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User Guide

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GONE

- a.* **FISHIN'**
- b.* **HUNTIN'**
- c.* **OFF-ROADIN'**
- d.* **ALL OF THE ABOVIN'**

No matter where it is you're headin', the **Chevy Silverado Half-Ton** will get you there with its best-in-class available V8 4x4 fuel economy¹ and intelligent Active Fuel Management™ technology.

¹Based on GM Large Pickup segment and EPA-estimated MPG (city/highway): Silverado Hybrid (available at participating dealers) 20/23, Silverado with available 5.3L V8 engine 15/21.



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Moving Forward

Exciting changes in design and staff are here



As you thumb through this month's issue, you'll undoubtedly notice a big change in the way these pages look. Art Director Rick Damien, in concert with the entire editorial team, has completely redesigned the graphic presentation. It's a fresh look for *Trailer Life*, a magazine that's been promoting the RV lifestyle for more than 70 years.

Redesigning this magazine didn't come without its challenges. Our goal was to inject a contemporary style into the pages while maintaining a very readable posture. Type font and spacing are critical elements, and while we were tempted to follow in the footsteps of many of today's publications, we elected to keep the type large and more comfortable to read. Departments will be clearly delineated, column heads are cleaner, layouts are bolder and high-quality images will continue to play a vital role throughout the pages.

We also hope you'll take advantage of our newly redesigned website, www.trailerlife.com. The upgraded website makes it easy for viewers to stay engaged in the great RV lifestyle by presenting content in a timely manner. Readers are encouraged to toggle between this magazine and the website, enhancing subscriber benefits. And we've made it easier to navigate related articles online from resources found in the pages of this magazine.

This month also marks a change in the editorship of *Trailer Life*. Stuart Bourdon, who has had the leadership role in our sister publication, *Camping Life*, will take over the reins as editor-in-chief. I will hand over "Driver's Seat" to Bourdon, who will pen this column starting with the June issue.

Bourdon is an experienced outdoorsman and has towed trailers for many years. He ran the towing program at *Trailer Boats* magazine, while under the auspices of our parent company. Bourdon's byline has graced a number of RV tests for this magazine, and he has been actively working with me for a number of years.

I, of course, will have more time to devote to my publisher responsibilities, while keeping my hand in product and technical content. During the next few months I'll also be developing a new column that will give my perspective on industry trends, campgrounds and the RV lifestyle.

I hope you like the look and direction we plan on taking America's premiere RV publication. Let me know what you're thinking (blivingston@goodsamfamily.com).

– Bob Livingston publisher

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INSIDE: Ready For The Rally?

» Check out the Louisville Rally primer story on page 28.

It's got the inside scoop on Louisville, Ky., and all the fun and frolic the town has to offer. There are lots of museums, restaurants and shops to keep you busy if you decide to spend some extra days in town before or after the June 21-24 Good Sam Rally.





Be Prepared

My daughter, who is an Ohio State Highway Patrol trooper, passed along an important bit of information that is not often thought of. Keep an updated list of emergency contact names and phone numbers in your vehicle, RV, purse and wallet. Also, check with your state's DMV and see if this information can be added to your driver's license and/or vehicle license plate database. Accident victims are often in no condition to give information, especially in this time of no landlines with only cell phones to rely on, it can become very difficult to contact next of kin. This is important information that, hopefully, will never need to be used.

Doris Wilt, via email

Editor's Note: You may also want to save the names and phone numbers of family members and emergency contacts in your cell phone under the "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) heading that almost all cell phones have now for just these sort of travel emergencies. Emergency and medical personnel have now been trained to check cell phones for these ICE numbers.



Winfield Does It Right

We purchased the Winfield front stabilizer kit in 2006 for our Titanium and have been very happy with the product and post-purchase support. We even removed the stabilizers when we sold our Titanium and mounted them on the Montana we bought. Winfield was very helpful in modifying the rear scissor jack stabilizers as our Titanium jacks were at about a 45-degree angle to the frame. We have found the product to be of the highest quality, and would recommend it to fellow RVers.

John Gajdos, Morro Bay, Calif.

Make Sure You're Covered

Your "Dream Sequence" feature on Alaska travel (February 2012) omitted an important consideration. As with Mexico, do not assume your auto insurance covers you in Canada. Most likely it does not. Call your insurance company for its recommendation when traveling in Canada. When we drove from Toronto to Thunder Bay in 1999, the word was that your rig could be impounded if you lacked proof of proper Canadian insurance coverage.

Fred Donner, Falls Church, Va.



CANADIAN COVERAGE?

» To be sure you're covered in Canada, get a Canadian Non-Resident Insurance Card from your insurance agent.

Priced Right

Editor's Note: This letter is in response to William Sill's email ("Do The Math," February 2012) regarding Charles Jennings' initial letter ("EcoBoost Addition," December 2011)

My original comments were made after watching the videos on EcoBoost engine 48A, after which I was impressed with this engine. I then went to the Internet, searched "Ford" and configured a truck as I would like to have it. Every time I put in the V6 EcoBoost, I saw the price indicated. I am very happy to hear that the actual price for the engine is only about \$750 more than the 5.0-liter V8. Again, I will consider this engine when I need to replace my current vehicle. Thank you, Mr. Sill, as I thought that the EcoBoost engine was out of my price range, but now perhaps it is not. I also would like to state that I was not Ford bashing, even though I do currently drive a Ram pickup.

**Charles Jennings,
Good Sam Life Member, via email**

Action Line Believer

I have been reading *Trailer Life* magazine for quite some time, and the first section I turn to is RV Action Line. The reason I do this is to see which RV or product manufacturers the complaint

letters are being directed at and how they are being handled. I do realize that sometimes the manufacturers are not responsible for the problem described and so the owner must find other recourse. But if I feel it should not have gotten to the point of reporting it to *Trailer Life* to get satisfaction, that manufacturer goes into a log I keep. It doesn't stop me from purchasing that brand, but the chances of me buying or even looking at a product from a manufacturer that has shown to be poor in responding to people's problems will be remote.

Mark Zeppelin, Waupaca, Wis.

FACEBOOK POLL

What do you like doing once you're set up and away from your trailer?

25% Hiking/Walking

20% Starting campfire

19% Side trips

11% Bicycling



Ruby Glover Go riding on backroads and look for wildlife



Danny Surdez Where is drinking a beer?

TALK TO US!

Write to: Trailer Life 3300 Fernbrook Lane N., Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN 55447 or e-mail info@trailerlife.com. Please include your full name and location.



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User Guide

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Good Sam Louisville Rally

A beautiful metropolis packed with entertainment and the latest in RV culture

Good Sam is set to host the second of three rallies presented by DISH and sponsored by Progressive Insurance. Other sponsors include Pilot Flying J, Fleetwood RV, Good Sam Insurance Agency, Good Sam Roadside Assistance, Good Sam Extended Service Plan, Camping World and Coast to Coast. Off to an exhilarating start, the first rally, held March 22-25 in Phoenix, Ariz., brought a large crowd of RV enthusiasts and people looking to enter the lifestyle. The Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, Ky. is the site for the second rally June 21-24 and is sure to draw many RV enthusiasts.

As with all Good Sam Rallies, live professional entertainment is just part of the buzz around what Good Sam promises to be "the greatest RV rally in the world." And with numerous travel trailers and motorhomes on display, vendors showcasing the latest and greatest in gadgets and gear as well as more than 120 informational seminars, it's no wonder

these rallies draw huge crowds.

The Louisville rally includes performances by award-winning musicians: Nine-time-Grammy-award-winning singer, songwriter and record producer Sheryl Crow, famous for hits such as, "A Change Will Do You Good" and "Every Day is a Winding Road;" as well as Burt Bacharach, the pianist, composer and music producer widely known for writing 70 Top 40 hits in the United States including such popular songs as "Walk on By" and "I Say a Little Prayer." Bacharach is set to perform on Friday, June 22, while Crow will be performing Saturday, June 23. In addition to live music and performances, rally-goers can experience all that Louisville has to offer by hopping on a trolley and taking group tours of the city including: a narrated luncheon cruise on the Ohio River, Old State Capitol and Kentucky Vietnam Memorial, Louisville Highlights, Kentucky Derby Museum, the Louisville Slugger Museum and lunch at Mark's Feed

Store, Historic Louisville, a winery tour, Bardstown and the Bourbon Heritage Center, Kentucky Horse Park, the American Printing House for the Blind, and an Old Louisville ghost tour. For more information about the Good Sam Rally, be sure to visit www.therally.com or call 877-749-7122.

RALLY BY THE NUMBERS

More than **120 seminars** will be offered at the rally – healthy cooking, chassis systems and RV caravan travel, to name a few

The rally features **two music icons** performing their hits: Sheryl Crow and Burt Bacharach

Roughly **740,000 people** live in Louisville

The Kentucky Exposition Center is **1.2 million square feet**

And it's also the **fifth largest** facility of its kind in the United States

THERE'S STILL TIME!

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- Air-conditioning
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ATC – The All-Terrain Camper

Adventurous campers who love off-road expeditions while enjoying the comfort of an RV can have the best of both worlds with the JK Wrangler Unlimited Jeep ActionCamper. Designed for two, the ActionCamper is a lightweight camper that sits atop a Jeep platform, only adding about 440 pounds to the vehicle's weight. The camper's pop-up roof expands, with the tallest point

in the kitchen accommodating individuals up to 6 feet 3 inches tall. The intelligent design includes amenities such as a king-size foldout bed expanding across the kitchen countertops, which also double as bedside tables. The kitchen includes a three-burner stove and sink combination and a top-loading refrigerator and storage for a Porta-Potti. A shower option can be added to the

camper where the floor is replaced by a grate and fitted with a gray-water tank. Dinette seating for two with storage under each seat is complete with a moveable dining table to add space

when not in use. The ActionCamper without the Jeep under it carries a hefty price tag of about \$53,000. For more information visit www.actioncamper.info or call 909-731-5450.



A Grand Discovery

Whether you're on a family vacation or a couples' getaway, those with a thirst for paleontology should head to The Mammoth Site in Hot Springs, S.D. The Mammoth Site features a sinkhole where mammals fell to their eventual death 26,000 years ago. Since 1974 when the sinkhole was discovered, more than 55 mammoths have been identified along with numerous mammals such as a short-faced bear, camel, llama, prairie dog and wolves as well as many invertebrates like clams, snails and slugs. The museum includes educational exhibits about the Ice Age and replica skeletons of the American lion and a pygmy mammoth. Museum information can be found online at www.mammothsite.com or call 605-745-6017.

NEWSWIRE

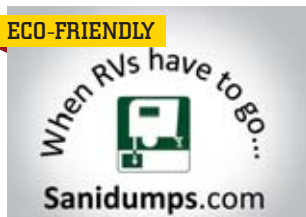
ECONOMY



Travel with the Prices

From the summer of 2011 through the winter of 2012, Kidd RV Resort Consulting, an integrated marketing firm specializing in the RV industry, gauged RVer's response to rising gas prices and traveling. According to the survey, RVers are more committed to paying higher fuel prices in 2012 than in 2011, and 55 percent of participants are planning to travel more in 2012 than in 2011.

ECO-FRIENDLY



Diverse Dumping

Knowing where to find the next dump station is just as important as knowing where you're parking your trailer and camping for the night. Whether you've got a computer, laptop, tablet or smart phone, www.sanidumps.com has got you covered with a comprehensive, up-to-date listing of dump stations throughout North America.

INDUSTRY



Top-Dog Tiffin

Tiffin was the No. 1 manufacturer of Class A motorhomes in 2011 with a 21.1 percent share of the Class A market. In 2010, Tiffin captured a 17.9 percent share of the Class A market. For the sixth consecutive year, Tiffin's Phaeton ranked as the top-selling diesel pusher.

WEB



From Website to Campsite

A group of avid outdoorsmen and women started www.ParkVisitor.com, a website devoted to park ratings, reviews, suggested recreational areas and more throughout the United States. People who love the outdoors and traveling submit the reviews and listings. Log on today to submit your favorite park or find your next vacation destination.



WEB-EXCLUSIVE



► This month's Web Exclusive features bonus photos of Louisville, Ky., the location of the upcoming Good Sam Rally being held on June 21-24.

Trailer Life editors take you inside the industry with the latest in RV news and offer a forum so you can ask the experts for tips on RV maintenance and new products.



Sign up for *Trailer Life* magazine's RSS feed to receive instant news, articles and updates.

VIP ACCESS

► Gain special subscriber-only access to more detailed information, extra photos and videos about new-product installs and trailer and tow-vehicle tests.

BLOGS

► Join our RV Blog-O-Sphere for exclusive commentary, reviews and photos — where *Trailer Life* and others blog about all things RV.

RV LINKS

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



Get sneak peeks at upcoming covers before they hit newsstands.

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Mist You Can't Resist

Whether you're traveling with infants, someone prone to sinus trouble or you're headed to a dry environment, AIR-O-SWISS has the solution with the Travel Ultrasonic AOS 7146. At only .7 pounds, the unit is small enough to pack in a travel bag and only requires a 17-ounce water bottle to operate. The mist output is about one gallon per 24 hours. The AOS 7146 is energy-efficient and allows a mist output control to fit your needs. MSRP: \$49.99. For more information visit www.airosswiss.net or call 800-336-0326.



RV Royalty

You'll feel like a king in the eleMMent palazzo, the newest RV designed by Austrian company, Marchi Mobile Vienna. The eleMMent Palazzo broke the mold of high-end luxury RVs with features such as a warm water floor heating, a rainfall shower and a bar area that pops out of one side of the motorhome. Enjoying the night air is a breeze with Palazzo's sky lounge. The sun roof, hand rail and stairway all release with the push of a button, opening up to the sky lounge where occupants can enjoy heated floors, water fog system, multi-media entertainment and an ice maker. Not a drop in the bucket, the Palazzo retails internationally for about \$3 million and can be sold and shipped to the United States. If you want to get your hands on one of five models made each year, check out marchi-mobile.com for more information.

One-Touch Campsite Cooking

Last year, Coleman launched a free application called Classic Camping Cookbook & Meal Planner, available through iTunes. The application is downloaded to your iPhone and eliminates the need for cookbooks or shopping lists, saving you precious space on the shelves. Users can create a menu for the duration of the vacation by plugging in the number of days and how many people to feed, all while selecting each meal of the day and side dishes or desserts. Picky eater? The application allows users to create meal options using specific foods – the day's catch from the lake or the only thing the little ones want to eat – sure to satisfy everyone. Meal plans also include a composite list of the ingredients for the meals chosen, utensils needed, and food prep items such as tin foil, for the duration of the trip. The list also includes a digital checkbox and a helpful tool for pre-trip grocery shopping. For a demo or to download, visit www.coleman.com/coleman/media/.



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- Rhode Island RV & Camping Show
- Virginia RV & Boat Show
- Summer Boat & RV Super Sale
- North Carolina Fall RV Show & Sale
- Big East Powersports Show
- Rocky Mountain Snowmobile Expo
- Fall Atlantic City RV Show
- St. Paul Ice Fishing & Winter Sports Show

**For dates, times and
more information, visit**
<http://www.gsevents.com/rv-shows.cfm>

RV ACTION LINE
TRAILER LIFE TO THE RESCUE

**Extended
Axle Action**

Looking for assistance with his request for a warranty extension he felt was more than justified, a reader turned to RV Action Line for help:



» I purchased a new 2010 Lance Travel Trailer Model 1881, with a one-year warranty, on March 12, 2011, from Rocky Mountain RV and Marine in Albuquerque, New Mexico. From that point on I had warranty repairs that created a loss of use of 66 days in the prime camping season. The last and most significant issue was extreme tire wear, which was determined by the dealer and factory to be a result of a deformation of both trailer axles. The dealer and factory replaced both axles and damaged tires at no cost to me.

On December 9, 2011, I sent a letter to Lance requesting an extension of the warranty on only the axles because of the approaching winter season during which I would have little time to take an extended trip to prove out the new axle configuration. Up until I contacted RV Action Line, I had heard nothing from Lance directly, and the dealer had advised me that I should expect the warranty to expire as originally stated on March 12, 2012.

In February 2012, I was contacted by the Lance factory and offered the six-month warranty extension on the axle replacements. Again, thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Richard G. Lueders, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Overcharge Refund

Darrel O'Neil of Ruskin, Florida contacted us when he felt the company that handled his repairs had overcharged him and he was getting no response from his inquiries. This is the response we received from an Interstate adjuster after our request for information.

THE COMPANY RESPONDED

To Whom It May Concern,

I am in receipt of your letter concerning the above-mentioned Vehicle Service Contract (VSC). Upon review of the claim, Mr. O'Neil was charged \$5,674.76 for a replacement of his hydraulic control unit for his braking system by Beard's Garage in Ethridge, Tennessee.

In the course of adjudicating Mr. O'Neil's claim, we obtained a copy of the repair bill from the shop that actually completed the repair, Cumberland

International Trucks of Nashville, TN. Cumberland International's invoice indicates they charged only \$2,849.13 for the replacement of the hydraulic control unit and one anti-lock brake sensor. The repair order notes on the invoice for Cumberland International were copied verbatim by Beard's Garage, and the prices were grossly inflated compared to what was originally charged by Cumberland International.

In light of these circumstances we are willing to reimburse the customer in the amount of \$2,724.13, which includes the covered parts and labor billed by Cumberland International, minus \$125.00 in shop supply fees, which are excluded by our contract under Exclusion Letter C.

David Harding, Jr. Claims Auditor, Interstate

Mr. O'Neil was also sent a copy of the letter and will be reimbursed for the overcharges to the repairs on his tow rig. 🚚

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

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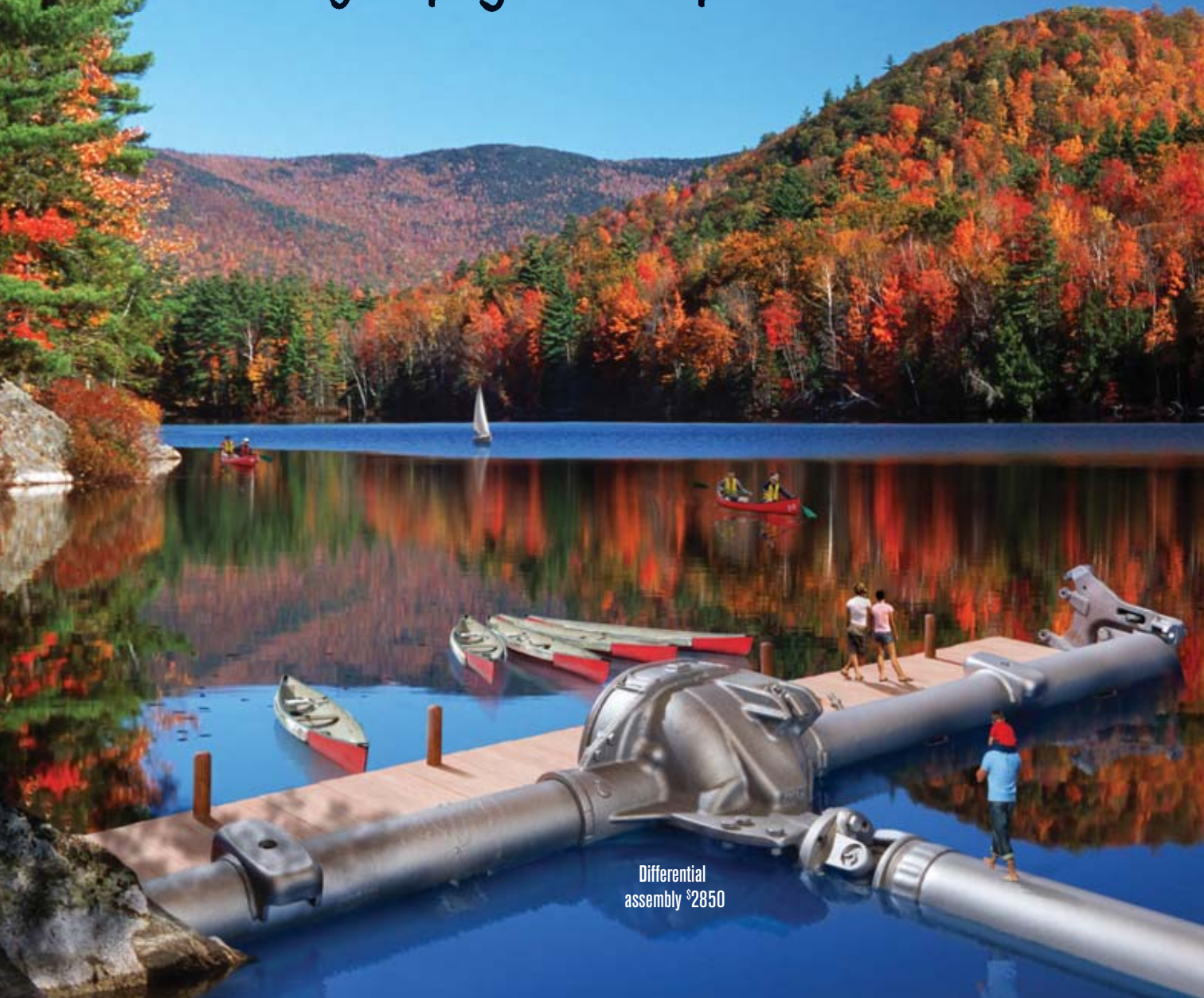
The DISH logo in red, lowercase letters with a stylized 'i'.

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Dish Network, Circle 129 on Reader Service Card

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"My favorite part of the trip?
Not having to pay for the part that broke!"



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assembly \$2850



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*All program benefits are subject to the limitations set forth in the current terms and conditions. ADTL-5477-May12 ©2012 ABI

What will full-timing cost you?

It's all a matter of how big or small you want to go – you make it happen



You've camped before. You love the adventure, discovery, fun, getting outdoors and making new friends. Now that you are retired or considering it, no matter what your age is, you may be thinking about taking to the

road full time. Fear of the unknown rears its ugly head, though. Will we like it? Will we regret selling our house? Most importantly, can we afford it?

