation pressure. This helps a lot, as the tire doesn't roll under as you turn. I hope this helps explain the wear a little better.

John Manley, Remus, Michigan

A Understanding trailer-tire wear can be a pain, John, so your observations based on your commercial driving experience are welcome. We've heard a variety of explanations about the odd tire-wear effect, and yours is as good as any we've seen. Thank you. 🚐

HAVE A QUESTION? » Email rvclinic@trailerlife.com or write to RV Clinic, 2750 Park View Court, Suite 240, Oxnard, California 93036. Include your full name and hometown. Selected letters will be answered in the magazine, but time does not permit individual replies. No phone calls, please.

Rocky Mountain Beach Town

When the snow melts in west-central Idaho, the small town of McCall greets the season with gusto

With the heat of summer starting to sizzle, we took our fifth-wheel into the cool Rocky Mountains of Idaho where a former logging town 100 miles north of Boise basks in the sun on the shores of Payette Lake. Who knew you could find a bona fide beach community, complete with kids building castles on a wide expanse of sand, personal watercraft lined up on the water's edge, bikini-clad girls perfecting their tans and sailboats gliding with the wind all smack in the middle of the mountains at an elevation of 5,000 feet?

As soon as we set up camp, we were swept up in the exuberance of summertime fun. From browsing the charming shops in town to taking a spin at the ice-skating rink, riding bikes through woodsy Ponderosa State Park and enjoying a picnic with a view on the big lawn by the beach, we found endless things to do.

McCall has fewer than 3,000 year-round residents, and every morning we joined a few of them in a row of colorful Adirondack chairs under a shade tree overlooking the lake to sip a cuppa joe from Mountain Java. On the docks at the upscale Shore Lodge, we ogled exquisite watercraft at the annual Classic and Wooden Boat Show (July 28 through 30 this year).

McCall intoxicated us. As one local whispered to me, "It's the best-kept secret." For RVers who travel there, small to midsize trailers can camp by the lake at Ponderosa State Park, and a top-rated Good Sam Park, McCall RV Resort, welcomes rigs of all sizes. 📶



Private Idaho

Paddleboards, personal watercraft and pontoon boats line the shores and marinas of Payette Lake, as summer comes to the mile-high vacation destination of McCall.



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