Having been on the road for more than five years, we can answer the last question. It's up to you. Sure there is a minimum amount of money necessary to live comfortably, but you're the person who can best set that amount.

Traveling full time while still owning a house is an expensive proposition unless you lease it out for an amount that will cover the mortgage, property taxes, insurance, and, in some cases, association fees. If your residence is paid off, you'll still have some obligations, such as property taxes, homeowner's insurance and repairs. If you don't have a family member to take care of the house in your absence, you will want to be wise and protect your investment with a property manager. Even with that, concerns about the safety, condition of the home and changes in the neighborhood may remain. In our case, selling the house and practically everything in it was the only solution. We never looked back. A brand new, carefree life lay ahead.

Full time RV living need not be expensive. In fact, as we found out, it can be cheaper than staying home. If you have to finance a big diesel-pusher, you'll definitely disagree, but if you sell your property and buy an RV outright with the proceeds, your expenses may be as follows:

Fuel – Some folks travel thousands of miles a month. In the beginning, there can be a tendency to race through the states, perhaps a leftover from being stuck in the rat race. Some elect to stay a month or more in each place and cut their fuel bill by at least half. Depending on distances traveled and gas mileage, what you spend on fuel will vary greatly. We average 10.5 miles per gallon pulling our trailer a lot, so our monthly fuel budget has been our biggest expense (about \$700 per month), because we have children from coast to coast who we like to visit.

Food – If you cook in the RV, your expenses should be the same as in your home. Many choose to eat out, and that's when the food bill triples or quadruples. When we are in transit, usually once a week, we eat at fast-food places. We especially like splitting Subway's \$5 foot-long sandwich

that is available in many places we visit. We also use free bonus restaurant meals from our credit card usage. Our monthly food bill averages \$450.

Campgrounds – Dry camping in a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or Forest Service campground can range from free to \$12 a day, or you can set yourself down in a national park for \$25 (there are discounts for seniors with the senior pass). We stayed in a BLM dispersed camping space in the Quartzsite area for a week free of charge, and camped in Zion, Bryce Canyon and Capital Reef National Parks for 11 nights for a grand total of just \$72. If you must have a full hook up campground every night, expect to pay anywhere from \$45 to \$60 a night, and up to \$125 for resorts with all the amenities. Alternating between dry camping for four days until the grey-water tank is on red and then moving to full hook ups has allowed us to stay within our budget of \$600 a month. You decide what your comfort level is and what you can afford.

Other major additional expenses are RV, truck or towing insurance; maintenance costs such as tires that wear out fast with heavy loads and occasional bad roads; propane, which runs about \$25 every three months, plus firewood (\$1 a stick); and toll roads, which we set our GPS to avoid. All other expenses, such as health insurance, phone and Internet, medication, health and beauty aids, cost basically the same as when we lived in a house.

Since our fuel bill is high, we economize and keep track of all our expenses by paying everything above \$10 with our Discover Card, which we pay off in full every month, and get free restaurant cards. We buy used books and DVDs. We hike and enjoy nature, attend free concerts and lectures and take advantage of senior prices at museums and many other entertainment venues.

While full-timing, you can choose the life you feel you can afford. Spend \$150 a month for fuel or \$1,000. Spend nothing boondocking, or \$250 to \$300 in the Corps of Engineers, Forest Service or National Parks campsites, or thousands a month in fancy resorts. Spend \$450 to \$500 eating in the rig or splurge on restaurants where the sky's the limit.

Whatever you decide, you make it happen. A carefree, stress-free life awaits. 🚐





Michigan's Mysterious Peninsula

The U.P.'s Keweenaw Peninsula makes for a fascinating road trip

Michigan's desolate Upper Peninsula is a virtual no-man's land. Although this area makes up almost a third of the state, the U.P. — as it's known by the locals — houses just 3 percent of Michigan's residents. With spectacular forests, abundant lakes and waterfalls, many beautiful parks and 1,700 miles of shoreline along Lake Superior and Lake Michigan, it may seem mysterious why this peninsula is relatively unpopulated. The two-fold answer is obvious to residents: the geographic isolation and long, harsh winters. This area gets more snow than anywhere in the Midwest and is nearly six hours from the closest major city, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Located at the northernmost part of the state and extending into the middle of Lake Superior like a hitchhiker's thumb, the Keweenaw Peninsula is a microcosm of the Upper Peninsula's appeal — relics of a bygone mining industry, the beautiful twin cities of Houghton-Hancock, unexpected elevation for the Midwest, the infinite and rugged shoreline of Lake Superior,

camping opportunities and, at the very tip of the peninsula, the charming village of Copper Harbor.

Only about 2,000 residents brave life in the Keweenaw, which can get hundreds of inches of snow each winter, and the area is dotted by ghost towns and abandoned mines — many hardly visible to passersby.

Lake Superior, the world's largest freshwater lake by surface area, contains 10 percent of the planet's freshwater and is the primary attraction along the Keweenaw. Its shores are rocky, yet stunning with crashing ocean-like waves or, depending on the day, glassy-smooth and clear water.

Travelers shouldn't miss the 8-mile Brockway Mountain Drive that rises above the surrounding lakes and forests from Eagle Harbor to Copper Harbor. At the top is a lookout offering one of the best views in the Midwest.

Houghton, the gateway city to the Keweenaw, has quaint shops and restaurants, as well as the Houghton County Historical Museum with artifacts and historic photographs of min-

ing life. Rides on the coal-burning Lake Linden & Torch Lake Railroad steam train provide excellent views of Torch Lake and the Lake Linden Village Marina. From June-September, it runs each Sunday from noon to 4 p.m., and only costs \$4 for adults.

A few private camping facilities dot the Keweenaw, while the Fort Wilkins State Park near Copper Harbor has 165 sites, electrical hookups, showers, a lighthouse and relics of the 19th century military post located here. This facility protected the area's copper resources during the Civil War and features costumed interpreters and museum exhibits to browse.

The Keweenaw Peninsula, like much of Upper Michigan, offers a glimpse at the industrial and military might of early America, while also preserving the human challenges and ethnic blending that makes our country's history so unique. 📍

Keweenaw National Historical Park,
906-337-3168,
www.nps.gov/kewe/index.htm.



WORTH NOTING

Be sure to visit the picturesque twin cities of Houghton-Hancock on your drive into the Keweenaw.

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VINES, VINEYARDS AND VITICULTURE

Oregon's wineries provide a tasty treat and a scenic tour

By Bob Difley

Most of Oregon's wineries are nestled in its valleys or creep up the south-facing hillsides of the Cascade and Coast Ranges. We were lucky enough to visit five of the state's eight grape-growing regions during our tour. These included the North Willamette Valley and South Willamette Valley, both in the Willamette Valley American Viticultural Area (AVA), and the state's largest wine production area, Southern Oregon, Umpqua Valley, and Rogue and Applegate valleys. The remaining regions, Walla Walla Valley, Columbia Valley and Columbia Gorge, all share their AVAs with the state of Washington.

The aim of our tour was not to just visit wineries that have won awards; all the wineries we sampled produced quality wines. The appreciation of wines is very subjective because no two palates are the same. Although a particular wine has won an award, it may mean that a professional wine taster has found complexity and certain nuances in a wine that the average wine drinker does not detect. Sample a variety of wines from many wineries and pick the ones you like regardless of



Most wineries have tasting rooms where visitors can enjoy the local libations. Many charge a small fee, some or all of which may be refunded with purchase. Some may offer tours of their vineyards.

awards, the reputation of the winery or the price of the bottle. Wine should be enjoyed.

The wineries included in our tour did, however, have to meet certain qualifications: They had to be suitable for large rigs, have access roads, large parking lots, turn-around space and be adjacent to the main winery tour route. They must be open five or more days a week, have an on-site tasting room (generally open from 10 a.m. or 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. or 6 p.m.) and offer retail sales.

A bonus on the winery tour, thanks to the Oregon Department of Transportation, is the helpful signage. You can find all the wineries on our tour by fol-

lowing the blue signs with white lettering all along the route in advance of, and at, turn-offs to the wineries. An added plus is that the signs give the mileage to the winery if it is more than a half-mile off the highway.

We have included a few wineries with drawbacks, but otherwise worth your visit, and you can alter your plans accordingly. When in doubt, call the winery. You will find Oregon wine people a friendly, helpful bunch, and a pleasure to visit. Many of the wineries and tasting rooms have a tasting fee, with some or all of it refunded with purchase. Be sure to ask at the wineries for a winery guide and map to the area's wineries.



South of Portland, Rex Hill Vineyards has been producing pinot noirs since 1982.



THE REGAL PINOT NOIR

Oregon is for pinot lovers. The long mild summers and warm falls enable the grapes to ripen slowly, and develop complex and elegant flavors. Oregon's intense pinots reflect the local terroir (French meaning "sense of place"), embodying the unique characteristics of the local geography, its soil type, weather conditions, sun exposure and drainage, resulting in a strong-flavored, full-bodied, fruity, rich wine.

Another Oregon specialty is the white wine pinot gris (or grigio). Oregon's unique climate allows the grape to achieve the perfect ripeness that produces its distinct flavors, which only a few regions in Europe aside from Oregon grow with any success. Pinot gris is the state's best and top-selling white wine. The August 2007 issue of *Wine & Spirits* magazine featured American pinot gris wines. Their tasters sampled 91 and selected six as the most outstanding. Four of those were from Oregon's Willamette Valley.



TASTY TOUR

We headed south out of Portland on State Route 99W and made our first stop the August Cellars (14000 NE Quarry Rd., Newberg, 503-554-6766) in the Yamhill Valley, the state's largest single wine district. August's cluster of eight wineries share the same facilities, a convenient feature enabling the tasting of wines from different wineries at one location. The parking lot is dirt and not suitable for large rigs, and turn-around space is limited on weekends when the lot is full.

Rex Hill winery was our next stop, and is one of Oregon's most frequently visited wineries (owned by A to Z Wineworks, Oregon's largest winery). It

was chosen as *Wine & Spirits*, "Winery of the Year" in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2006. Tasting room manager Rick Toyota is a fountain of knowledge and is willing to share with both novice and oenophile. Its Reserve Pinot Noir was rated 94 (based on a 100-point scale and considered "outstanding; superior character and style"). Park off the highway to the right (30835 N. Hwy 99W, Newberg, 800-739-4455), past the winery buildings in the large gravel lot with plenty of room and turn-around space.

Next we found Argyle Winery just down the highway at 7th Street in Dundee (691 Highway 99W, Dundee, 888-427-4953, ext. 233). It is one of only a handful of sparkling wine producers in

OUR WINE TOUR

- 1) August Cellars - Newberg
- 2) Rex Hill - Newberg
- 3) Argyle Winery - Dundee
- 4) Yamhill Carlton Wineries - Carlton
- 5) R. Stuart & Co. - McMinnville
- 6) Panther Creek - McMinnville
- 7) Evergreen Vineyards - McMinnville
- 8) Coelho Winery - Amity
- 9) Eola Hills Wine Cellars - Rickreall
- 10) Benton Lane Winery - Monroe
- 11) Sylvan Ridge/Hinman Vineyards - Eugene
- 12) Sweet Cheeks Winery - Eugene
- 13) King Estate Winery - Eugene
- 14) Melrose Vineyards - Roseburg
- 15) Bridgeview Vineyards - Cave Junction



Oregon, though they also produce memorable pinots as well. Their Nut-house Pinot Noir made the *Wine Spec-tator* Top 100 list for 2006. (Argyle, along with several Oregon wineries, practices safe agricultural practices that have gained it the certification Salmon Safe.) The second entrance on the left leads to the parking lot. To leave, continue around behind the winery to the exit loop.

More than 100 wineries squeeze into an area between Newberg, McMinnville, Gaston, Yamhill and Carlton, so this would be a good place to pick a campground and spend a day or two touring the area's many fine wineries in your tow vehicle.

The following day, we took a side trip up State Route 47 to the Yamhill-Carlton wineries. Park in the pull-through parking area behind the Scott Paul tasting room (128 Route 47) in Carlton and visit three tasting rooms on the same corner. Tyrus Evans, in the old Carlton RR Depot, offers wines made across the street in its winery. There is also parking behind the winery.

We returned to 99W and turned south (right) toward McMinnville. There are two places in McMinnville we visited: R. Stuart & Co. (845 NE 5th St.), housed in an old granary; and Panther Creek's tasting room (455 NE Irvine St.), located in its winery, the old McMinnville power plant. You can park on the street or in the large lot behind the winery.

South of McMinnville, we headed northeast on State Route 18 for a side trip to Evergreen Vineyards (866-434-4818), which has a huge parking lot since it is inside the huge Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum along with Howard Hughes' famous flying boat, the Spruce Goose and several other historic flying machines. The wines, of course, bear the Spruce Goose label.

Then we returned to 99W and traveled south to Amity. Coelho's tasting room is in a building built in the 1930s. Then, we continued on to Rickreall where we stopped at Eola Hills Wine Cellars (501 South Pacific Hwy 99W, 800-291-6730). If your timing is right, you can enjoy its "Best in the Northwest" Sunday Brunch in the Cellar.

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YAMAHA

Oregon Winery Tour



Many Oregon wineries have become destinations in themselves, decorated and landscaped to attract visitors and please the eye with water features, vintage aircraft and beautiful gardens filled with bountiful blossoms.

Weekly specials also include pan-fried oysters, 10 styles of eggs Benedict, an omelet and pasta bar, Belgian waffle and crepe bar, soup and salads and two glasses of wine. The 2005 pinot gris won a double gold medal at the 2006 Florida State Fair International Wine Competition. Drive to the large event parking area behind the winery.

Continuing south, the number of wineries thinned out as we entered the South Willamette AVA and Lane County, home to 18 wineries. When you drive through Corvallis to Monroe, and as you

leave town, stay to the right and merge onto Territorial Highway. Highway 99W turns off to the left to Benton-Lane Winery (23924 Territorial Highway, Monroe, 541-847-5792). We checked it out. Two of its wines made the 2006 Top 100 Wines of the World. According to winemaker Tim Wilson, Benton-Lane practices environmentally friendly farming techniques and is certified both Salmon Save and Sustainable.

About nine miles south of Veneta we found two nice wineries across the road from each other: The European-style

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Sylvan Ridge/Hinman Vineyards (27012 Briggs Hill Road, Eugene, 541-345-1945) and the Sweet Cheeks Winery (27007 Briggs Hill Road, Eugene, 877-309-9463). Sweet Cheeks is a brand new winery with a pleasantly large picnicking patio with vineyard and valley views. Parking is limited so it might be best to visit this winery on a weekday, as weekends, especially Friday afternoons, are crowded.

King Estate Winery (80854 Territorial Hwy, Eugene, 541-942-9874) offers 1,033 acres of certified organic vineyards, including orchards, and vegetable and flower gardens. The winemaking process is also certified organic. It sells estate-grown organic produce to enjoy on the patio overlooking the vineyards. The newly opened full-service restaurant features gourmet dishes and produce from its organic garden. Oh, and they also make wine. At the 2005 Oregon State Fair the Professional Wine Awards presented King Estate the 2002 Oregon Pinot Noir a Gold Medal, Best of Class, and Best of Show of all 275 wine entries.

Next, we continued through Larane and back to I-5 where we headed south to visit one winery from the Umpqua AVA, Melrose Vineyards (885 Melqua Road, Roseburg, 541-672-6080). It occupies a restored 100-year-old barn.

Several wineries are grouped together south of Grants Pass and east toward Medford and Ashland in the Rogue and Applegate Valley AVA. However, the last winery on this tour, Bridgeview Vineyards (4210 Holland Loop Road, 877-273-4843) on Route 199 in Cave Junction, is one of Oregon's largest wineries. The blue bottles of Blue Moon label (including a bottle of chardonnay shaped like the Man in the Moon) are unique and their pricing is reasonable, with some wines priced below \$8. And the owners Lelo and Bob Kerivan are fellow RVers, vacationing in their fifth-wheel whenever they can get away.

We toured only a sprinkling of Oregon's 350-plus wineries, but that titillated our taste buds and introduced us to the high quality of wines available in our nation's fourth largest wine producing state (preceded only by California, New York and Washington). Even better was finding nice campgrounds and making new friends in each AVA we visited. Happy tasting! 🍷

OREGON WINERY INFORMATION AND LISTINGS

To access most of the wineries on this tour, park your rig at a campground and use your tow vehicle. Check each winery's individual information for a map, driving directions and tasting room hours. Don't assume that the RV/bus icon indicates you can actually get in and get out with a large rig. We found that some displaying the icon had low overhanging tree branches, parking for only smaller RVs and no turn-around space when too many vehicles were in the lot.

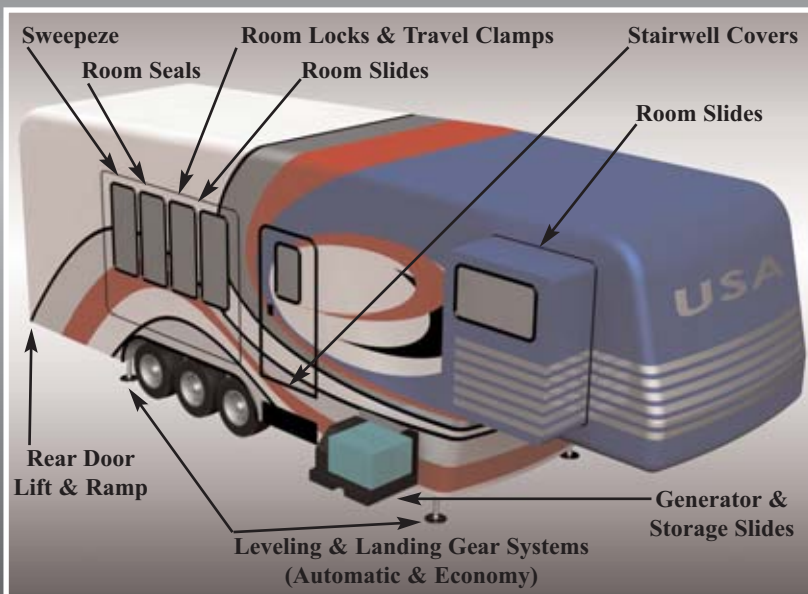
Click on the "Explore Wine Regions" of the Oregon Advisory Board's website (www.oregonwine.org) and select the region you want to tour. Then select the individual winery for its information page and directions.



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Sparkles in the Sand

Everyone gets lucky at Craters of Diamonds State Park

by Pamela Selbert

A little more than a century ago an Arkansas farmer named John Wesley Huddleston spotted two “round pebbles with fiery eyes that blazed up at him” from the gravel of his barnyard where he was feeding his hogs.

Huddleston arranged for the stones to be sent to a jewelry store in Little Rock to be appraised. The jeweler confirmed they were indeed diamonds, one white weighing 2.63 carats, the other was yellow and weighed 1.38 carats, both stones were “of fine grade.” The news spread like wildfire.

Before Huddleston’s discovery, no diamond had ever been found in its original location anywhere in the entire Western Hemisphere. Since then, tens of thousands have been plucked from the plowed furrows of a 37-acre patch of lamproite (a mixture of soil atop an eroded volcanic pipe where diamonds were created) that is today Crater of Diamonds State Park and was once part of Huddleston’s farm.

The park is conveniently located just two miles south of Murfreesboro in the hills of southwest Arkansas and more



[Left] Melissa Oliver (right) examines the contents of a large screen as a couple works their high grade in the adjoining tub. The Olivers, from Rosston, Ark. come every weekend. They have found more than 60 diamonds. [Right] Mike Ellison of Murfreesboro dumps his saruka.

than 100,000 visitors a year pay a small fee to dig (only hand tools are allowed and can be rented) and keep all the diamonds they find. Some have become famous. There was the 40.23-carat Uncle Sam, the largest diamond yet found in North America (1924); the 15.33-carat Star of Arkansas (1956); the 7.28-carat Dickinson-Stevens (1998); the 5.75-carat Arabian Knight (2009) and the 4.25-carat canary-hued Kahn Canary diamond (1977), which Hillary Clinton wore at the 1993 and 1997 presidential inaugural balls.

Spectacular as those may be, the largest so far has been the 3.03-carat white Strawn-Wagner (1998), which after being cut weighs 1.09 carats and is valued at nearly \$34,000. On revolving display at the park museum/visitor center, the stone is set in a white gold and platinum.

Treasures To Be Found

The chances of finding such a treasure may be relatively slim, but the possibility of it entices visitors to come to the crater for a dig. Many visit often, some every day for months, even years. Friendly rivalries sometimes develop, such as between two prospectors we met years ago, James Archer and Angelo Cela, both in their 70s. Both had retired from other occupations and moved to Murfreesboro to dig for diamonds six days a week, rain or shine, and both had found dozens, always good-naturedly trying to out-dig the other.

Archer and Cela have since passed away, but while watching them work on one of our early visits I asked Cela how, probing in the muck, he could tell the difference between the quartz, calcite and diamonds he was unearthing. He looked up knowingly through Ben Franklin glasses that had slipped low on his nose and said, "It's apples and oranges, kid."

Park interpreter Margi Jenks, a volcanologist, told us "between 800 and 1,000 diamonds in a wide range of sizes, color and quality are found every year. White diamonds are the most common, followed by brown, with yellow the least-often found."

Today one might marvel that Huddleston (who, sadly, died a pauper), after making his serendipitous discoveries, did not scour his 160-acre farm for more. Instead he promptly sold the land for \$36,000 to three Little Rock, Arkansas in-

vestors, who then formed the Arkansas Diamond Company. Their commercial mining of the site soon revealed numerous "diamond-productive" acres. Three years after the first gems were discovered, a South African diamond mine operator came to test the site and found diamonds throughout a 205-foot deep test shaft.

As the news spread, so did a treasure-seeking frenzy that soon resembled the California Gold Rush of half a century earlier. The excitement was further fueled when Huddleston's neighbor M.M. Mauney opened his land to visitors, since it contained the site's remaining diamond-bearing acres. Mauney charged just 50 cents for ice cream, the chance to dig for diamonds and keep whatever visitors unearthed. Many were



Examples of the colors of diamonds found at the Crater: yellow, brown and white.



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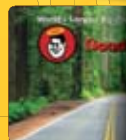
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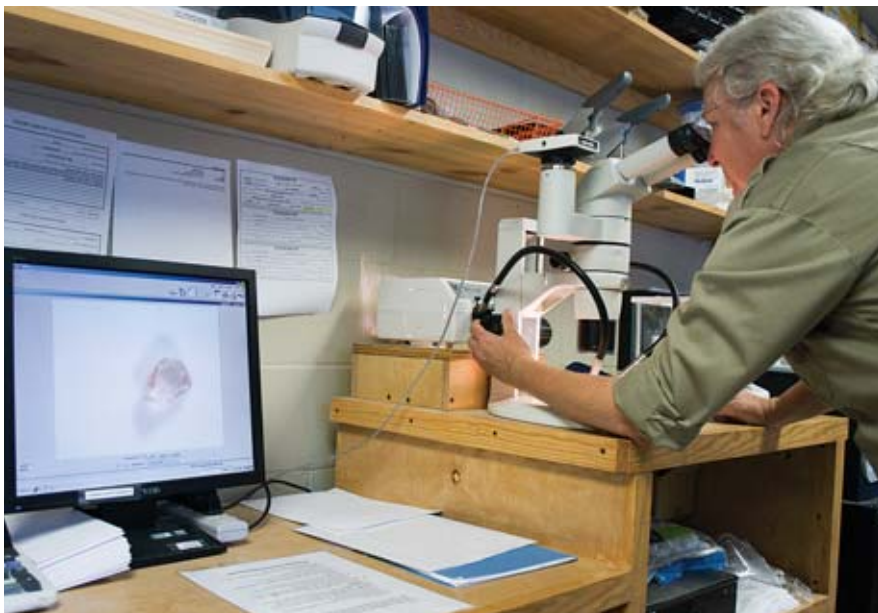
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[Left] Margi Jenks verifies a stone is indeed a diamond, then weighs and photographs the find. Visitors receive a certificate of authenticity for their finds. Because of their unusual hardness and beauty, Arkansas diamonds are considered one of the most desirable found anywhere. **[Right]** This little girl may not be using the most efficient method of discovering diamonds, but she is sure having the time of her life doing it.

found, including a 10-carat gem.

Tourism to the area, which had been a trickle at most, became a flood. Soon Murfreesboro's only hotel, with just 10 rooms, was obliged to turn away hundreds of visitors. A tent city for the many gem seekers sprang up near the crater. Over the decades the land saw various owners, and a number of commercial mining ventures came and went. In 1969, General Earth Minerals of Dallas bought and consolidated the properties and then continued running the operation as a tourist attraction. Three years later, the state purchased the 80-acre crater and surrounding land for \$750,000, establishing 911-acre Crater of Diamonds State Park. Jenks noted it's the only site in the world where diamonds occur naturally and the public can keep what they find.

Within a few years the park also offered a campground (which recently underwent a \$1 million renovation), visitor center (also recently redone, with a grand opening on Memorial Day 2011), gift shop and other amenities, including a water park. We've stayed at the campground several times, most recently since the renovation, which reduced 60 sites to 47 much roomier, tree-shaded sites, all with water, 50-amp electrical service and sewer. The 1.2-mile River Trail can be accessed directly from the campground and winds through a forest

of pine and oak to the Little Missouri, with placards explaining local flora and fauna with bench seats along the way.

Main Attraction

Diamonds are the brightest draw here, but an array of semi-precious stones are also found including calcite, quartz, peridot, garnet, amethyst, black spinel, emerald-green chrome-diopside, agate and jasper. Of the diamonds still encased in the crater's lamproite, park superintendent Justin Dorsey said, "We won't run out of them any time soon."

There are several ways to prospect for diamonds, including just walking the furrows. The land is plowed once a month to help reveal new material, and deep plowed (to a depth of 6 feet) every fall. People do get lucky, and sometimes find exquisite stones lying on the ground, even in shoe prints. Dry sifting through a screening tray is another method, but wet sluicing (screening in water) is generally the most successful,

but also the most work. Screening trays full of diamond-bearing soil are shaken and rotated in tubs of water. The diamonds are heavier than other material and will sink to the bottom of the tray, so when it's flipped over they lie glistening on top.

There are those who make regular trips to the mine, some every weekend, and they find as many as half the diamonds taken from the site. The last day we were there, the Grahams of Wisconsin, a family of three, were barely able to contain their excitement after unearthing a sliver of a diamond just before the mine closed for the day. A lovely thing, the 22-pointer (almost a quarter of a carat), lay on the open palm of Mrs. Graham. Looking more luminously pearl-like than sparkly, a typical diamond-in-the-rough, it was the first they had ever found. But the sparkle in their eyes meant it may not be the last time they visit Crater of Diamonds State Park. 📍

BEFORE YOU GO »

Two events are held at the park: Prospectors' Gemboree, June 16, is a day of family activities including a treasure hunt; and John Huddleston Heritage Day in August, offers speakers telling the story of diamond mining at the site. The town of Murfreesboro will hold its 39th annual Diamond Festival in late spring (for information contact the Chamber of Commerce at 870-285-3131). For more information about the park: Crater of Diamonds State Park, 870-285-3113, www.craterofdiamondsstatepark.com.

Discovering Louisville

By Tom Kaiser



Come for the Rally, stay for the city's many attractions

South of downtown Louisville, the Kentucky Exposition Center is the epicenter for the Good Sam Rally taking place June 21-24 that will draw thousands of RVers. Attending the Rally will give you the perfect opportunity to make yourself comfortable, stay a while and explore the area. A relatively undiscovered dot on the national map, Louisville is a cosmopolitan city on the rise with colonial-era history, exceptional architecture and cultural attrac-

tions surrounded by an incredibly beautiful landscape that's within a quick drive of this city of nearly 1 million residents.

Before you arrive, it's best to have some information about your destination. Kentucky's largest city, Louisville, is home to more than 2,500 restaurants that feed a \$200 million local tourism industry. It houses the largest collection of Victorian homes in the United States and the third largest historically preserved district in Old Louisville. Its



Louisville is home to an impressive 2,500 restaurants.

PHOTOS BY DAN DRY



[Left] Visit the Urban Bourbon Trail-area restaurants and pubs that specialize in the smoky liquor. [Center] The Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory is the birthplace of the official bat of Major League Baseball. [Right] Walk the Louisville Slugger Walk of Fame, a mile-long tribute to baseball's greatest players.

skyline is situated along an 85-acre Waterfront Park that provides an alluring backdrop to the adventure easily accessible within this vibrant city's metropolitan area.

The Tours

Looking for a quick and easy way to soak up the area's flavor? Several big-name tours offer convenient ways to visit the highlights of the area. If any flavor captures the spirit of Louisville, it's bourbon, Kentucky's own consummate spirit.

Visit www.bourboncountry.com to create a personalized bourbon tour to experience great drinks, bourbon-marinated food and entertainment throughout the city. Prove your knowledge by getting a Bourbon Country passport and collecting stamps for all the places you visit along the Urban Bourbon Trail — area restaurants and pubs that specialize in the smoky liquor.

Ask any 10-year-old boy about Louisville, and he may give you a recommendation to visit the Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory where they build the official bat of Major League Baseball. This is your place to see one-of-a-kind baseball history, learn how they build bats, test out bats used in major league games, order your own personalized bat and stroll the mile-long Louisville Slugger Walk of Fame that honors many of the game's greatest players.

The museum begins its factory tours at 9 a.m. and they run through 5 p.m. every day; Sunday tours begin at noon. Admission is \$11 for adults, \$10 for seniors, \$6 for kids 6-12 years old, and free for kids 5 and under.

Less than 10 minutes west of the Exposition Center, the Churchill Downs racetrack hosts the annual Kentucky

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Discovering Louisville

Derby, along with a series of other races and music festivals throughout the year. It's a National Historic Landmark, with historic walking tours free with admission to the Kentucky Derby Museum (\$14 for adults, \$13 for 55+, \$6 for kids 5-12, free for kids under 5).

Throughout the 30-minute guided walking tour visitors will learn about past Derby winners and track trivia, meet the track's resident thoroughbred horse and experience the location's history. The museum attracts more than 200,000 visitors, and recently benefited from a \$5.5 million renovation after a flood damaged the main floor exhibits in 2009.

Stepping into the modern, leading edge of art, Louisville's 21c Museum Hotel is the country's first museum dedicated exclusively to contemporary art of the 21st century. The museum is located in the heart of downtown and within walking distance of the Louisville Slugger Museum, Frazier History Museum, Muhammad Ali Center and the Louisville Science Center — all part of Louisville's acclaimed Museum Row.



PHOTO COURTESY CHURCHILL DOWNS & REED PALMER

Churchill Downs, a National Historic Landmark, hosts the annual Kentucky Derby.

For the full experience, the 21c Museum Hotel combines Southern hospitality and luxury with some of the best American contemporary art on display. This 90-room boutique hotel that opened in 2006 is housed within 19th century tobacco and bourbon warehouse buildings that form the museum and hotel complex. It was voted one of the country's top

hotels by the Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards. The hotel's lobby gallery is open to non-guests, and the men's restroom is a must-see.

Nightlife

Don't go to bed too early when you're in town or you'll miss the other side of life in Louisville. And there's no place to ex-



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The 85-acre Waterfront Park is a recreation area with a playground, water feature, walking trails, bike rentals and a 12-acre great lawn that slopes down to the Ohio River.



perience the nightlife like Fourth Street Live! It's Louisville's premier dining, entertainment and retail destination. Located in the historic downtown district on Fourth Street between Liberty Street and Muhammad Ali Boulevard, this row of venues includes Hard Rock Café, The Improv Comedy Club, TGIFridays, Tengo Sed Cantina, Angel's RockBar, Sully's, J. Gumbos and the world's first Maker's Mark Bourbon House & Lounge. Live music is featured at Howl at the Moon.

Natural Attractions

Sited along the beautiful Ohio River, Louisville's downtown is unique for its stunning evening reflections and 85-acre Waterfront Park. It's considered the front door to Kentucky from its northern neighbor, Indiana. Three building phases, and an estimated \$95 million, has made this park a city treasure that continues to evolve. Aside from the spectacular view, the park hosts an ongoing roster of concerts and festivals and it's the perfect spot for some quiet reflection, a lovely stroll or a picnic in

one of the country's finest urban parks.

For an escape from the city, the rolling hills and lush trees of the Jefferson Memorial Forest are a quick 30-minute drive south of downtown Louisville. The 6,191-acre park is a living memorial to the state's wartime veterans. It's a National Audubon Society wildlife refuge and the nation's largest urban forest, but is still expanding.

Popular activities include hiking its 35 miles of trails — ranging from paved to rugged — fishing, bird watching, picnicking and camping. Along the way, keep your eyes peeled for 10 species of towering oak trees, abundant wildflowers and animals including fox, deer, great blue herons and owls.

Back in town and just across the Ohio River in Indiana, the Falls of the Ohio State Park — a swift 10 minutes from downtown — is part of a National Wildlife Conservation Area and includes an interpretive center where visitors can learn about the nearby Devonian fossil beds from the Paleozoic Era. Finds include ancient shells, so-called Indian

Louisville's 2012 Good Sam Rally

One of three Good Sam Rallies being held across the country in 2012, the Louisville event takes place at the Kentucky Exposition Center near downtown Louisville June 21-24. This is your place to enjoy entertainment events, attend informational seminars and tour the massive trade show under one air-conditioned roof.

Entertainment options include music stars Burt Bacharach and Sheryl Crow, optional tours, the 10th annual Rally Dog Show on Saturday, and seminars during which RV professionals answer questions and spread their knowledge about healthy cooking, technical troubleshooting and helpful travel tips. All seminars are scheduled in 1 ½ hour blocks of time, although individual presentation times may vary.

Get more information and register for your visit at www.therally.com or by calling 877-749-7122. Save \$50 by attending multiple rallies in 2012, reserve your spot for the Daytona rally Nov. 2-4.

Bead fossils, corals and various snails. The history of previous human inhabitants is also on display in this park.

Whether you are at the Good Sam Rally, touring town or exploring the surrounding countryside, you will find it very easy to keep busy during your visit to Louisville. 📍

Sited along the Ohio River, downtown Louisville offers beautiful evening reflections illuminating the river with city light.

May 2012 TRAILERLIFE 31



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(See next page, please)

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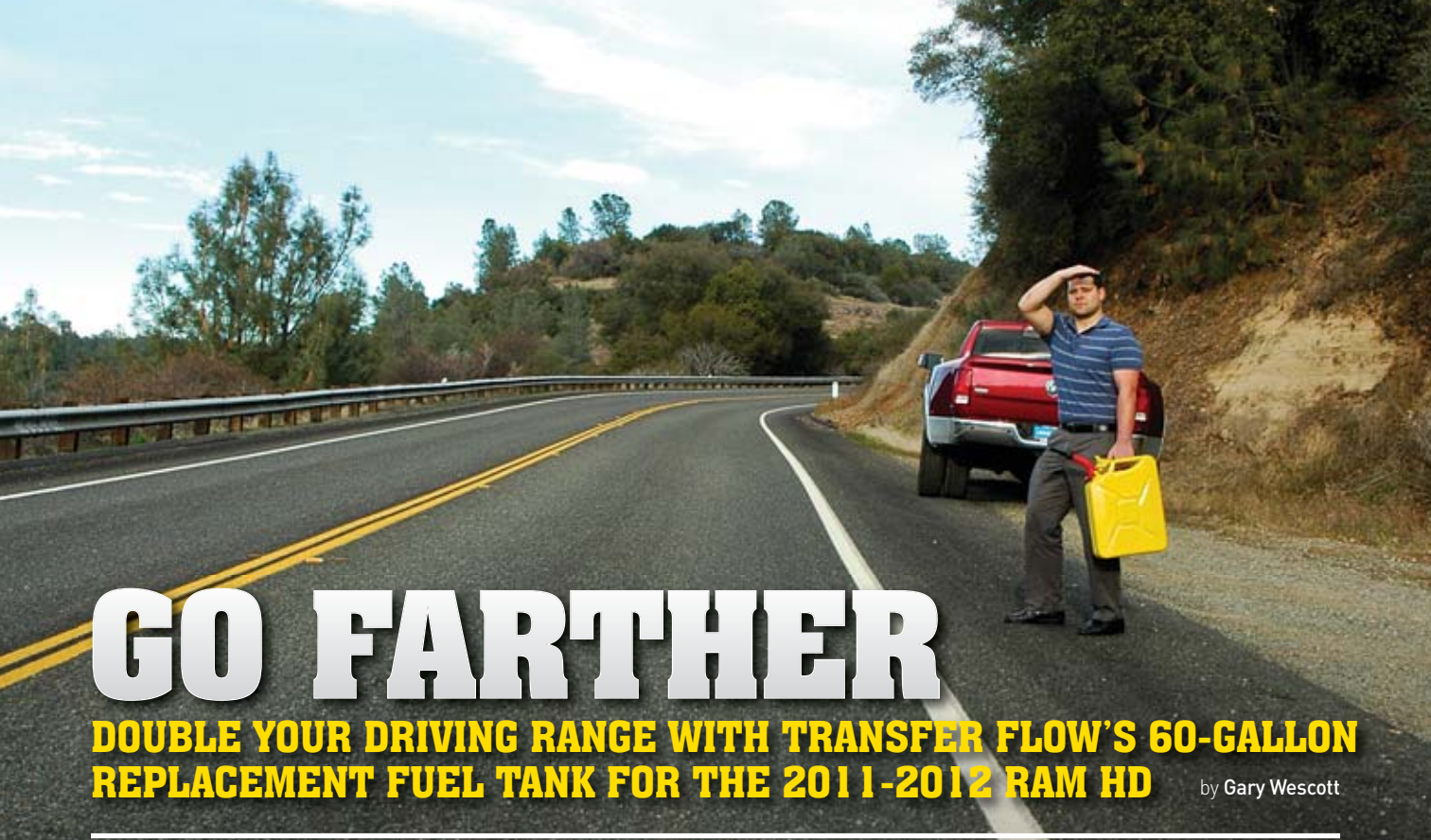
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GO FARTHER

DOUBLE YOUR DRIVING RANGE WITH TRANSFER FLOW'S 60-GALLON REPLACEMENT FUEL TANK FOR THE 2011-2012 RAM HD

by Gary Wescott

Everything is bigger on the Ram HD. Surprisingly, with all that size the Ram HD Crew Cab Long Bed comes with just a 35-gallon fuel tank. While the Cummins is known for its good fuel economy, if you're towing a big fifth-wheel, and getting 9-to-10 MPG, that's only going to take you a little more than 300 miles. Most of us want to go farther between fuel stops.

Transfer Flow is one the most prolific manufacturers of fuel tanks, has a knack for getting the most out of the space available, and has just introduced a 60-gallon replacement fuel system for the 2011-2012 Ram HD 2500/3500 Crew Cab Long Bed (two-or four-wheel drive models).

A brand new Ram 3500 long bed dually was already on the rack at Transfer Flow's facility in Chico, California when we arrived to review the installation procedure. The first step in removing the OEM tank was to loosen the short rubber connecting hoses to the metal fill and vent tubes and slip them loose. The tank was supported securely with a hydraulic jack; then the factory mounting straps were removed. Then it was lowered about 6 inches, making just enough room to reach and disconnect the electrical plug from the OEM sending unit and the supply and return hoses on top the tank. These can be difficult to see, but step-by-step instructions with

photos are included in the detailed installation manual.

With the OEM tank now on the shop floor, the fuel sender was removed and a new float arm was attached to give an accurate fuel-level calibration for the new, larger tank. The factory uses a twist-lock compression seal on the sender. Transfer Flow replaces that with an O-ring and gasket, and a top-sealing ring attached with six nuts over studs. Two new rollover valves were also fitted.

Soapy water and compressed air were used to double-check all seals. Using low pressure (about 3 PSI) for this seal check is suggested, as too much pressure can balloon the tank and



A) Though it may not look that big, the new Transfer Flow 60-gallon replacement tank for the 2012 Crew Cab Long Bed significantly extends your range. B) The first step was to loosen the short rubber connecting hoses to the metal fill and vent tubes and slip them off. C) With the factory mounting straps removed, the tank was securely supported with a hydraulic jack and lowered.



D) A new float arm was attached to give an accurate fuel level calibration for the larger tank.
 E) Transfer Flow replaces the twist-lock compression seal with a new O-ring and gasket, and a top-sealing ring that is attached with six nuts over studs. F) Two new rollover valves were fitted.

damage the internal baffles.

Installing the tank was straightforward, but it does weigh about 200 pounds, so a proper support was necessary during this operation. No drilling was needed. The Transfer Flow tank hangers hooked right into the factory frame slots. Additional padding is added on top to accommodate the shape of the larger tank. With the tank slightly lowered, the electrical connection and the fuel pick-up lines were plugged in. The connectors on the new tank face toward the front, making them much easier to reconnect, and the two hose fittings have 3/8-inch and 5/16-inch diameters, so they are impossible to mix up. Dual-purpose rubber fill- and vent-hose connectors were supplied in the kit, but they do need to be cut to length depending on whether the installation is on a single rear wheel or a dually. The tank was then fully raised into position and new lower mounting straps were installed.

The new 60-gallon replacement fuel system carries an MSRP of \$995 and installation at the Transfer Flow factory in Chico is \$200. However, Transfer Flow

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G) Soapy water and compressed air are used to double check all seals. H) Transfer Flow tank hangers hook into the factory frame slots. I) Additional padding is added on top to accommodate the shape of the larger tank. J) The new Transfer Flow tank weighs about 200 pounds, so a proper support is necessary during the installation process.

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AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE MEMBERS

As an RV owner, you understand the importance of being prepared. You made a smart investment when you enrolled in Good Sam Roadside Assistance. One thing I feel strongly about and have a passion for is our Roadside Assistance product. As a member of the Roadside program myself, it is obvious to me why this is the best product available. This letter is not a sales pitch, it's just an explanation of the facts to reaffirm your trust. On average, more than 1 in 3 RV owners will experience a roadside emergency this year. I did myself on the way from Chicago to Traverse City!

Although roadside assistance is something most people would rather purchase and then not have to worry about, you may find other services offering seemingly similar services. It is very important that you carefully review – on an Apples to Apples basis – what you are really getting for your money. We have worked very hard to enhance and improve this product. I am proud of the results.

Good Sam, guided by our management team, current members and Insurance experts around the country, has re-designed a road service program that uniquely meets the needs of RV owners like us. As you know, we handle other vehicles as well, like autos, trucks, and other household vehicles, but no one can match our expertise when it comes to RV's. Compare that to another popular product, Coach-Net®, which is commonly available through dealers. Unlike Coach-Net®, Good Sam Roadside Assistance has been helping RV owners since 1984 with over 1.6 million roadside rescues, while servicing a customer base of close to 500,000 families.

That's why I am suggesting you take a moment to review the benefits and compare them to any other product. On the following page, I have summarized the most critical emergency service standards. I think you'll see that Good Sam Roadside Assistance will always be the right choice.

You have invested a great deal in your RV and by purchasing a quality roadside assistance program you have invested in your security. I'd like to highlight a few significant differences between Good Sam Roadside Assistance and the competition.

- Good Sam has an exclusive Nationwide Brand Name Tire Delivery and Servicing Network – where we “bring the shop to you.” 40% of our claims every year are tire related! We are also working on a preventive program to avoid some of these unnecessary breakdowns.
- Good Sam's Caller Locator uses cell phone GPS technology to pinpoint our members' exact locations. This is important because RVers often travel to remote locations.
- Good Sam's RV Roadside Assistance Mobile App will allow you to request assistance at the touch of a button.
- And my personal promise, if you ever have an issue that is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can contact me directly at MarcusVIP@GoodSamFamily.com. I will take care of it myself, period.

I would like to show my personal appreciation for your continued loyalty by making current Roadside Assistance Members this offer – if you are not one of our thousands of members enrolled in automatic renewal, do so now and I will guarantee your membership dues for life. Specifically – I will guarantee \$112.95 if you have Standard Roadside Assistance and \$129.95 if you have Platinum Roadside Assistance. Automatic renewal means you NEVER have a gap in service, you NEVER have to worry about a price increase and you will NEVER receive another renewal notice again! Call 1-888-557-3442 to learn more.



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- ✓ Appointment Service
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Transfer Flow Replacement Tank



K) With the tank slightly lowered the fuel pick-up lines and electrical connection are plugged in. L) Replacement fill and vent hose connectors are supplied and need to be cut to size.

has a network of dealers nationwide to install and service its products; fuel systems are covered by a three-year or 60,000-mile limited warranty. This replacement tank won't give you any better fuel economy, but on long trips, it certainly will extend your range. Now you might only need to stop for coffee on the way to your favorite campground. 🚚

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A Clear View

Voyager wireless digital backup camera system adds an element of safety without the fuss of extensive wiring

by Bill and Jenn Gehr

Navigating the space around you while towing a trailer is often a major challenge. Backing into a campsite, for example, is difficult enough, let alone if you're by yourself. Even with an assistant to help guide you, hand signals can end up looking like you're trying to swat off a buzzing bee! It would sure be nice to have a set of eyes back there.

Backup cameras are a good solution but they are not commonly found in trailers, and trying to wire one up can be difficult. There are a few wireless aftermarket units available, but the analog technology typically used in these devices has not been effective enough to provide the driver with a clear view — and is susceptible to interference and noise problems. Recognizing this problem, ASA

Electronics created a modern, easy to use and install wireless digital observation system called the Voyager.

The WVO511 Voyager wireless backup camera system (MSRP \$850) consists of two major parts: a 5.6-inch LCD color monitor with audio and a wireless camera that is mounted onto the rear of your RV using a swivel bracket. The audio feature is a clever bonus that enables the driver to hear the assistant's directions, enhancing the process. There is a volume control on the front of the monitor in addition to the brightness control. The wireless signal transmits through and around objects, and works on vehicles 60-plus feet in length. The Voyager employs proprietary WiSight technology so the camera is locked to the monitor, and interference is virtually a

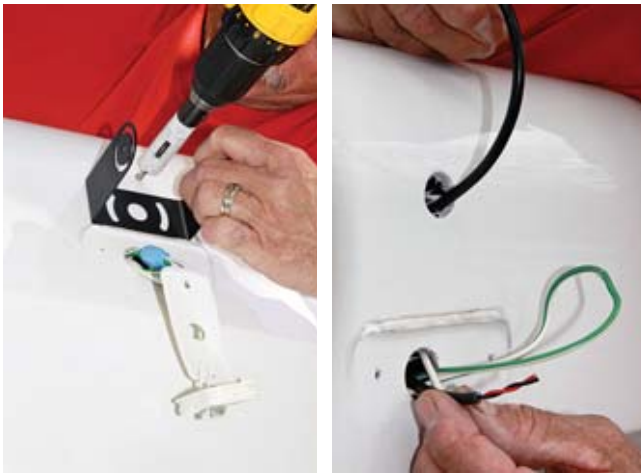


Select a location in the rear of the trailer, centered above the clearance light. Power for the camera will be tapped off the clearance light wiring.

thing of the past.

Installation of the Voyager takes only a fraction of the time it would take to set up a fully wired system, especially in a trailer, where the separation of the tow vehicle complicates the procedure. The camera should be

Voyager Wireless Backup Camera



(Left) Remove the clearance light and drill a 3/4-inch hole for routing the camera wiring. (Right) Wiring is then routed to the clearance light.

mounted high in the rear of the trailer and centered above the clearance light(s), which will be the source of 12-volt DC power. If space is limited above the clearance light(s), the Voyager can be mounted below; just be sure the camera does not obstruct the light(s).

Before drilling, temporarily install the bracket on the camera and hold it up at the desired location for mounting. Be sure that the antenna can be positioned vertically without obstructions. Then mark and mount the bracket using the supplied screws; weatherproof sealant must be applied to prevent water damage. Remove the nearest clearance light and select a location to drill a 3/4-inch hole in order to run

the cable to the light fixture. Insert the cable with the grommet and route it to the clearance light. It may be necessary to enlarge the clearance light hole behind the light to be able to splice together the Voyager cable. Prior to tightening the screws, you will need to install the monitor inside the tow vehicle.

In the cab of the truck, plug the power cable to the back of the monitor and secure with the supplied cable tie. Once the provided bracket is attached to the rear of the monitor (using the supplied screws), find a suitable location on your windshield for mounting, using the suction cup with snap lever. Make sure the location does not block your vision. Plug the power cord of the Voyager monitor into any 12-volt DC outlet and move the antenna to a vertical position.

Press the power button on the monitor and turn on your vehicle's parking lights. The camera image should appear in approximately 10 seconds. If the monitor is not receiving a signal from the camera, an image will not appear on the screen and you will need to pair your camera with the monitor. This step requires two people following the pairing process described in the installation manual. Adjust the viewing angle of the camera and tighten the screws on the camera bracket. Be sure that the antenna always remains in a vertical position.

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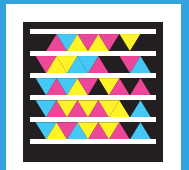
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Weatherproof sealant must be used on the holes for the bracket mounting screws to prevent water damage. Finish mounting the camera bracket with the supplied screws.

The Voyager system provides an excellent view of multiple angles and builds confidence when changing lanes and backing into close quarters. Infrared, low-light enhancement capabilities support images that are clear day or night. Overall, on the road, the monitor gives the driver better visibility of potential blind spots, especially while executing lane changes at night and in traffic.

In camp, the combination of sight and sound proved indispensable while backing into narrow campsites. During our test, the camera views clearly informed the driver of tree limbs to avoid, and the helper was able to use verbal instructions to prevent the trailer from smacking into a drainage pipe that was protruding out of the ground near the rear wheels. That incident alone proved the value of this backup camera system. It's nice to have eyes in the back of your head. 🚗

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A SOLID CONNECTION

Torklift's frame-mounted camper tie-down system using cleverly designed Fastgun Turnbuckles is a real game changer

Pickup campers are versatile RVs, providing an amazing amount of livability for their size. Obviously, these campers (also known as slide-in or truck campers) are designed to mount in the bed of a pickup truck, although they can be easily unloaded for use independently of the truck and/or for solo storage. The key elements to making this happen are a good set of corner jacks and an appropriate tie-down system.

Ever since the slide-in camper was invented, the methods used to attach it to the bed of a truck have been fairly basic. The commonly used bed and bumper tie-downs have a pretty good track record, but a more secure and stable method is to use frame-mounted camper tie-downs like the ones designed and marketed by Torklift International.

To test the performance differences between the two tie-down systems, we enlisted a Dodge 3500 four-wheel-drive dually carrying a Lance 1161 camper. The almost 12-foot-long Lance is a formidable load

for the truck, and the original bed-type tie-downs served the duo well for the past seven years. But the downside to this type of system is the bed, which is bolted to the frame, is relied upon for support, rather than the frame. If the bed moves, the camper moves with it, thus affecting stability. In what may be a subconscious process, the owner becomes acclimated to the handling characteristics of his particular combo and adjusts driving habits in order to be comfortable and safe on the road. In this case, the Dodge and Lance had their limitations, which, surprisingly, were marginally noticeable until the Torklift tie-downs were installed.

The original mounting system uti-



A) Front brackets are bolted to frame using existing holes; fit is very precise.
B) Tie-down inserts are slid into frame brackets and held in place with pins.
C) Fish wire is used to thread bolt through frame with restricted access. **D)** Painter's tape is used to prevent bolt from slipping out of hole while second bolt is fished through frame.



E) A piece of 3/8-inch tubing is wrapped around emergency brake line using a cable tie. F) Tubing prevents the emergency brake line from rubbing against the bracket. G) Four holes are drilled into the hitch receiver side plates. H) Rear brackets are bolted to hitch receiver side plates. Washers can be used if there's an interference problem with the exhaust tailpipe. I) Insert slides into rear bracket and is pinned in place. J) Fastgun turnbuckles must be assembled before positioning.

lized a cross member that was bolted to the front of the bed with brackets on the ends that accepted the tie-downs. In back, the tie-downs were connected to brackets bolted on the ends of the bumper — not very stout, but standard operating procedure for many years. Torklift components are securely bolted to the side plates of the hitch receiver and front frame members.

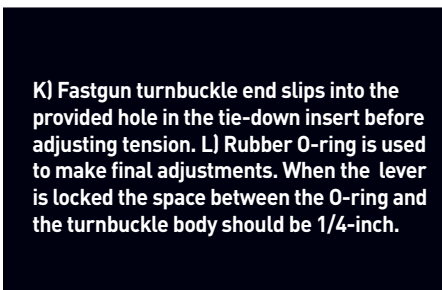
Installing the tie-down brackets (MSRP for the rear, \$240; the front kit is \$272) is a fairly benign process with a few moments of frustration brought on while bolt fishing. Four holes are drilled into the hitch receiver side plates, and the arms are connected using grade eight bolts set with 40 ft-lbs of torque. It may be necessary to use a few half-inch flat washers (supplied with the kit) if the tie-down bracket interferes with the exhaust tailpipe.

The fronts require a little more head scratching before you figure out exactly where the brackets go, but you don't have to drill. Part of the problem is due to the instructions, which could use some revision. The right side was easy, but the clearance to position the bolts through the bracket on the left was partially blocked by the gas tank. Fish wires were used to snake the bolts — a process that could make the installer's language very colorful. The fish wire process eventually worked, but it would be nice to provide a couple of extras; we had to clean up the ends to reuse for subsequent attempts. Nevertheless, you'll get the job done with some patience.

Once the brackets are in place, the Torklift Fastgun Turnbuckles (\$232 for two in white) were assembled and installed between the camper and tie-down brackets. Unlike the standard type

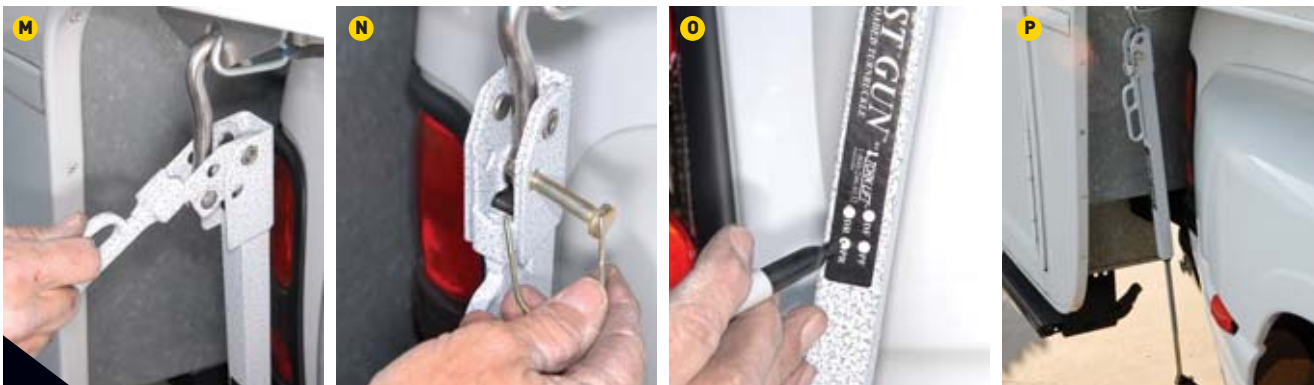
turnbuckles that require wrenches to install and remove, the Fastguns have locking levers that resemble a lever-action rifle. These levers load the internal springs that provide the right amount of travel while immobilizing the camper so movement in the bed is minimal. The action here is smooth and easy, requiring no tools once the turnbuckles are adjusted properly.

Unfortunately, the instructions for the Fastgun Turnbuckles were also difficult to follow. After we muddled our way through the first one, the other three went smoothly. A simple procedure is used to adjust the length of the turnbuckle and once it's done, each one is marked with respect to location for proper reinstallation after the camper is loaded. The optional, keyed-alike lever locks (\$58) were used to secure the turnbuckles, rather than the factory pins.



K) Fastgun turnbuckle end slips into the provided hole in the tie-down insert before adjusting tension. L) Rubber O-ring is used to make final adjustments. When the lever is locked the space between the O-ring and the turnbuckle body should be 1/4-inch.





M) Fastgun turnbuckle is locked into place using convenient levers. N) Retaining pins are used to prevent the lever from opening. Optional keyed-alike locks can be used instead of the pins. O) Once the Fastgun turnbuckles are set, a marker is used to identify positioning for future use. P) Nicely finished turnbuckle looks good when locked in place.

Torklift's tie-down system is not just a handsome addition to the camper and truck. While the choice of white, gray, polished or black finishes does make it easier to color match, the end result is impressive, aesthetically and from a practical standpoint. Handling improved dramatically, with most of the body roll eliminated when the camper became connected to the frame of the truck. The rocking sensation when entering drive-

ways or turning corners was comparatively squelched. In camp, the rocking in concert to moving bodies inside the rig after installing the Torklift system was noticeably tempered. Overall the Torklift system improved drivability except on rough roads. Concrete highways with the notorious expansion joints and sections in need of repair made the ride rougher — certainly attributable to making the camper more rigid to the

truck frame.

Unquestionably, the Torklift system adds a higher level of safety and handling, especially in adverse driving conditions. And the tie-down inserts can be removed (using locking pins) when the camper is unloaded from the truck for a more stock — and unobtrusive — appearance. ☎

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CHACO CANYON

**Ancient life still inhabits
this National Historical Park**

By Donna Ikenberry



Spring was perfect with mild days and clear nights just right for exploring and stargazing. We hiked through the abundant ruins during the day, marveling at the Chacoans' architectural skills. At night, we stared up at the Milky Way and countless stars, knowing we were gazing at the same sky they did centuries ago.

Chaco Culture National Historical Park is located in remote northwestern New Mexico, about 70 miles southeast of Farmington. After finding our way to the small town of Nageezi, we traveled 8 miles on CR 7900, then continued 13 more miles on CR 7950, a rough dirt road normally suitable for all passenger vehicles. Visitors will find a campground and visitor center at the park, as well as self-guided trails. But don't expect to find food, firewood, lodging or fuel. You'll need to bring your own supplies and accommodations.

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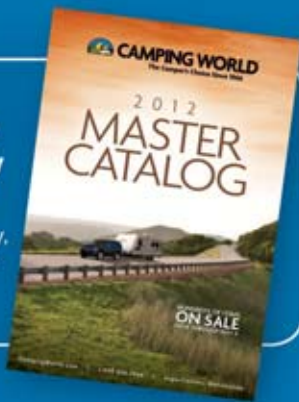
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Chaco Canyon

Camping is by far the best way to enjoy this park. You'll see the brilliant colors of the stones at sunrise, and after sunset you can enjoy the lack of light pollution and see the stars in all their glory. In addition, there are special talks by park researchers and many other activities in the park.

The Gallo Campground is located one mile east of the visitor center, where there are 30 sites available on a first-come, first-served basis. There's a group camping area as well. A campground host provides assistance from April through October. There are no hookups, but a dump station is on site for waste disposal.

Chaco Canyon was the center of a vast civilization from about AD 850 to AD 1250. It encompassed what is known today as the Four Corners states — New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona and Utah. Explore Chaco Canyon and you'll find the remains of great houses, characteristic buildings of the Chacoans. The great houses consisted of large structures containing many rooms, kivas (round ceremonial rooms) and plazas. Re-



Nestled in a rocky cove, the 30-site Gallo Campground is just one mile from the visitor center. It has no hookups, but it does offer lots of peace and quiet, dark skies, and millions of stars.

searchers believe these great houses were more like centers of pilgrimage or ceremony instead of permanent dwellings.

It's best to begin at the visitor center where there are two films and the museum displays to view. Next, you'll want to get out and walk. Una Vida can be

reached from the parking area and is one of the original great houses of the canyon. Here, you'll see an unexcavated great house just like early explorers saw when the houses were discovered in 1849. In addition to the dramatic ruins, visitors can also see a remarkable rock art panel filled with petroglyphs (carvings).

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Chaco Canyon

Along the nine-mile loop drive, which is paved, there are many sites to see. At Hungo Pavi there is an unexcavated multi-story great house site as well as a wonderful hand-pecked stairway. Pueblo Bonito – the largest and most excavated of the Chacoan sites – is a must-see if you have limited time in the park. From the parking area for Pueblo Bonito visitors can also walk to Chetro Kettle. And if you have time, be sure to walk the Petroglyph Trail between the two sites.

Farther along the drive, see Pueblo del Arroyo, a terrific great house showcasing some of the newest archeological preservation in the canyon. Casa Rinconada is just beyond and offers the largest great kiva in the Chacoan world.

If you prefer to visit the ruins with a guide, be sure to attend one of the twice-daily guided tours of Pueblo Bonito. Offered at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. from April through October, participants meet at the parking area for Pueblo Bonito. Also offered during the same months is the Night Sky program. The Chaco Observatory provides visitors with an intimate look at the night sky. During the day, visitors can view spectacular night sky images that were made at the Chaco Observatory.

While we were in the preserve we hiked all of its trails, including the backcountry trails, such as one that leads to the Supernova Pictograph, a drawing that may represent an exploding star seen worldwide in AD 1054.

Among the many mysteries left behind by the ancient Chacoan people are the petroglyphs and pictographs they created on the walls of buildings and the landscape in their world.



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Chaco Canyon

While researchers do not know the true meaning behind Chacoan rock art, comprised of pictures either carved or painted on rock, they do believe the Chacoans had sophisticated wisdom regarding the sun and the moon. For instance, on top of Fajada Butte, the sun's position is marked on a spiral petroglyph during four important events — the summer solstice, winter solstice and both equinoxes.

Elevations in the park range from 6,040 feet to 6,860 feet and its 34,000 acres consist of four habitats: pinyon-juniper woodland, mesa top grasslands, canyon floor and riparian. While exploring the ruins and rock art, be sure to keep an eye out for animal life. A total of 128 bird species have been identified in the park. Elk are quite common, but also look for the usual coyotes, mule deer, cottontails, as well as a number of bat species. There are reptiles such as a variety of lizards and snakes, including prairie rattlesnakes, which are more common in the backcountry. Gopher and bull snakes can be seen around the ruins.

If you travel to Chaco through Aztec be sure to make a stop at Aztec Ruins National Monument, which is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. most of the year and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Memorial Day through Labor Day. The park is closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

Around AD 1100, the ancestral Pueblo people began an ambitious project that would take almost three decades to build. The great house at Aztec West stood three stories high, was longer than a football field and once boasted as many as 500 masonry rooms, including a ceremonial great kiva more



than 40 feet in diameter. Take a walk through the ruins of Aztec West and be amazed, then descend into the great kiva, a reconstructed marvel that is the oldest and largest building of its kind. For more information call 505-334-6174 or visit www.nps.gov/azru.

For more information on Chaco visit www.nps.gov/chcu or call 505-786-7014. The weather in Chaco is as varied as the ruins themselves. Summers are usually not as hot as other desert environments, but expect highs in the 90s. In July the monsoons begin so expect heavy precipitation in short intervals, with slick, muddy roads a probability. Spring and fall are the best seasons for visits thanks to the moderate temperatures. 🚗

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Batteries are the silent servants of unplugged camping, providing us with light, entertainment and other important functions. Yet many pay no attention to them until there's a problem — which unfortunately is often too late for the batteries.

Design Types

Heavy-duty batteries designed for RV's are called deep-cycle because they can be discharged and recharged more often and to a deeper discharge level than engine-starting batteries. Deep-cycle batteries come in three basic internal design types: Conventional flooded electrolyte, gel type and absorbed glass mat (AGM). Flooded-type batteries have been around the longest, are most often supplied as original equipment and offer good capacity at the lowest cost. Conventional flooded cells with removable caps require periodic checking and refilling with distilled water to maintain their electrolyte level. Batteries that get a fast charge, are used in hot weather and/or frequently cycled will use more water. If the electrolyte level drops below the top of the internal plates, the battery may be ruined. Conventional batteries also require more frequent cleaning of corrosion from terminals. A sub-category of the flooded cell is the so-called maintenance-free battery, which uses calcium mixed with the lead to reduce water usage. They usually have caps that can be removed if necessary, and if they are used hard (deep discharges and fast charging) they may need water replenishment.

Both gel and AGM batteries cost more than flooded cell batteries, usually last longer and don't require maintenance. Instead of a liquid electrolyte like flooded cells use, gel-type batteries use a thick paste electrolyte that doesn't require periodic refilling with water. How-

ever, gel cells don't tolerate fast charging well. AGM batteries, which have their electrolyte absorbed in a fiber-glass-type matting wrapped around the internal lead plates, also don't require water, but can tolerate fast charging better than gel types.

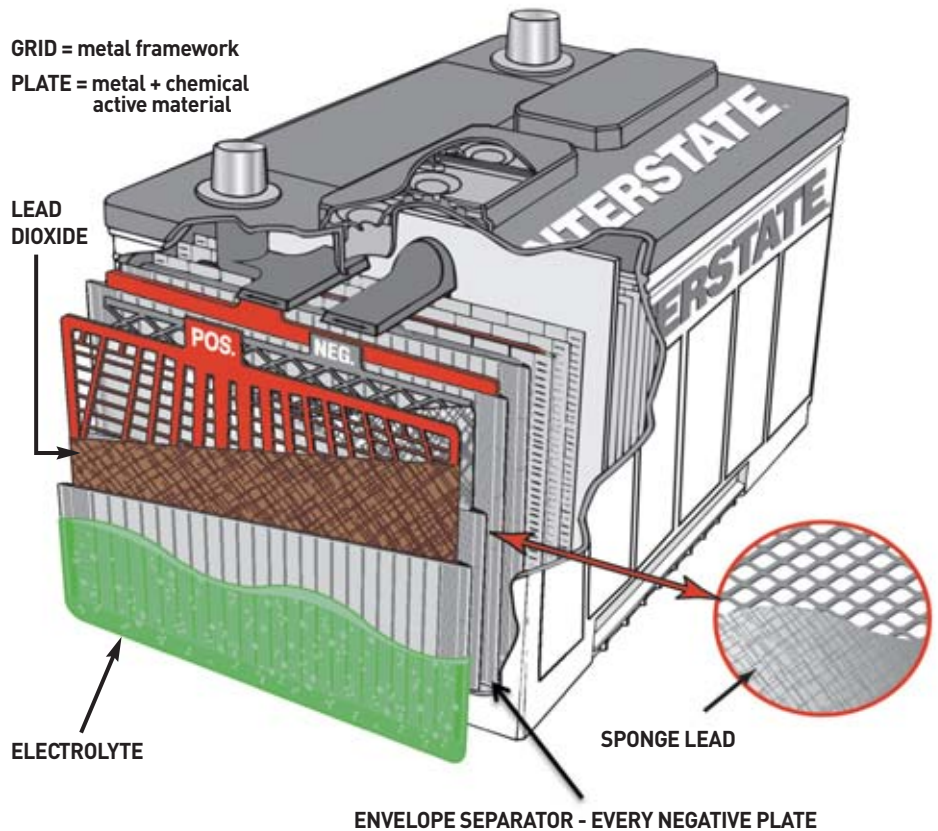
Deep-cycle batteries used in RVs typically come in 6- or 12-volt configurations. Six-volt batteries must be installed in pairs and wired in series (connected together so that a + terminal is connected to a - on the other side) so that their combined voltage will be a nominal 12. Twelve-volt batteries can also be used in pairs, but they must be wired in parallel (+ to + and - to -) so that their combined output remains at



Regularly clean your battery terminals for reliability, especially after storage.

12 volts. When 12-volt batteries are wired in parallel and used in pairs, the stronger one will discharge into the weaker one (known as cannibalizing), whereas a pair of 6-volt batteries in series won't discharge each other.

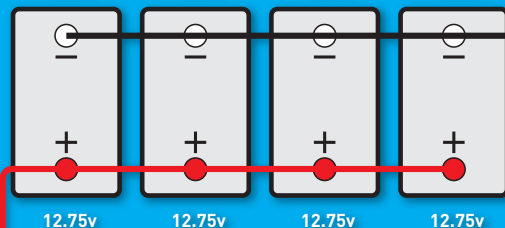
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Getting More From Your Batteries

Sulfation (the formation of lead sulfate on plates) is the biggest killer of RV batteries. Sulfation occurs with each charging cycle, and gradually the battery begins to lose capacity to store a full charge, until it must be replaced. However, there are many things you can do to get the full life cycle designed into your battery.

How often you use and charge flooded-type batteries determines water consumption. Using batteries in hot weather requires more frequent wa-

tering. Check the battery water level often and add distilled water when needed. Never add tap water to your battery as it contains minerals that will reduce the battery's capacity and increase the self-discharge rate.

A fully charged 12-volt battery (at rest, with no charger or load on it) will actually measure 12.6 volts or more. A 12.4-volt reading indicates a 75 percent charge, a 12.2-volt reading indicates a 50 percent charge, a 12.0-volt reading means there's only a 25 percent charge, and 11.7 volts or less is considered fully discharged.

Specific gravity, which can be measured only with flooded cells using a hydrometer, will show:

- 100% charge – 1.265
- 75% charge – 1.225
- 50% charge – 1.190
- 25% charge – 1.155
- Discharged – 1.120

Charging is commonly done by your engine's alternator, electric hookup (campground), solar panels, wind turbines or portable generators. Make sure the engine alternator's charging output is within specifications, typically it's between 13.6 and 14.4 volts, maximum. Batteries that are mounted in campers and trailers suffer from voltage drop between the alternator and battery. Measure charging voltage (run engine at driving RPM in neutral) at the RV battery. Run a heavier gauge (minimum 8 gauge) charging wire if needed.

Don't leave a battery at a low state of charge for an extended period as the sulfate will harden, ruining the battery. Recharge a discharged battery as soon

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as possible, and don't use a battery when it's at a low state of charge before fully recharging. Deep discharges (more than 50 percent of capacity) drastically shorten battery life, so it's important to install a battery system with sufficient capacity.

Many onboard power converters with a single fixed output voltage will damage batteries if they are left on for long periods. Proper recharging requires a smart charging system that can vary charging voltage based on state of charge. Follow the battery manufacturer's recommendations for charging voltage and current. Maintain the proper charging range by using an automatic temperature-sensing, voltage-regulated charger.

Charging batteries at a fixed voltage (from most converters) of 13.6 volts results in a lengthy recharge time and doesn't fully recharge them. Increasing charge voltage to 14.4 volts reduces charging time for a 125-A/H battery to three or four hours. Once a battery reaches 80 percent of full charge, voltage must be reduced to 13.6 volts or less. However, keeping a fully charged lead-acid battery at a fixed 13.6 volts will cause gassing and water loss. To prevent this, the float voltage must be reduced to around 13.2 volts.

Storage

Batteries lose their charge over time, and most RVs also have small parasitic current draws, so disconnect the batteries during storage. Use a smart multi-stage maintenance charger during storage (not a regular trickle charger). A converter/charger that can maintain a

full charge at 13.2 volts will reduce gassing and water loss. However, this voltage doesn't provide enough gassing to prevent a condition called battery stratification. Stratification occurs because the electrolyte is a mix of water and acid and the acid is heavier than water. Therefore, the acid settles and concentrates at the bottom of the cells (which also causes additional sulfation), further reducing capacity and service life. To prevent stratification an equalizing charge should be applied to lead/acid batteries about once every 10 charge cycles, or every couple of months. To equalize a battery, the charging voltage is raised (by a smart charger) to more than 15 volts for a short period. This higher voltage helps break up sulfation and causes gassing that mixes (equalizes) the electrolyte.

The rate of battery self-discharge increases with temperature. At 80 degrees Fahrenheit, a conventional battery will self-discharge at about 4 percent per week. The electrolyte in a lead/acid battery may freeze if the battery is partially discharged. A battery at a 40 percent state of charge can freeze if the temperature drops to about minus 16 degrees Fahrenheit. However, when a battery is fully charged, the electrolyte will not freeze until the temperature plummets to approximately minus 92 degrees Fahrenheit. So keep your batteries charged!

Upgrades

The battery group size indicates which battery dimensions will best fit the physical dimensions of your RV or tow



To use a hydrometer to check battery charge level, insert the tube into a cell, squeeze and release the bulb, and electrolyte will be drawn into the chamber. When using a digital voltmeter, touch the probes to the appropriate terminals, and the voltage will be displayed on-screen.



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Battery Basics

vehicle. The most common battery group sizes in smaller RVs are group 24, 27, 31, and some rigs use pairs wired in parallel. If you find that your battery pack is discharged excessively, you may want to consider upgrading to a larger battery or multiple batteries. First you should determine how much space you have for a larger battery or batteries. Battery manufacturer websites (such as www.lifelinebatteries.com/rvsizing.php) usually include the dimensions and ratings of various batteries, to allow you to plan a change. Some of these websites also have calculators to help decide what size battery you need. If you are a heavy user of battery power, note that 6-volt, golf cart batteries, (among the RV enthusiast's favorite battery choices) provide the most energy storage and service life per dollar. Keep in mind that if you keep the same charging system, charging times will increase in proportion to the increase in capacity. For example, if you double the storage capacity of your battery, it will take at least twice as long to recharge them.

Safety

When working around batteries wear rubber gloves and eye protection, and exercise caution. Battery acid damages anything it comes in contact with, including paint, chrome and metal. During operation, batteries produce hydrogen, which can explode if a spark occurs nearby. When disconnecting, loosen the bolt/nut on the negative (ground) terminal first. That way, if the wrench touches metal on the chassis, it won't spark. When working on batteries, make sure the ground terminal is connected last for this very same reason. Loose battery posts and terminals, plus improper jump-starting, are major causes of sparks, which can cause explosions. Always connect jumper cables to the dead battery first, then to the good battery, and attach the last jumper cable to an unpainted metal portion of the chassis, rather than to the battery. This keeps any sparks away from the battery. Never charge a frozen battery. ⚡

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Troubleshooting

The following are some of the most common problems owners have with batteries.

Battery Uses Excessive Amount of Water

This is generally caused by frequent deep discharging, high temperatures and excessive charging voltage. If the temperatures are moderate and you aren't discharging the battery excessively, measure charging voltage (it should be around 13.2 volts at rest) and note the type of charger/converter. If the unit has a fixed output, consider upgrading to a unit with a multi-stage smart output, such as a Xantrex TrueCharge.

Battery Goes Dead During Storage

If the battery goes dead in a few days or sooner when not in use, there may be a load such as a compartment light left on. To check for current draws, shut everything off. Then remove the fuses one at a time and connect a test ammeter across the terminals. If you find a fuse socket with a significant draw, you've found the culprit circuit. Then disconnect any items on that circuit one at a time until the draw is found. Note: Audio systems, alarms and appliances often have keep-alive memories that draw a small current (around 0.050 amp). The surest way to stop power draws is to disconnect the battery, either by unbolting the negative cable, or by using a cut-off switch. Manual and electronic switches are available through Camping World and other RV shops. Then, keep the battery(ies) on a maintenance charger.

Charging with a Generator

If you are charging a battery from a portable generator that has 12-volt battery charging terminals, you may find that it charges the battery slowly. A better way to do it is to use a separate battery charger that plugs into the generator. The maximum charging rate for long battery life should not exceed 20 percent of the battery's amp-hour (A/H) rating. For example, a battery rated 105 A/H should be charged at 20 amps or less.



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Steer Straight

If you are beginning to feel a little too much free play in that front end, Borgeson offers a complete power steering upgrade kit designed for the 1994 – 2002 Dodge Ram 2500 and 3500 with the Cummins turbo diesel engine. The kits offer a replacement heavy-duty power steering box, Hi-Flow Power Steering Pump, and the new OEM-style power steering hoses complete with new hydro-boost brake hoses (if applicable). The Borgeson Heavy Duty Steering Shaft is an optional addition to the kits.

MSRP: \$669 - \$993

(860) 482-8283, www.borgeson.com

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Get Hitched

The new Quiet Hitch by Roadmaster is designed to reduce that disturbing rattle, shake and shimmy caused by bike racks or other hitch accessories. Once this easy to attach item is secured, the Quiet Hitch device snugs down the ball mount, tow bar or hitch accessory to the hitch receiver, thus eliminating movement between the two parts. Roadmaster also claims that the Quiet Hitch product helps reduce wear and tear by eliminating free play between the receiver and tow bar.

MSRP: \$28.04

(800) 669-9690, www.roadmasterinc.com

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Fill 'R' Up

Firestone Industrial has recently added eight new options to its Air-Rite Air Control Systems line providing the flexibility to choose the exact air assist components for your application. Choices include a Standard Duty air compressor system, ideal for most half-ton trucks and moderate use; a Heavy Duty compressor designed for HD trucks; and the Xtreme compressor, designed for heavy usage and for those large fills. Pricing starts at \$285. For more information, call (800) 247-4337, or go to www.ride-rite.com.

Pricing starts at \$285

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Tuff Treads

Designed for high torque trucks that tow trailers or haul heavy loads, the Open Country H/T with Tuff Duty from Toyo Tires offers triple-belt construction, multi-wave siping, deep treads (up to 17/32-inch) and minimal tread voids to help deliver long-term wear and all-season performance. Tuff Duty 3-Belt construction reinforces and stabilizes internal tire construction, contributing to a longer tread life. A number of sizes and load capabilities are available.

Estimated MSRP: \$200 each (877) 682-8696, www.toyotires.com

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DynoMax VT Muffler Systems

Aftermarket exhaust systems are popular among towing enthusiasts, as they can boost power and fuel economy. Their altered backpressure characteristics may also allow your engine to run better, which is especially important for vehicles towing heavy trailers. But many aftermarket exhausts also produce an annoying droning sound in the vehicle's interior at certain RPM and loads.

DynoMax VT (Valve Technology) mufflers are innovative, high-flow stainless steel performance designs that feature an exclusive patented internal valve. This allows them to provide maximum performance and control interior noise common among performance exhaust systems, while allowing an open, throaty sound during acceleration. Designed around the precisely calibrated internal valve, the muffler's routing redirects the exhaust flow during cruising conditions to limit that unwanted drone. The valve opens with the exhaust flow from the engine. When the RPM is ramping up, the valve is wide open and the vehicle has the performance sound that the driver desires. At cruising highway speeds the valve moves to a partially closed position controlled by the exhaust flow from the engine and the spring pressure. That reduces the noise inside the cab of the vehicle.

The mufflers also employ Continuous Roving Fiberglass (CRF) technology that absorbs additional unwanted interior resonance and provides a rich, deep performance tone. The all-steel body mufflers are 100 percent welded for durability.

Joe Pase, director of performance products for Tenneco told us, "We're very excited for enthusiasts to hear this new muffler and to see it perform. The DynoMax VT performance exhaust system was designed to improve performance and deliver drone-free acoustics. Now you can be satisfied when you're

revving your truck and when you're just cruising. You gain not only impressive horsepower, but you get the added benefit of a patented valve technology that controls sound."

The muffler's airflow performance was demonstrated in recent flow-bench testing comparisons of the DynoMax VT (No. 17956), MagnaFlow (No. 11226), and Flowmaster (No. 42541) products. The DynoMax VT muffler delivered 841-cubic-feet-per-minute flow, compared to 588 CFM for the MagnaFlow and 373 CFM for the Flowmaster. Tests were conducted on a

14-inch body with 2.5-inch offset/center configuration.

DynoMax VT mufflers, cat-back and axle-back systems are available for a full range of applications for popular late-model cars, gas and diesel light trucks and sport utility vehicles. There are 11 universal VT mufflers in the product line and 25 direct-fit VT muffler systems for most vehicles used for recreational towing. The stainless-steel mufflers are covered by a limited-lifetime warranty and a 90-day performance and sound guarantee. This lets buyers try the muffler and return the product within 90 days for a full refund of purchase price. Further information and the location of dealers can be found at www.DynoMax.com or by calling (734) 384-7806.

Replacement for Gasoline?

Primus Green Energy of Hillsborough, N.J., reports that it has invented a process that can make gasoline from renewable plant products. Primus also says the fuel is a direct replacement for gasoline made from crude oil and no engine modifications are needed. The proprietary technology uses woody and herbaceous biomass and natural gas, which is available domestically to produce a fuel said to have 93 octane and a lower benzene level than gasoline made from fossil fuels. Primus is building a demonstration plant and plans to start a commercial plant next year with a 4.8-million-gallon capacity per year, using wood scraps and non-food crops.

Grand Cherokee, Dodge Durango and Dakota Replacement May Get Diesels

Chrysler has announced the 2013 Jeep Grand Cherokee will offer an optional 3.0L V-6 turbodiesel, which will be built by Italy's V.M. Motori. In addition, the Dodge Durango SUV, and the



Looking for better performance, more power and, in some cases, better fuel mileage? Consider adding an aftermarket exhaust system to your tow vehicle.

successor to the Dodge Dakota pickup truck (which went out of production in August 2011), is also likely to get a diesel option.

Stop Texting While Driving!

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) recently announced guidelines for vehicle manufacturers designing upcoming models. The DOT wants automakers to allow functions like text messaging or Internet browsing only when vehicles are parked and to reduce the amount of input needed by drivers. Operations should need only one hand and not require drivers to look away from the road for more than two seconds.



Nissan/Infiniti Recall

Nissan has issued a recall for 14,718 vehicles in its Nissan and Infiniti lineups. Some affected vehicles may develop severe oil leaks. Models affected are the

2012 Nissan Frontier and Nissan NV, 2011-2012 Pathfinder and Xterra, 2011 Infiniti FX and 2012 Infiniti M. Bolts connecting engine oil coolers and engine oil filters to the engine could break, causing serious oil loss. If severe enough, it could cause engine seizure. For more information call Nissan at 800-647-7261, or NHTSA at 888-327-4236, reference recall #11V592000.

Ford Recall

Ford issued a recall for 16,091 2011 model F-150 pickups and 2012 F-250, F-350, F-450 and F-550 models. The problem is the brake shift interlock switch, which could allow recalled vehicles to shift out of park without depressing the brake pedal, and result in a collision. The problem affects F-150s built between September 9 and 22, 2011, and 2012 F-Series heavy-duty models made from September 12 to 22, 2011. If you think your vehicle may be affected, contact Ford Motor Co. at 866-436-7332 or NHTSA at 888-327-4236, reference recall #11V582000. 🚗

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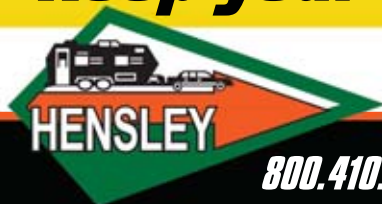
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Practical Choices

Lightweight trailer from Pacific Coachworks offers tow-vehicle flexibility, in-camp comfort

When searching for a lightweight trailer that can be towed by the family's daily truck or SUV, it's often a necessity for potential buyers to make some sacrifices. Smaller trailers come with smaller footprints, so owners-to-be have to take a hard look at what they're willing to do without. After spending time in the Tango Ultra-Lite 20UL, it became apparent that while some wide-open interior space to spread out may not be feasible, overall comfort and all the amenities of home need not be omitted.

Pacific Coachworks has designed the Tango Ultra-Lite for couples or small families who prefer to have the option to accommodate an overnight guest or two, and though the quarters would be a bit cramped, the trailer offers comfortable sleeping arrangements for up to five people (give or

take one or two, depending on whether little ones are involved). The sleeping areas consist of the RV queen bed in the master, in addition to the 68-by-42-inch jackknife sofa in the living room. The sofa is located in the large streetside slide, which, at more than 7 feet in length, really helps to open up the interior.

There is no permanent dinette table in the 20UL; rather, the free-standing table is set up and removed as needed. This may seem like a bit of a hassle, but given the trailer's abbreviated floorplan, owners will definitely appreciate the ability to fold the table and store it in the front pass-through storage area when mealtime is over.

When in sofa mode, the jackknife is surprisingly comfortable and offers a great area for conversation or to view the TV (not included on our test model) with AM/FM/DVD player (\$283) located

on the entertainment center pillar. Each side of the sofa offers an upholstered end table, complete with cup holder. There is also open storage space for odds and ends.

The galley area is as expected on a trailer this size, and includes a dual-basin sink, optional microwave (\$181) and three-burner cooktop and oven (\$181) for your mealtime duties. The lack of a sink cover means that counter space comes up rather short. One solution would be to bring the table back in, but that severely cuts into walking space in the interior. As we said, there are some sacrifices to be made.

Where sacrifices definitely need not be made is in the bathroom. The lav runs the entire width of the trailer's rear end, meaning there is more than





While our test unit didn't include the optional TV in its built-in entertainment center, the living area felt spacious with the table stowed and the streetside slideout extended. We found the comfy sofa, with dual upholstered end tables, particularly inviting after the day's adventures.

enough space for grooming, showering and for heeding the call. Even with the door closed, we never felt cramped. The shower included the optional skylight bath (\$123) meaning head room was adequate, but we definitely would have preferred a proper shower enclosure rather than the shower curtain. A linen closet keeps the unused towels in the bathroom, and the towel ring seems small – but is definitely appreciated – and adds a residential touch.

The master bedroom is sectioned off from the rest of the trailer with curtains on both sides of the entertainment pillar, which serves as the primary wall. This type of setup usually means, at 6 feet 2 inches, I have trouble fitting on the bed without curling up, but the Tango offers enough room so that my feet don't even reach the wall. Nightstands with drawers flank both sides of the bed, and a large cabinet above easily swallowed our duffels, diapers and other necessities. One thing that was missing was a cabinet for hanging clothes, but



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WALKTHROUGH: TANGO ULTRA-LITE 20UL

this trailer is about weekend fun rather than stuffed shirts that need pressing. It also would be nice for the TV to be on a swivel so owners have the option to turn it around to face the master bed.

We found the lighting throughout the trailer to be a bit dim, though the manufacturer has compensated for this with four large windows that let tons of ambi-

ent lighting in during the daylight hours.

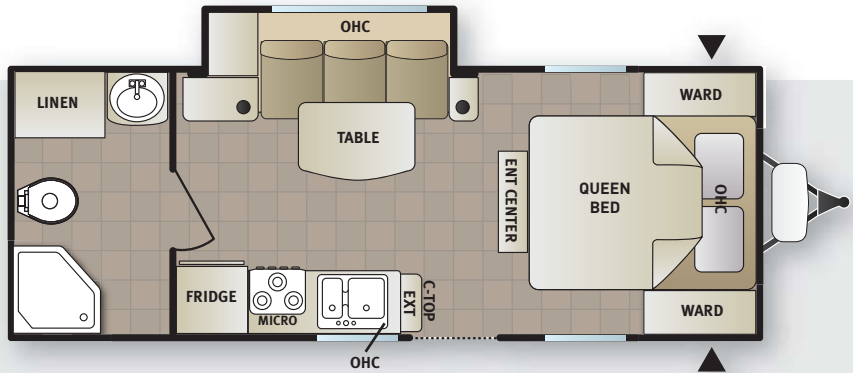
The test trailer included Beaufloor flooring, a standard upgrade that not only adds to the stain and water protection, but also looks pretty nice. The flooring paired quite nicely with the Spice earth-tone color scheme and attractive cabinetry.

The Tango Ultra-Lite 20UL is likely

towable by the truck or SUV you already own, features all the comforts of home and has a bathroom befitting a trailer twice its size. True, there are some sacrifices to be made in a smaller trailer such as this, but the practical floorplan's flexibility and nifty use of space make it a solid trailer for a growing family. 🚐

QUICK INFO ✓

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Ext. width	8' 4"
Ext. height	10' 8" (w/A/C)
Int. height	6' 6"
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WALKTHROUGH: 2012 JAYCO PINNACLE 35LKTS FIFTH-WHEEL

Full-time Flagship

Floor-to-ceiling windows and an expanding L-shaped galley counter serves up the pinnacle of views and meals.

Lasting memories of great trips always seem to include good food and new landscapes, and the 2012 Pinnacle caters to both in 40 feet of full-timing luxury. With five floorplans between 35 and 40 feet and four interior décor choices, the popular Pinnacle is Jayco's flagship luxury fifth.

A Look Inside

Jayco has successfully incorporated an efficient yet fully appointed galley that provides more than 8 feet of usable countertop along with everything needed for a great meal. Half of the cabin's 15-foot streetside slideout holds the galley appliances that include a three-burner stove and oven, and a standard microwave above. Deep double sink basins covered with matching Corian covers are serviced by a pull-out faucet. Handsome Concord cherry-stained hardwood cabi-

nets and matching slide fascias used throughout the coach surround the microwave and stove, providing generous shelf and full-extension drawer storage for culinary necessities.

The standard 8-cubic-foot refrigerator with matching wood panel is paired with a full-height pantry that is sacrificed when the larger optional (\$1,914) 12-cubic-foot fridge is ordered. Next to the fridge on the forward cabin wall, however, is the large multi-use cabinet that is plumbed and wired for a laundry combo unit or for use as a spacious pantry with fully adjustable shelves, or a combination of both depending on need.

The most notable feature of the Pinnacle's galley is revealed as the room opens and the fixed L-shaped counter is created. As the slide extends, taking with it the 26-by-26-inch tambour-door appliance garage, four-

bottle wine rack and stemware storage cabinet, the final length of that high-gloss Corian-topped workspace materializes. Hanging pendant lamps illuminate this signature L-shaped design that also includes a raised corner countertop section, perfect for the resident sommelier.

Four can dine at the free-standing 26-by-37-inch table enlarged further with the 10-inch-wide leaf, safely stowed for travel in a cavity beneath the tabletop. The near alfresco dining experience will draw comments while surrounded by the slide's pair of floor-to-ceiling windows that offer a grand view of the outdoors and likely become the favored lookout for owners and pets alike.

Relaxing after a good meal is just steps away where two large Ultra-



Available in six different lengths- from 34 feet 9 inches to 40 feet 4 inches, our 35LKTS is the longest. All have a 6-foot-9-inch bedroom for an airy feel throughout the interior.

leather rocker recliners await in front of another panoramic rear wall picture window. Guests can lounge on the sofa bed, which is also equipped with a 54-by-74-inch Aero Bed. The handsome entertainment center fills the remainder of the galley slide holding the 40-inch LCD HD TV on a swing-out mount, an AM/FM/MP3/CD/DVD stereo system, optional (\$1,000) 5,000 Btu heat-generating fireplace and handy laptop desk and drawer feature. Plenty of media and general storage is found in the cabinetry surround.

The full bath, adjoining the bedroom, is located at the top of the 27-inch-wide stairway where a paired bath door setup provides bathroom privacy and access for either the bedroom or living area as needed. The one-piece radius shower offers an 80-inch ceiling with an additional 5 inches of headroom courtesy of the domed skylight. The porcelain commode has storage above it and the 23-by-21-inch vanity provides more storage below and a medicine chest with accent lighting above.

Retiring to the bedroom rewards the weary with a walk-around, 79-by-71-inch, king-size platform bed with a Cloud Ten mattress in the streetside slide. Convenient reading lamps, eye-glass nightstands and 120-volt AC out-

lets are provided for both sides. At the foot of the bed is a two-drawer aisle dresser with overhead media storage shelves flanking the optional (\$564) 22-inch LCD HD TV. The front cap is fitted with a full-width aromatic cedar-lined walk-in closet and separate wardrobe cabinet. The closet features a full-width storage shelf behind the 43-inch-long clothes rod that provides 45 inches of hanging length with full height shoe and small item shelving next to it. Given the roofline taper toward the front cap, the bedroom still offers almost 7 feet of headroom.

Outside Highlights

Outside, Jayco continues the user convenience theme with its high-gloss gel-coat body finish that includes entry and baggage doors and both caps. A striking, but optional (\$7,700) premium paint package is also available. Dual-stacked battery trays and dual 7-gallon LP-gas cylinders on a slide-out tray makes stand-up servicing a snap. Positioning the landing gear leg mounts outside the frame enhances coach stability when deployed. A spacious, lighted and heated forward pass-through storage compartment handles all needed campsite extras and protects the utility dock control panel from



(Top left) A 15-foot slideout, massive windows and quality finishes create an exceptionally inviting living area. (Top right) An L-shaped counter separates the galley, and provides valuable preparation and service space. (Bottom left) Exterior storage space is generous, including this lighted and heated front pass-through compartment. (Bottom right) A king-size Cloud Ten bed may be the grandest creature comfort of all.

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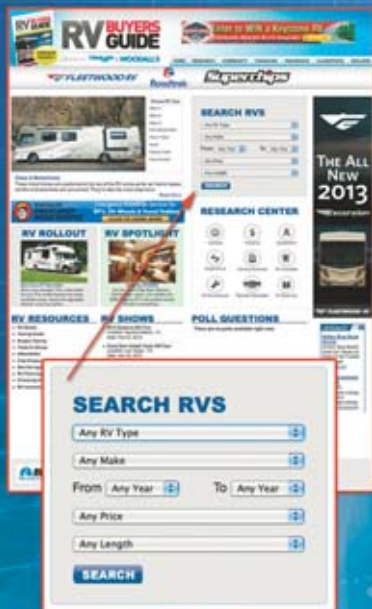
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WALKTHROUGH: TANGO ULTRA-LITE 20UL

road and weather damage.

Wondering what you'll do for outside rear cargo and bike storage on this sleek new fiver? The Jayco Pinnacle frame is designed to accept the optional (\$400) draining 24-by-64-inch rear slide-out storage tray with fold-up bike rack. Four-season campers are not forgotten either. In addition to the expected heated water and holding tanks and optional (\$1,279) thermal pane glass, the small "Polar Barrier" sticker near the entry door certifies that the Pinnacle design has been cold tested to zero degrees Fahrenheit with the 40,000 Btu furnace maintaining a cabin temperature of 78 degrees Fahrenheit that varied only plus or minus 3 degrees Fahrenheit throughout the length of the coach during testing.



The Fine Print

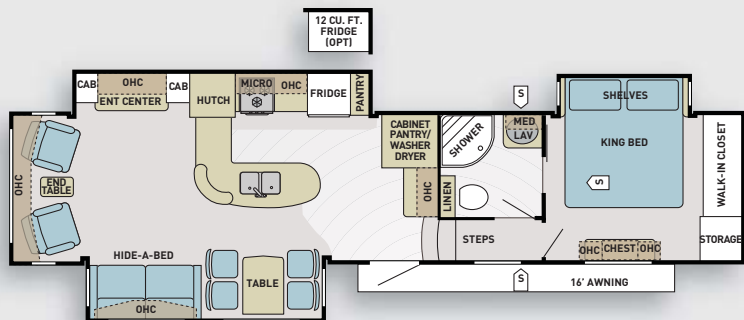
Two required equipment packages come with the Pinnacle. The Summit Upgrade Package provides the hardwood cabinets, 40-inch TV, aluminum wheels, free-standing table and chairs,

Corian countertops and the recliners, adding \$6,664 to the base price. The Customer Value Package adds \$2,847 and includes the 12-gallon gas/electric water heater, 15,000 Btu air conditioner, bathroom skylight and power vent, exterior awning, security lock box, entry grab handle, cabin stereo system, outside security lights and a water filtration unit.

Whether you are a full-timing couple or family of weekenders, the 2012 Jayco Pinnacle line continues to offer the desirable features, components and conveniences RV enthusiasts are looking for and that should keep this flagship fresh for years to come.

Our thanks to Richardson's RV Centers in Riverside, Calif., for providing the Pinnacle for this review. 🚐

QUICK INFO



Ext. Length	40' 4"	Black-/Gray-Water Cap	49/86 gal.
Ext. Width	8'	LP-gas Cap	14 gal.
Ext. Height (W/AC)	12' 11" (13' 3" w/Opt. bedroom AC)	GVWR	15,950 lb
Int. Height, bedroom	6' to 6' 9"	Dry Weight	12,200 lb
Int. Height living area	8' to 8' 11"	Dry Hitch Weight	2,665 lb
Freshwater Cap	87 gal.	MSRP Base	\$51,371
		MSRP as Reviewed	\$78,831

Jayco Inc. (574) 825-5861 www.jayco.com Circle 206 on Reader Service Card.
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Simple Satellite Setup

Delsand's PDQ Signal Stand takes the guesswork — and frustration — out of pointing a manual dish for HD service

DIFFICULTY

1 2 3 4 5

TIME TO COMPLETE

0.5 HR.

TOOLS NEEDED

1/2-INCH SOCKET WRENCH

Setting up a satellite dish antenna that needs to be manually positioned can be challenging at best. The process becomes more complicated when adding an HD DVR to the system. Setup can be even more frustrating when dealing with uneven ground and, of course, that nemesis of the satellite user, trees. Using a Delsand PDQ Signal Stand eliminates the headaches associated with dish setup and pointing.

Most people who use a dish on the ground rely on some type of tripod. While there are many tripod choices, it's usually necessary to use a compass and signal finder to locate the appropriate satellites, since most basic tripods are not equipped with a level or markings for azimuth settings. For HD service, it is also necessary to set the proper skew/tilt along with elevation and azimuth. And that's the rub. Unless you get lucky, you can spend an inordinate amount of time setting up the dish so it provides a decent signal to the receiver.

The PDQ Signal Stand has been designed to be much more accurate with its built-in levels, compass, and azimuth setting knob and gear. And to make life easier, Delsand has added a unique line-of-sight tool that allows you to look through the device to pinpoint a clear, unobstructed pathway for your dish before the actual setup.

Once a clear line of sight has been established, you insert the PDQ Signal Stand mast that's been preinstalled to your dish antenna. Next, you set the skew/tilt (for HD models), elevation and drop the mast onto the PDQ Signal Stand. By using walkie-talkies, we're



able to communicate the different signal strengths, and with a few minor adjustments a strong satellite signal is achieved, in most cases within five minutes. Once it's set, we use two 10-pound dumbbells (recommended by the manufacturer but not supplied) to stabilize the stand.

The PDQ is easy to store, lightweight, quick to assemble on any terrain and has a high-wind tie-down kit to keep it from moving in bad weather. Virtually any dish is compatible with the Delsand PDQ Signal Stand.

Delsand's website has a helpful instructional video that can be used along with the instructions for assembly and setup. The company also offers excellent customer support over the phone or via e-mail, and Delsand will be happy to walk you through any difficulties you may

experience while using the PDQ Signal Stand. The product is backed by a one-year limited warranty and retails for \$250. 🚚

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RV SALVAGE

Q We recently did some damage to our Cougar fifth-wheel trailer and need to replace a slide fascia. Because of the shape and size, shipping is expensive going through a dealer. We are wondering where the RV units go when they are wrecked. Is there a salvage yard some place in the Midwest we could access easily?

Joan Black Lund, via e-mail

A Insurance companies generally send “totaled” units to regional auctions and salvage yards, because of the high cost of shipping them long distances. Therefore, there should be some RV salvage yards within your region. You can put “RV salvage yards” into an online search engine. Here is a website (www.salvage-yards.org) that lists salvage yards by state. RV.net also has a list of salvage suppliers at www.rv.net/obsolete. Click on “Parts.” – **Ken Freund**



Most regions have RV salvage yards, but you may have to dig to locate the nearest one.

DIFFERENTIAL COOLING

Q I recently heard that it is a good idea to have additional cooling capacity for my 2010 RAM 2500 rear differential. My truck is a 2010 Dodge RAM 2500 diesel and I tow a 32-foot Wildcat fifth-wheel that is around 10-to-12 thousand pounds. Is this something that makes sense or just hype to sell these aluminum-finned covers.

Kurt Salseth, via e-mail

A Aluminum covers with fins are designed to improve heat dissipation, which will probably help cool the lubricant.

As far as needing such a device, the evidence can be seen rolling down the road, Kurt. There are millions of vehicles without any such auxiliary cooling and they roll up thousands of miles with no differential damage. Use of such a device can't hurt, and if it offers a somewhat greater lube oil capacity it may extend the lifespan of the oil a bit, but I don't think it would be accurate to say you need one. The best way to achieve long differential life for your truck would be to avoid overloading the axle or the truck's tow rating, and observe the factory recommended lubricant service intervals. – **Jeff Johnston**

THE TECH TEAM



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



JEFF JOHNSTON: Jeff Johnston is a former technical editor of *Trailer Life* and has been an RV enthusiast and mechanic since he was old enough to hold a wrench.

DESPERATE DURAMAX

Q My 2005 Chevrolet HD 3500 pickup with the Duramax 6.6L and Allison transmission has 91,664 miles on it. The truck has been at the dealer for two weeks. The truck runs fine, doesn't miss, doesn't cut out, but it won't idle. However, it will start back up immediately. So far the dealer has no solution. They have been in contact with General Motors and still no solution. Do you have any suggestions?

James Ritchie, Bardstown, Ky.

A The truck should be test driven with a GM scan tool/data recorder, which can be used to review the data the moment the problem occurs. Without looking at data acquired by a scan tool during the condition, any projected causes are speculation. It could be a number of things, including the powertrain control module (PCM), a fuel system fault including faulty injectors, a camshaft or crankshaft position sensor/relector ring, incorrect torque converter lockup or the EGR valve sticking (although T/C and EGR most likely would just cause rough running at idle). I did a little checking and didn't find any Technical Service Bulletins for stalling, although there is an intermittent drivability recall: Product Emission - PCM Integrated Circuit Chip Damage-Replace PCM, # 05539A (April 27, 2005). So you should also see if your dealer performed this recall. - **K.F.**

PORTABLE GENERATOR

Q I understand that I need a generator for my fifth-wheel. However, I am not sure that it should be an inverter style. Since the power at my house is not inverter type and I power computers and digital TVs at home without a problem, what is the true need? Will a standard generator do the job?

James M. (Jack) Strong III., via e-mail

A Computers and other power-sensitive equipment require what is referred to as clean power. Clean power is electrical current that is consistent and has a stable alternating current sine wave output. The better inverter-type generators have a sine wave equal to or better than the current from your household power. If the

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RV CLINIC

lighting in your home were powered by a generator and there was a fluctuation in the AC power, you would probably see the lights dim and then return to full brightness. However, if the computer were powered by a generator and the voltage fluctuated, chances are the computer would shut down. Inverter technology takes the power produced by a generator and uses a micro-processor to provide ultra-clean power with a sine wave equal to or better than the current from your household AC wall outlet. — K.F.

CRACKED CARAVAN

Q We love our 2003 Coleman C23 Caravan travel trailer. About two years ago, while parked in a mall parking lot, we got sideswiped! Of course no one stopped or left a note. Since then, a hairline crack in the outside skin toward the back of the unit where we were hit has developed. I think the entire side is one sheet and it would be very expensive to replace the whole thing. Can you recommend an alternate method of sealing the crack? I have been using clear silicone over the crack but it appears the crack is getting wider. Is there any type of tape or other topical material that I can use to seal it and make it impervious to weather?

Jim Rhodes, Eldersburg, Md.

A That's unfortunate and really annoying that someone damaged your trailer and took off. Yes, the walls are one sheet of fiberglass, but it's likely that the damaged area can be repaired. While it's good to keep moisture out of the crack, you need to take it to a shop that does RV body repairs for a thorough inspection and estimate before it cracks more. It may have to be reinforced from the backside of the panel to strengthen the area. Your silicone stop-gap method will only go so far and will not keep the crack from spreading. — K.F.

STICKY ALUMINUM WHEELS

Q While attempting to rotate the tires on my 2009 Ford F-350 Lariat I found that three of the four OEM 20-inch aluminum wheels were solidly corroded onto the center steel hub. One broke away rather easily, but the other two took a lot of work to break loose. Before remounting the wheels I spread a coat

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of chassis grease on the hub with hopes of preventing this from happening again. Time will tell how well this works. Can you offer any better suggestion to prevent corrosion between the aluminum wheels and the steel hub?

R. Warn, Oak Harbor, WA

A This can be a big problem in regions with wet weather and high humidity. As to a solution, anything that creates a film between the two dissimilar metals will work to keep them from sticking. A thin coat of RTV silicone, paint or anti-seize compound should also do the job. — **K. F.**

BATTERY MONITORING

Q We have a 2008 21RB Dutchman Class C motorhome by Four Winds featuring a battery cut-off switch and a 55-amp converter charger with an output of 13.6 volts DC. I would like to install an ammeter in the coach, to check the status of my two batteries that are in parallel, for checking the rate of discharge, when operating on battery power alone, and for rate of charge

from the charger/converter when on an electrical hookup. Could you tell me what scale on the ammeter I should get, what gauge of wire for about a 4-foot-long run I will need, and where I can find a schematic on how and where to hookup the wires. They have a little information in the full-time RVing book, but not much of anything else. Thanks!

Bob Loeper, via e-mail

A An ammeter will let you monitor current flow in and out of the coach batteries, but it won't show you charge status (state of charge) or actual charging voltage. For that you need an accurate voltmeter, preferably a digital unit. These can be easily installed, and only requires 16-gauge wire.

You could install an ammeter inline (in series) in either the main positive power cable going to the batteries (before it splits to go to each battery) or in the single ground cable that connects both batteries to chassis ground. It's safer to put it entirely in the grounded side of the battery, because if it gets shorted out it won't cause a fire. With a



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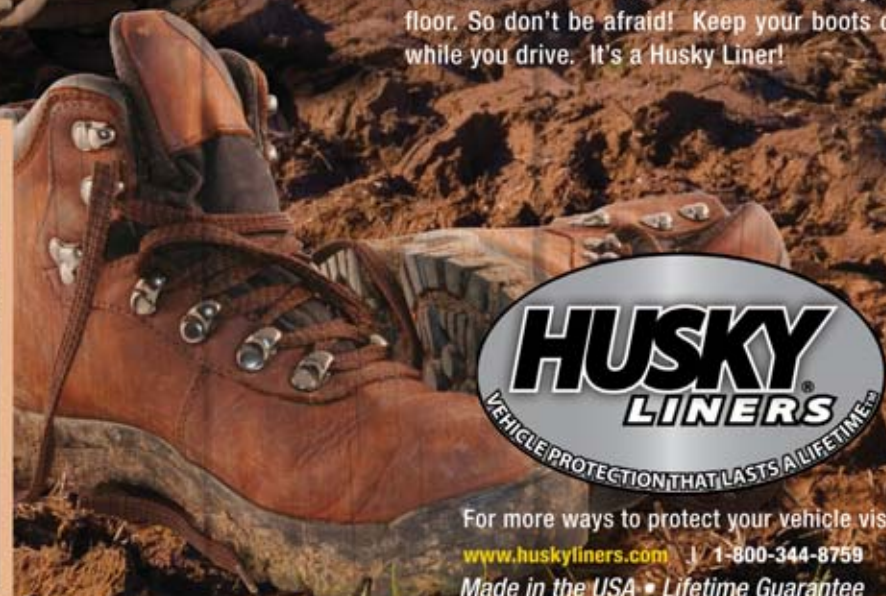
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short run such as 4 feet you shouldn't have too much loss in the cables, but remember that the distance both wires (going to and from the meter) run counts. The scale on the ammeter should go higher than maximum charging or power draw, so 60 or 75 amps should do. You must use a wire gauge at

least as heavy as the original wire, so it is better to go one size larger (as wire diameter increases, gauge numbers decrease). So if the wire is 6 gauge, using heavier 4 gauge is preferred. Use flexible automotive insulated copper cable and quality connectors, either crimped or preferably soldered. - K.F. 📧

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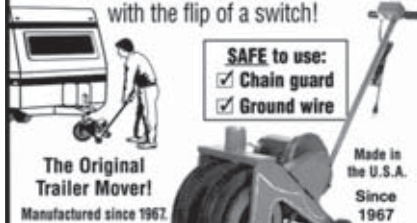
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USED 2004 Jayco EAGLE 291RLTS **NOW \$15,995** (888) 668-6715 Katy, TX STK# KATC9620A



USED 2006 Dutchmen COLORADO 31BKDSL WAS \$26,908 **NOW \$15,995** SAVE \$10,913 (888) 450-7060 Dothan, AL STK# DOT40513



USED 2006 Keystone OUTBACK 30RLS WAS \$24,995 **NOW \$15,995** SAVE \$9,000 (888) 450-7060 Dothan, AL STK# DOT40287



USED 2004 Fleetwood PROWLER 295RLTS WAS \$23,995 **NOW \$15,995** SAVE \$8,000 (866) 502-8238 Bath, NY STK# BAT66399



NEW 2011 Keystone BULLET 188EXP
MSRP \$23,348 **NOW \$15,995** SAVE
\$7,353 (888) 617-5406 Oakwood, GA
STK# ORV15779



NEW 2011 Keystone HIDEOUT 21FQS
MSRP \$23,104 **NOW \$15,995** SAVE
\$7,109 (888) 542-3819 Mesa, AZ STK#
MES14817



NEW 2011 Crossroads SLINGSHOT 27RB WAS
\$30,663 **NOW \$16,985** SAVE \$13,678 (888) 242-
0293 Madison, WI STK# MAD15063



NEW 2011 Jayco OCTANE SUPER LITE
161 WAS \$25,700 **NOW \$16,495** SAVE
\$9,205 (888) 819-7952 Longmont, CO
STK# KC111208



USED 2003 Keystone MONTANA 3255
WAS \$27,888 **NOW \$16,955** SAVE
\$10,933 (888) 471-3546 Chichester, NH
STK# GRV507495



USED 2009 MVP RV COAST 21LRBS **NOW \$16,995**
(888) 331-1595 Santa Clarita, CA STK# AMRV22330
VIN# 9C873572



USED 2008 Forest River CHEROKEE
255S WAS \$28,995 **NOW \$16,995** SAVE
\$12,000 (888) 860-8684 Strafford, MO
STK# STR11533A



USED 2005 Forest River CEDAR CREEK
32BHBS WAS \$23,690 **NOW \$16,995**
SAVE \$6,695 (866) 610-5049 Akron, OH
STK# SRV19552



USED 2009 Trailmanor
TRAILMANOR ELKMONT
24FQ WAS \$26,777
NOW \$16,997 SAVE
\$9,780 (888) 463-3995
Colorado Springs, CO
STK# KC211428B



NEW 2011 Starcraft TRAVEL STAR
245RBS WAS \$29,309 **NOW \$16,998**
SAVE \$12,311 (888) 457-4801 Colfax, NC
STK# CFX4097



USED 2011 Jayco JAY FEATHER X19H
WAS \$30,454 **NOW \$16,999** SAVE
\$13,455 (866) 415-9726 Wheat Ridge, CO
STK# KC510794B



NEW 2011 Crossroads SLINGSHOT
23CK WAS \$28,871 **NOW \$16,999** SAVE
\$11,872 (888) 471-3546 Chichester, NH
STK# GRV507131



USED 2010 Dutchmen KODIAK 235 WAS
\$25,877 **NOW \$17,755** SAVE \$8,122
(888) 471-3546 Chichester, NH STK#
GRV507523



USED 2005 Extreme RVs SPORTSMEN
239FS **NOW \$17,870** (888) 479-
3568 Vacaville, CA STK# VAC19636 VIN#
52098992



USED 2007 Pilgrim
ROUTE 66 31R66 WAS
\$24,995 **NOW \$17,895**
SAVE \$7,100 (866) 673-
0250 Statesville, NC
STK# STA126262



NEW 2011 Heartland PROWLER SPORT
23PFB WAS \$24,998 **NOW \$17,988**
SAVE \$7,010 (866) 673-0250 Statesville,
NC STK# STA125787



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT265BHS WAS \$27,590 **NOW \$17,995** SAVE \$9,595 (888) 848-7312 Columbia, SC STK# COL17028



NEW 2011 Keystone HIDEOUT 21FQS WAS \$26,439 **NOW \$17,995** SAVE \$8,444 (877) 289-0812 Las Vegas, NV STK# LVN40035



USED 2009 Keystone SPRINTER 250RBS WAS \$28,900 **NOW \$17,999** SAVE \$10,901 (888) 489-5784 Knoxville, TN STK# KNOX19536



USED 2007 Keystone COUGAR 29BHS WAS \$27,989 **NOW \$17,999** SAVE \$9,990 (877) 554-3516 Lakewood, NJ STK# LAK8618



NEW 2011 Crossroads SLINGSHOT 23CK WAS \$27,695 **NOW \$17,999** SAVE \$9,696 (866) 648-5288 St. Augustine, FL STK# JAC37710



USED 2004 Holiday Rambler ALUMASCAP 29RKT **NOW \$18,003** (888) 479-3568 Vacaville, CA STK# VAC18348 VIN# 4E146718



NEW 2011 Starcraft TRAVEL STAR 285RLSA WAS \$28,000 **NOW \$18,895** SAVE \$9,105 (866) 502-8238 Bath, NY STK# BAT66797



USED 2006 Forest River SANDPIPER 325BHD WAS \$32,995 **NOW \$18,995** SAVE \$14,000 (866) 754-7302 Greenwood, IN STK# GRW326054



USED 2008 Keystone OUTBACK SYD 30RLS WAS \$28,376 **NOW \$18,995** SAVE \$9,381 (888) 682-3036 Churchville, NY STK# CHU69272



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT265BHS MSRP \$27,790 **NOW \$18,995** SAVE \$8,795 (888) 815-7523 Woodstock, GA STK# WDS16783



NEW 2011 Keystone HIDEOUT 27BHS MSRP \$27,778 **NOW \$18,995** SAVE \$8,783 (888) 542-3819 Mesa, AZ STK# MES14826



NEW 2010 Dutchmen AEROLITE 27QSTH-SL WAS \$34,035 **NOW \$18,999** SAVE \$15,036 (866) 289-0113 Chattanooga, TN STK# CH6205



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT265BHS WAS \$28,074 **NOW \$18,999** SAVE \$9,075 (877) 458-3214 Jacksonville, FL STK# JAX19786



USED 2006 Komfort TRAIL BLAZER 252FS **NOW \$19,222** (888) 479-3568 Vacaville, CA STK# VAC11162D VIN# 62023455



NEW 2011 Crossroads ZINGER 29DB WAS \$28,788 **NOW \$19,388** SAVE \$9,400 (866) 755-9604 Charleston, SC STK# CHN127614



USED 2008 Dutchmen KODIAK 30BHSL **NOW \$19,422** (888) 480-3175 Sacramento, CA STK# SAC14187B VIN# 8K123075



USED 2008 Keystone COUGAR 29 **NOW \$19,487** (888) 641-0925 Kaysville, UT STK# KY37660



USED 2006 Thor JAZZ 2760RL NOW \$19,779 (888) 480-3175 Sacramento, CA STK# SAC18459 VIN# 6C465435



USED 2001 Forest River CARDINAL 28RKB LX NOW \$19,784 (888) 480-3175 Sacramento, CA STK# SAC10924B VIN# 1G075785



USED 2009 Keystone OUTBACK 27L WAS \$29,995 NOW \$19,897 SAVE \$10,098 (888) 903-6787 Harrisburg, PA STK# HAR69576



USED 2006 Keystone MOUNTAINEER 319BHS WAS \$49,490 NOW \$19,858 SAVE \$29,632 (888) 692-9016 Myrtle Beach, SC STK# MB126252



USED 2006 Jayco JAY FLIGHT 31BHS WAS \$25,641 NOW \$14,995 SAVE \$10,646 (866) 996-3140 Calera, AL STK# CLE19282



USED 2007 Jayco EAGLE 32 NOW \$19,950 (888) 479-3568 Vacaville, CA STK# VAC17589 VIN# 71CA0096



USED 2007 Forest River WILDWOOD 33TS WAS \$36,995 NOW \$19,985 SAVE \$17,010 (888) 484-3906 Spartanburg, SC STK# GR125693



NEW 2011 Dutchmen KODIAK 250BHSL MSRP \$28,208 NOW \$19,995 SAVE \$8,213 (888) 542-3819 Mesa, AZ STK# MES12205



NEW 2011 Dutchmen RUBICON 2100 WAS \$32,511 NOW \$19,998 SAVE \$12,513 (888) 457-4801 Colfax, NC STK# CFX4079



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



USED 2009 Keystone COUGAR 276RLS WAS \$29,995 NOW \$19,999 SAVE \$9,996 (866) 820-0335 Council Bluffs, IA STK# CBI18632



NEW 2011 Dutchmen AEROLITE 285BHGS WAS \$29,346 NOW \$19,999 SAVE \$9,347 (866) 289-0113 Chattanooga, TN STK# CH5991



NEW 2012 Forest River MAVERICK 2902 WAS \$28,977 NOW \$19,999 SAVE \$8,978 (866) 415-9726 Wheat Ridge, CO STK# KC511708



USED 2006 Forest River CEDAR CREEK 362BTS WAS \$49,995 NOW \$20,995 SAVE \$29,000 (888) 903-6787 Harrisburg, PA STK# HAR69863



NEW 2011 Starcraft LEXION S-LITE 314RE WAS \$37,207 NOW \$20,995 SAVE \$16,212 (866) 502-8238 Bath, NY STK# BAT66818



USED 2009 Keystone SYDNEY 29RLS WAS \$34,900 NOW \$20,999 SAVE \$13,901 (888) 489-5784 Knoxville, TN STK# KNOX19537



NEW 2012 Dutchmen RUBICON 2100
 WAS \$32,448 **NOW \$21,975** SAVE
 \$10,473 (888) 471-3546 Chichester, NH
 STK# GRV507372



NEW 2011 Jayco
EAGLE SUPER LITE
284BHS MSRP
 \$31,411 **NOW \$21,995**
 SAVE \$9,416 (888)
 315-7967 Tucson, AZ
 STK# TUC13926



NEW 2011 Starcraft LEXION S-LITE
256RKU WAS \$42,125 **NOW \$21,996**
 SAVE \$20,129 (877) 450-7415 Island Lake,
 IL STK# CRV5676



NEW 2011 Keystone OUTBACK 230RS LIST PRICE
 \$35,499 **NOW \$22,550** SAVE \$12,949 (888) 331-
 1595 Santa Clarita, CA STK# AMRV22157 VIN#
 BB451822



NEW 2011 Dutchmen DUTCHMEN
315BHDS WAS \$32,592 **NOW \$22,671**
 SAVE \$9,921 (888) 474-1330 Bartow, FL
 STK# DCW8089



USED 2011 Coachmen CATALINA 38
BHDS WAS \$35,888 **NOW \$22,985** SAVE
 \$12,903 (866) 755-9604 Charleston, SC
 STK# CHN125655



USED 2010 Keystone
OUTBACK SYDNEY 290
RLS WAS \$31,995 **NOW**
\$22,985 SAVE \$9,010
 (888) 848-7312 Colum-
 bia, SC STK# COL16327



USED 1999 Teton
PRESTIGE 32 FLAG-
STAFF WAS \$37,500
NOW \$22,988 SAVE
 \$14,512 (866) 820-0335
 Council Bluffs, IA STK#
 CBI17237



USED 2007 Monaco STARWOOD M-
29RKD WAS \$31,824 **NOW \$22,995**
 SAVE \$8,829 (877) 458-3214 Jacksonville,
 FL STK# JAX20585



USED 2007 Gulf Stream CANYON TRAIL
33FBHT WAS \$31,997 **NOW \$22,997**
 SAVE \$9,000 (888) 463-3995 Colorado
 Springs, CO STK# KC211267B



NEW 2011 Dutchmen DUTCHMEN
315BHDS WAS \$34,278 **NOW \$23,564**
 SAVE \$10,714 (866) 289-0113 Chatta-
 nooga, TN STK# CH5990



NEW 2011 Starcraft
LEXION S-LITE 314RE
 WAS \$35,355 **NOW**
\$23,895 SAVE \$11,460
 (888) 474-1330 Bartow,
 FL STK# DCW7903



USED 2007 Gulf Stream SEDONA
34FSBW **NOW \$23,974** (888) 641-0925
 Kaysville, UT STK# KY36139



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



NEW 2011 Keystone SPRINTER 308BHS
 WAS \$34,011 **NOW \$24,599** SAVE \$9,412
 (888) 568-2177 Burlington, WA STK#
 FRV9814



USED 2007 Keystone COUGAR 311RLS
NOW \$24,777 (888) 727-2952 North Little
 Rock, AR STK# LIT18269



USED 2006 Americamp SUMMIT RIDGE
327RRK WAS \$37,855 **NOW \$24,877**
 SAVE \$12,978 (866) 996-3140 Calera, AL
 STK# CLE18948



NEW 2011 Coleman COLEMAN CT-387DQDS MSRP \$34,287 **NOW \$24,988** SAVE \$9,299 (888) 348-5909 Avondale, AZ STK# AV013900



USED 2004 Fleetwood WILDERNESS ADVANTAGE 365FLTS WAS \$37,856 **NOW \$24,995** SAVE \$12,861 (888) 860-8684 Strafford, MO STK# STR15757A



USED 2005 Forest River CARDINAL 34 WAS \$35,299 **NOW \$24,995** SAVE \$10,304 (888) 568-2177 Burlington, WA STK# FRV9737



NEW 2011 Coleman COLEMAN CT275REX WAS \$36,784 **NOW \$24,995** SAVE \$11,789 (888) 378-1057 Lake City, FL STK# LAC21664



NEW 2011 Keystone SPRINTER 255RKS LIST PRICE \$35,385 **NOW \$24,995** SAVE \$10,390 (888) 331-1595 Santa Clarita, CA STK# AMRV21977 VIN# B1533234



USED 2006 Coachmen SOMERSET 341QS WAS \$45,900 **NOW \$24,999** SAVE \$20,901 (866) 289-0113 Chattanooga, TN STK# CH5934



NEW 2011 Keystone OUTBACK 285FL WAS \$37,128 **NOW \$24,999** SAVE \$12,129 (877) 554-3516 Lakewood, NJ STK# LAK8189



NEW 2011 Coleman COLEMAN CT-387DQDS MSRP \$35,921 **NOW \$24,999** SAVE \$10,922 (888) 348-5909 Avondale, AZ STK# AV019328



USED 2006 Keystone MONTANA 3600RE **NOW \$25,985** (888) 801-3226 Byron, GA STK# MAC16137



USED 2004 Forest River CEDAR CREEK 36 **NOW \$25,048** (888) 479-3568 Vacaville, CA STK# VAC17720A VIN# 4P188221



USED 2008 Forest River SIERRA 292RLBS WAS \$47,925 **NOW \$25,995** SAVE \$21,930 (888) 315-7967 Tucson, AZ STK# TUC18120



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



USED 2007 Holiday Rambler AL-MASCAPE SUITES 32SKT **NOW \$26,777** (888) 727-2952 North Little Rock, AR STK# LIT17708



USED 2007 Gulf Stream SEDONA 34FBRW WAS \$43,524 **NOW \$26,877** SAVE \$16,647 (866) 996-3140 Calera, AL STK# CLE19279



USED 2011 Keystone OUTBACK 280RS **NOW \$26,895** (888) 696-2165 Savannah, GA STK# SAV17428



NEW 2011 Coleman COLEMAN CT-F267BH WAS \$38,740 **NOW \$26,995** SAVE \$11,745 (888) 903-6787 Harrisburg, PA STK# HAR69261



NEW 2011 Starcraft LEXION S-LITE 256RKU WAS \$37,786 **NOW \$27,167** SAVE \$10,619 (888) 568-2177 Burlington, WA STK# FRV9664



USED 2005 Fleetwood TRIUMPH 395RL WAS \$47,695 **NOW \$27,985** SAVE \$19,710 (888) 484-3906 Spartanburg, SC STK# GR125365



USED 2005 Fleetwood GEARBOX 375FS **NOW \$27,995** (877) 834-0429 Bakersfield, CA STK# SLV22219 VIN# 52312602



USED 2008 Heartland BIG COUNTRY 3250TS **NOW \$27,995** (888) 617-5406 Oakwood, GA STK# ORV15957



NEW 2011 Coleman COLEMAN CT-F267BH WAS \$38,857 **NOW \$27,995** SAVE \$10,862 (888) 727-2952 North Little Rock, AR STK# LIT14254



NEW 2011 Coleman COLEMAN CT-F267BH WAS \$40,860 **NOW \$28,950** SAVE \$11,910 (888) 850-5575 Wood Village, OR STK# POR37502



USED 2007 Alpenlite VOYAGER 31CK WAS \$49,900 **NOW \$28,999** SAVE \$20,901 (866) 289-0113 Chattanooga, TN STK# CH6868



USED 2006 Coachmen SOMERSET 358RLTS WAS \$44,900 **NOW \$28,999** SAVE \$15,901 (888) 489-5784 Knoxville, TN STK# KNOX19655



USED 2006 Carriage CAMEO 35KS3 **NOW \$29,775** (888) 801-3226 Byron, GA STK# MAC16043



USED 2008 Dutchmen GRAND JUNCTION 31TKS **NOW \$29,858** (888) 815-7523 Woodstock, GA STK# WDS17078



USED 2008 Forest River SANDPIPER 305RLW **NOW \$29,995** (888) 668-6715 Katy, TX STK# KAT9876



USED 2009 Thor COLORADO 320BH-BS WAS \$54,843 **NOW \$29,995** SAVE \$24,848 (888) 692-9016 Myrtle Beach, SC STK# MB126677



NEW 2011 Keystone FUZION 230 MSRP \$43,065 **NOW \$29,995** SAVE \$13,070 (888) 542-3819 Mesa, AZ STK# MES16789



USED 2010 Keystone OUTBACK 320 FDB WAS \$43,680 **NOW \$31,388** SAVE \$12,292 (866) 755-9604 Charleston, SC STK# CHN126992



NEW 2012 Crossroads SUNSET TRAIL 29RL WAS \$45,087 **NOW \$31,988** SAVE \$13,099 (888) 386-5187 Houghton Lake, MI STK# HL6326



USED 2006 Keystone RAPTOR 3319 **NOW \$31,995** (877) 834-0429 Bakersfield, CA STK# SLV22473 VIN# 6M853799



NEW 2011 Keystone FUZION 230 LIST PRICE \$46,267 **NOW \$32,753** SAVE \$13,514 (877) 834-0429 Bakersfield, CA STK# SLV21363 VIN# BF810503



NEW 2011 Heartland ELKRIDGE 29BHK
 WAS \$47,297 **NOW \$32,995** SAVE
 \$14,302 (866) 820-0335 Council Bluffs, IA
 STK# CBI14435



NEW 2011 Dutchmen LAKEWOOD
400RLP WAS \$46,528 **NOW \$32,995**
 SAVE \$13,533 (888) 475-5918 Roberts-
 dale, AL STK# RD39308



USED 2007 Western ALPENLITE 34RL **NOW**
\$34,995 (888) 668-6715 Katy, TX STK# KAT9870



NEW 2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT-
F325RL MSRP \$48,863 **NOW \$33,995**
 SAVE \$14,868 (888) 905-0490 Anthony, TX
 STK# LC15898



USED 2008 Heartland BIG HORN 3600RL
 WAS \$52,798 **NOW \$34,985** SAVE
 \$17,813 (866) 673-0250 Statesville, NC
 STK# STA126284



USED 2010 Jayco EAGLE 30.5DDBSA **NOW**
\$34,995 (888) 614-5201 Draper, UT STK#
 ABRV39411



USED 2007 Alpenlite VOYAGER 34RLR
 WAS \$51,365 **NOW \$34,995** SAVE
 \$16,370 (888) 625-5187 Fort Myers, FL
 STK# FTM9740A



NEW 2011 Heartland ELKRIDGE 29BHK
 WAS \$50,996 **NOW \$34,995** SAVE
 \$16,001 (888) 896-2801 Albuquerque, NM
 STK# ARV15889



NEW 2011 Keystone
LAREDO 310RE WAS
 \$50,390 **NOW \$34,999**
 SAVE \$15,391 (888)
 471-3546 Chichester, NH
 STK# GRV507252



USED 2008 Forest River CEDAR CREEK
35L4QB WAS \$75,970 **NOW \$35,858**
 SAVE \$40,112 (888) 484-3906 Spartan-
 burg, SC STK# GR125557



NEW 2011 Keystone LAREDO 324RL
 WAS \$50,646 **NOW \$35,995** SAVE
 \$14,651 (888) 471-3546 Chichester, NH
 STK# GRV507260



USED 2007 Keystone MONTANA 329S
NOW \$36,717 (888) 480-3175 Sac-
 ramento, CA STK# SAC12783B VIN#
 74702833



NEW 2011 Crossroads HAMPTON 38CK
 WAS \$63,695 **NOW \$37,500** SAVE
 \$26,195 (866) 648-5288 St. Augustine, FL
 STK# JAC38873



NEW 2011 Forest River SANDSTORM
3215SRS MSRP \$55,114 **NOW \$37,995**
 SAVE \$17,119 (888) 905-0490 Anthony, TX
 STK# LC15520



USED 2006 Alfa SEE
YA 35RLIK **NOW**
\$38,995 (888) 641-
 0925 Kaysville, UT STK#
 KY37748



USED 2009 Keystone MONTANA 3465RL
NOW \$39,858 (888) 815-7523 Wood-
 stock, GA STK# WDS17090



USED 2012 Keystone MOUNTAINEER 345DBQ NOW \$39,858 (888) 617-5406 Oakwood, GA STK# ORV16667



NEW 2011 Keystone MONTANA HIGH COUNTRY 343RL WAS \$64,388 NOW \$39,965 SAVE \$24,423 (888) 242-0293 Madison, WI STK# MAD18832



USED 2011 Keystone MONTANA 333DB NOW \$39,987 (888) 614-5201 Draper, UT STK# ABRV40241



USED 2009 Keystone CHALLENGER 35CKQ NOW \$39,995 (877) 834-0429 Bakersfield, CA STK# SLV21995 VIN# 9E750174



USED 2009 Heartland CYCLONE 3914 WAS \$64,895 NOW \$39,995 SAVE \$24,900 (888) 860-8684 Strafford, MO STK# STR14160A



USED 2010 Keystone EVEREST 3401 NOW \$42,540 (888) 905-0490 Anthony, TX STK# LC15682A



USED 2009 Keystone MONTANA 3455SA NOW \$42,995 (888) 668-6715 Katy, TX STK# KAT9126A



NEW 2011 Starcraft LEXION 355RESA WAS \$68,702 NOW \$44,799 SAVE \$23,903 (866) 775-0682 Roanoke, VA STK# ROA12132



NEW 2011 Keystone RAPTOR 400RBG WAS \$80,169 NOW \$48,995 SAVE \$31,174 (866) 502-8238 Bath, NY STK# BAT65845



NEW 2011 Jayco PINNACLE 34RLTS WAS \$72,278 NOW \$48,999 SAVE \$23,279 (866) 415-9726 Wheat Ridge, CO STK# KC511165



USED 2010 Heartland CYCLONE 3812 WAS \$72,145 NOW \$49,585 SAVE \$22,560 (866) 648-5288 St. Augustine, FL STK# JAC39872



NEW 2012 Dutchmen INFINITY 3640RL WAS \$76,644 NOW \$49,995 SAVE \$26,649 (888) 819-7952 Longmont, CO STK# KC111447



NEW 2011 Keystone RAPTOR 4014LEV WAS \$76,404 NOW \$49,995 SAVE \$26,409 (888) 682-3036 Churchville, NY STK# CHU69198



NEW 2011 Keystone RAPTOR 300MP WAS \$68,581 NOW \$49,995 SAVE \$18,586 (888) 454-1707 Kissimmee, FL STK# KS8764



NEW 2011 Coleman COLEMAN CTF340RL LIST PRICE \$76,481 NOW \$54,977 SAVE \$21,504 (888) 331-1595 Santa Clarita, CA STK# AMRV22005 VIN# BC659945



NEW 2011 Keystone RAPTOR 3912LEV WAS \$80,993 NOW \$55,949 SAVE \$25,044 (888) 568-2177 Burlington, WA STK# FRV9743



NEW 2011 Keystone FUZION 405 WAS \$83,971 NOW \$59,995 SAVE \$23,976 (888) 860-8684 Strafford, MO STK# STR14162

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USED TRAVEL TRAILER TOWABLES

YEAR/MANUFACTURER/MAKE/MODEL	STOCK #	LIST	NOW*	PHONE NO.
1993 Skyline NOMAD 1850	HL6332	\$6,690	\$4,988	(888) 386-5187
2006 Cruiser RV FUN FINDER 189	JAC40514	\$12,999	\$10,999	(866) 648-5288
2007 Coachmen SPIRIT OF AMERICA 23FKS	SRV19272	\$15,690	\$11,995	(866) 610-5049
2009 Jayco SPORT 226	SYU73047	\$15,768	\$11,995	(888) 672-5049
2004 Palm Aire FREEPORT 3103	CFX4267	\$13,711	\$11,998	(888) 457-4801
2005 Dutchmen CLASSIC 26F-DSL	TAL41189	\$15,995	\$12,995	(888) 902-8565
2007 Keystone ZEPPELIN Z292	SRV19257	\$17,690	\$12,995	(866) 610-5049
2009 Cherokee GREY WOLF 20RB	LAC21402	\$14,995	\$12,995	(888) 378-1057
2009 Coachmen ADRENALINE BLAST	GB41740	\$15,645	\$12,995	(888) 674-0275
2006 Coachmen CAPTIVA 32	CRV5685	\$18,497	\$13,995	(877) 450-7415
2006 Jayco JAY FEATHER 26S	LAC21405	\$14,995	\$13,995	(888) 378-1057
2006 Jayco FLIGHT 25RKS	HIL40061	\$16,950	\$14,950	(888) 859-6653
2007 R-V Vision TRAIL SPORT 25S	TAL41673	\$15,995	\$14,995	(888) 902-8565
2007 Sunnybrook SUNSET CREEK 269BH	LAK8692	\$19,999	\$15,295	(877) 554-3516
2006 Forest River FLAGSTAFF 831BHSS	LAC21406	\$16,995	\$15,995	(888) 378-1057
2006 Trailmanor TRAILMANOR 2619	JAC41034	\$18,900	\$16,200	(866) 648-5288
2006 Forest River WILDCAT 29RLS	KC210836B	\$21,997	\$16,497	(888) 463-3995
2009 Dutchmen RAINIER 25C	POR37483	\$22,950	\$16,988	(888) 850-5575
2008 Dutchmen KODIAK 24RBS	LAC21398	\$18,995	\$16,995	(888) 378-1057
2009 Cruiser RV VIEWFINDER 21FB	TAL41329	\$18,995	\$16,995	(888) 902-8565
2007 Wkd. Warrior WKD. WARRIOR 2800FSC	FTM17203A	\$25,689	\$19,995	(888) 625-5187
2007 Jayco EAGLE 328RLS	GB41262	\$22,902	\$21,499	(888) 674-0275
2007 Keystone COUGAR 302RLBS	JAX19858	\$26,985	\$21,995	(877) 458-3214
2011 Pacific Coachworks TANGO 256RKS	FRV10435	\$27,995	\$21,995	(888) 568-2177
2007 Jayco EAGLE 288 RLS	HIL39228	\$28,000	\$24,950	(888) 859-6653

USED FIFTH WHEEL TOWABLES

YEAR/MANUFACTURER/MAKE/MODEL	STOCK #	LIST	NOW*	PHONE NO.
1999 Sunnybrook SUNNYBROOK 24CKFS	FTM1141E	\$10,000	\$8,000	(888) 625-5187
2000 Forest River CEDAR CREEK 30	JAX20091	\$14,662	\$11,998	(877) 458-3214
2007 Forest River WILDCAT 29RLBS	OCA19191	\$19,995	\$16,888	(877) 774-0328
2005 Keystone COPPER CANYON 293RKSLS	FRV10580	\$21,995	\$16,995	(888) 568-2177
2002 Fleetwood TRIUMPH 31.5G	POR37939	\$22,950	\$17,950	(888) 850-5575
2006 Fleetwood ADVANTAGE 295RLS	POR36739	\$24,950	\$18,900	(888) 850-5575
2008 Gulf Stream CANYON TRAIL 29RLF	MER18149A	\$26,995	\$19,858	(888) 254-9145
2007 Cruiser RV LAND ROAMER 285RK	SYU73051	\$27,758	\$21,889	(888) 672-5049
2009 Heartland SUNDANCE 3300SK	LVN36892A	\$32,855	\$24,995	(877) 289-0812
2003 Forest River CEDAR CREEK 36RLTS	DCW7885B	\$29,995	\$24,995	(888) 474-1330
2007 Crossroads PARADISE POINT 34RL	GR126682	\$32,995	\$26,888	(888) 484-3906
2010 Coachman CHAPPARRAL 276RLS	TAL40550	\$34,995	\$26,995	(888) 902-8565
2007 Forest River CARDINAL 29RK	RD40424	\$39,988	\$29,988	(888) 475-5918
2006 Heartland BIGHORN 3055	RD39398	\$39,988	\$29,995	(888) 475-5918
2009 Keystone MOUNTAINEER 347THT	RD39508	\$44,988	\$32,995	(888) 475-5918
2007 Fleetwood GEARBOX	FTM13974A	\$42,792	\$32,995	(888) 625-5187
2009 Heartland BIG COUNTRY 325TSL	POR37152	\$44,950	\$34,950	(888) 850-5575
2006 Nu Wa HITCHHIKER 35LKRSB PREMIER	KC2CS960B	\$48,997	\$35,997	(888) 463-3995
2010 Keystone MONTANA 3150	CHN125677	\$49,930	\$36,985	(866) 755-9604
2006 Heartland LANDMARK GRAND CANYON	CHN126376	\$51,258	\$39,858	(866) 755-9604
2007 Keystone CHALLENGER 34TBH	MB126854	\$51,004	\$39,859	(888) 692-9016
2008 Heartland CYCLONE 4012	KS8548	\$53,412	\$39,995	(888) 454-1707
2009 Keystone RAPTOR 3602RL	CFX3844	\$53,999	\$39,998	(888) 457-4801
2008 Heartland BIG HORN 3670RL	AV013519	\$59,875	\$44,811	(888) 348-5909
2009 Glendale TITANIUM 30E35SA	MES18119	\$69,500	\$53,995	(888) 542-3819

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2012 Coleman COLEMAN CTS274BH	COL16292	\$19,896	\$15,995	(888) 848-7312
2011 Forest River WILDWOOD 26RKSXL	OCA19092	\$21,985	\$16,888	(877) 774-0328
2012 Coleman COLEMAN CTE184	SW9769	\$23,490	\$18,270	(888) 844-1758
2012 Dutchmen DUTCHMEN 255RB	LC115907	\$24,260	\$18,750	(888) 905-0490
2012 Dutchmen DUTCHMEN 265BHS	DOT39261	\$25,290	\$18,995	(888) 450-7060
2011 Dutchmen DUTCHMEN 265BHS	RD39785	\$25,180	\$18,995	(888) 475-5918
2012 Coleman COLEMAN CT265BHS	TAL40132	\$25,543	\$18,999	(888) 902-8565
2012 Jayco JAY FLIGHT 25BHS	ORW16276	\$24,793	\$19,659	(888) 617-5406
2012 Coleman COLEMAN CTS260BH	SW10001	\$27,075	\$21,900	(888) 844-1758
2012 Dutchmen DUTCHMEN 296FKS	KC111462	\$29,761	\$21,995	(888) 819-7952
2011 Crossroads SLINGSHOT 29BH	CFX4011	\$29,299	\$21,998	(888) 457-4801
2011 Forest River THOROUGHbred 827VRB	OCA19106	\$29,329	\$22,888	(877) 774-0328
2011 Keystone PASSPORT 2590BH	OCA19176	\$28,357	\$22,888	(877) 774-0328
2011 Jayco JAY FLIGHT G2 29RLS	ARV15777	\$30,257	\$23,498	(888) 896-2801
2011 Keystone SPRINTER 277RLS	WDS15901	\$32,435	\$23,997	(888) 815-7523
2012 Dutchmen AEROLITE 269BHSS	SW9852	\$30,097	\$24,270	(888) 844-1758
2012 Dutchmen RUBICON 2100	DOT39374	\$31,674	\$24,785	(888) 450-7060
2011 Coleman COLEMAN CT387DQDS	AV013905	\$34,287	\$24,998	(888) 348-5909
2012 Dutchmen KODIAK 263RLSL	CHU69834	\$35,491	\$26,995	(888) 682-3036
2011 Keystone SPRINTER 277RLS	HIL36969	\$35,759	\$27,950	(888) 859-6653
2012 Dutchmen DENALI 270FK	KC111354	\$38,299	\$27,995	(888) 819-7952
2012 Dutchmen DENALI 289RK	CB115375	\$37,722	\$29,995	(866) 820-0335
2011 Keystone HORNET RETREAT 39FDEN	RD38632	\$42,516	\$33,995	(888) 475-5918
2011 Jayco OCTANE ZX T26Y	TUC13939	\$52,027	\$39,872	(888) 315-7967

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YEAR/MANUFACTURER/MAKE/MODEL	STOCK #	LIST	NOW*	PHONE NO.
2012 Heartland ELKRIDGE EXPRESS 26	ARV15903	\$30,350	\$23,988	(888) 896-2801
2012 Heartland ELKRIDGE EXPRESS 24	CB116193	\$29,558	\$24,999	(866) 820-0335
2012 Coleman COLEMAN CTF267BH	MAD16062	\$37,685	\$27,481	(888) 242-0293
2011 Coleman COLEMAN CTF267BH	KC211315	\$38,957	\$29,497	(888) 463-3995
2011 Coleman COLEMAN CTF259RE	LVN36711	\$39,080	\$29,700	(877) 289-0812
2012 Coleman COLEMAN CTF259RE	SAV17016	\$38,227	\$29,960	(888) 696-2165
2012 Heartland ELKRIDGE 27RLSS	CB116190	\$38,393	\$29,990	(866) 820-0335
2011 Keystone COUGAR 27SAB	SYU64684	\$38,059	\$29,999	(888) 672-5049
2012 Coleman COLEMAN CTF325RL	GB40361	\$44,265	\$34,788	(888) 674-0275
2011 Jayco EAGLE SUPER LITE 31.55RLDS	ABR37289	\$44,814	\$35,983	(888) 614-5201
2011 Heartland GREYSTONE 32RL	KC112177	\$49,123	\$36,995	(888) 819-7952
2011 Starcraft LEXION S-LITE 315BSSA	LVN40266	\$53,530	\$39,995	(877) 289-0812
2012 Heartland ELKRIDGE 28TSRE	KNOX20792	\$46,891	\$40,716	(888) 489-5784
2012 Crossroads CRUISER SAHARA 320CK	HL6164	\$49,624	\$41,988	(888) 386-5187
2012 Dutchmen KOMFORT 3130FRL	GB39126	\$60,991	\$45,995	(888) 674-0275
2012 Keystone MOUNTAINEER 290RLT	LIT16334	\$59,837	\$49,777	(888) 727-2952
2012 Dutchmen INFINITY 3250RL	SW9908	\$64,578	\$51,270	(888) 844-1758
2011 Jayco EAGLE 365BHS	ABR38144	\$61,160	\$52,897	(888) 614-5201
2012 Keystone MOUNTAINEER 324RLQ	LIT16335	\$64,269	\$54,777	(888) 727-2952
2012 Dutchmen INFINITY 3520MS	SW10011	\$75,439	\$59,270	(888) 844-1758
2011 Keystone ALPINE 3450RL	FTM15421	\$73,669	\$59,995	(888) 625-5187
2011 Keystone RAPTOR 4014LEV	TUC18107	\$71,033	\$59,995	(888) 315-7967
2011 Keystone MONTANA 3455SA	LVN38432	\$79,243	\$60,223	(877) 289-0812
2012 Dutchmen INFINITY 3640RL	STR15646	\$73,574	\$61,900	(888) 860-8684
2011 Keystone MONTANA 3400RL	ABR37194	\$92,063	\$69,827	(888) 614-5201

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Stair Step Strain Saver

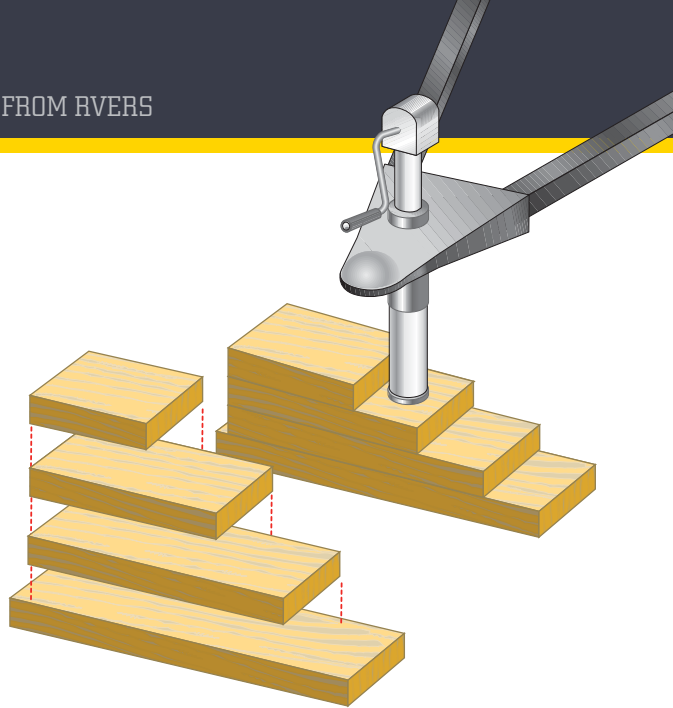
Here is how I made an A-frame jack block that saves considerable time and strain when hitching and leveling a travel trailer. Folks with manually cranked jacks will really appreciate the work it saves.

Using 2-by-5-inch boards and nails or screws, assemble a stair-stepped platform (see diagram).

After the trailer is parked, determine how much front-to-rear leveling will be needed. If the A-frame must be raised considerably, place the jack post on the highest step of the block. Conversely, if the A-frame must be lowered significantly, select the lowest step on the block.

After using this device a few times, you will be able to quickly judge which step to use to minimize the work at hand.

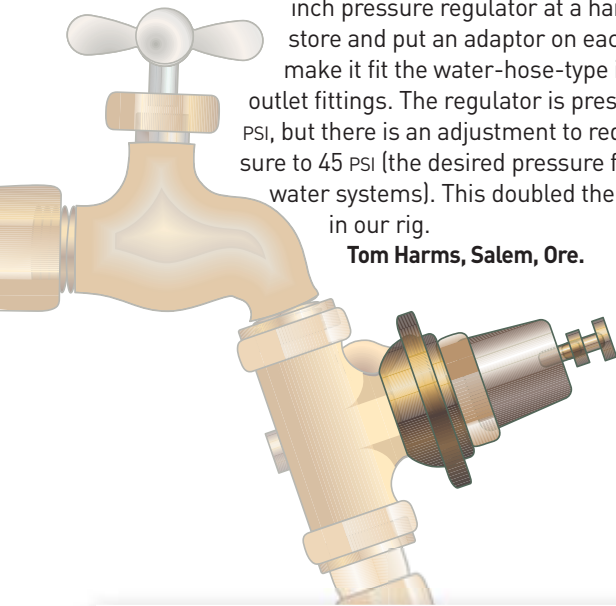
Charles McAfee, Haleyville, Ala.



More Volume, Less Pressure

If you are dissatisfied with the low volume of water flow in your RV due to the restriction in the water regulator (1/4-inch opening), try using a household-type unit. I purchased a 3/4-inch pressure regulator at a hardware store and put an adaptor on each end to make it fit the water-hose-type inlet and outlet fittings. The regulator is preset for 50 PSI, but there is an adjustment to reduce pressure to 45 PSI (the desired pressure for RV water systems). This doubled the water flow in our rig.

Tom Harms, Salem, Ore.



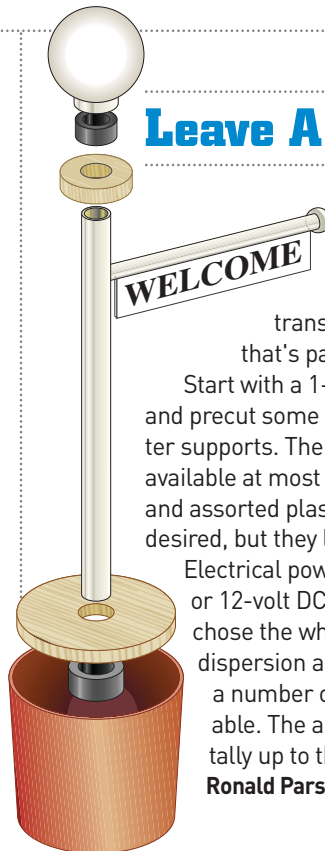
Leave A Light Burning

Here's a simple porch light project for neighborly campers that costs around \$35 and breaks down for transport. It's only plastic, but that's part of its beauty.

Start with a 1-foot-diameter plastic planter, and precut some plywood top and bottom center supports. The 2-inch white plastic PVC pipe, available at most hardware/gardening stores, and assorted plastic fittings can be painted if desired, but they look just fine in white.

Electrical power can be either 120-volt AC or 12-volt DC, depending on your taste. We chose the white plastic globe for soft light dispersion and resistance to breakage, but a number of different styles are adaptable. The addition of plastic flowers is totally up to the boss of the family!

Ronald Parsons, Kirksville, Mo.



illustrations by Bill Tippon

QUICK TIP

Dirty Contacts

To clean those dirty contacts on markers, stop and taillights, the turn signals and trailer connector/receptacles, I use approximately 1 ounce of cider vinegar and add a little table salt. I apply the cleaner with an acid brush or similar applicator, and when the contacts are clean, rinse them with water from a spray bottle. Then I dry the contacts with a hair dryer (you can also use compressed air). Works great here in rainy country. **Chas H. Webb, Gresham, Ore.**

To send your submission, write to: Trailer Life 10-Minute Tech, 3300 Fernbrook Lane N, Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN 55447. Please include an illustration or photo if applicable.

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Private Retreat

Jefferson's little known hideaway offers visitors a voyage of historical discovery



Virginia is the birthplace of eight American presidents, and the homes of six are open to the public. The two that first come to mind are George Washington's home at Mount Vernon and Thomas Jefferson's home near Charlottesville. A visit to any of these homes offers insight, not just into the former presidents' lives, but also into the times in which they lived.

Monticello, Jefferson's home, is an autobiographical masterpiece of Jefferson. He designed the home and included amenities exacting of his lifestyle and that of his family. Probably no other celebrated home in America more accurately reflects the personality of its owner, our third president and the author of the Declaration of Independence, than Monticello.

Down the road 63 miles to Lynchburg, on highway 29, and then west a few miles on highway 460, there is a place about which a similar claim can be made, and safely so, because it's about the same man.

During the most challenging time of his presidency, Thomas Jefferson started building a private retreat away from public scrutiny. It was his most personal architectural creation. The octagonal house was surrounded by 4,000 wooded acres called Poplar Forest. It was a three-day ride from Monticello. Although he loved Monticello, he said that people would peek in his windows and that he was uncomfortable being "the curiosity of the neighborhood." Jefferson always longed to be out of the limelight, to "detach myself from public life, which I never loved, to retire to the bosom of my family, my friends, my farm and books, which I have always loved." The year was 1806 and he was 63. His wife of 10 years had passed away 24 years earlier, and only one of their six children was living. Still, he had 12 grandchildren. He wrote to a friend, "I am preparing an occasional retreat in Bedford where I expect to settle with some of my grandchildren."

He first stayed there in 1809 after he retired from the presidency. From then on he would visit every few months, often with his granddaughters, until three years before his death at Monticello on July 4, 1826. He was 83.

Though Thomas Jefferson was born into a wealthy family, he was deeply in debt when he died. After his death, his possessions were sold, including Monticello, in 1831. He left



Poplar Forest is considered a masterpiece of architect Thomas Jefferson, as well as the private retreat of our third president. Today the site is an ongoing archeological dig where we are learning more about Jefferson's lifestyle.

Poplar Forest to his grandson, who lived there with his wife for just two years before selling it.

For 150 years, Monticello and its surrounding property were sold and altered many times until it fell into eventual disrepair. During those years, the 4,000-acre plantation was whittled down to just 50 acres.

Unfortunately, Poplar Forest drifted into unnoticed oblivion because it was such a private place. Jefferson never used it for official functions. He would not even work on his mail there. Many of his contemporaries, indeed the general public, never knew of it. The public focus was always on Monticello.

In 1983 someone finally noticed. A group of local residents formed a non-profit organization to rescue Jefferson's retreat. The group now owns 577 acres of Jefferson's plantation. Today the house and grounds are well on their way to complete restoration. Now open to the public, it is an ongoing archeological dig and a continuing project of discovery.

We are so hooked on the new in this day and age that the familiar can often be too conventional. A visit to Poplar Forest prompts a mental reset where an earlier time is understood and appreciated, maybe even wished for.

Welcome to America's Outback. 📧

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
Here are some tips on how to use Digital Trailer Life:

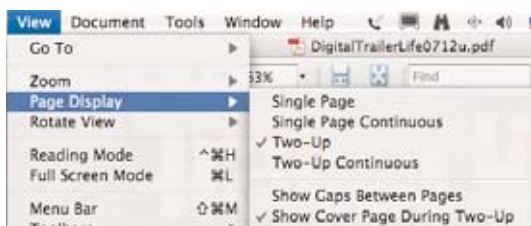


- Click on the TrailerLife.com button to go directly to our Web site.
- Click on the User Guide button on any page to bring you back to this page.
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- When the hand icon changes to a pointing  finger, it indicates a link to a Web site or to another page in the magazine.

- Use the Zoom  tool to zoom in on the page. Use the Zoom-out tool  and hold down the option (Macintosh) or Windows key to toggle back and forth.

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We recommend a Page Layout view of Two-Up (or Facing, depending on the version of Reader), Showing Cover Page, however, Adobe Reader provides several options you may prefer.

We hope you enjoy reading our Digital *Trailer Life* magazine, and we encourage your comments and suggestions to our editor at kbunker@affinitygroup.com