

MADE IN THE SHADE: 13 AWNING ACCESSORIES TO HELP BEAT THE HEAT

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August 2017

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A replica of the ship that brought the first colonists from Scotland to Nova Scotia greets the sunrise on glassy water in peaceful Pictou, Cape Breton (see page 24).



We've selected 10 long-term coaches that feature luxury appointments, larger capacities and robust construction.

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## ON THE COVER

Full-timing is easy in any one of the upscale models in our roundup of motorhomes built for long-term living (see story on page 36). Exterior photos courtesy of Renegade RV, Newmar Corp., American Coach and Winnebago Industries Inc. Interior photos courtesy of Foretravel Motorcoaches, Entegra Coach and Newell Coach.



Photo: Mercedes Morgan Photography

By Kristopher Bunker

# Snowbird Season

**T**hough the heat of the summer months indeed lingers, this is the time of year many motorhome owners begin planning their escape route from the impending frigid winter temperatures in their hometowns. I'm talking, of course, about the group known as snowbirds, who are known to leave their chilly winter roosts in search of warmer environs. Their destination can be any place that's not buried under sheets of the cold, white snow, but history proves that the most popular destinations lay in what is known as the "Sun Belt," a region stretching across the southern and southwestern regions of the U.S., from Florida to California, and all states in between.

And we're not talking about weekend jaunts or even weeklong trips here: To be the true definition of a snowbird, a motorhome owner essentially drives south to roost for the winter, to soak up the sun for months at a time. Many snowbirds have been doing so for years or even decades, often beginning to plan the following year's destinations with their annual neighbors almost as soon as they arrive at the park or RV resort.

Snowbird motorhome owners are the epitome of all the wonderful things in the RV lifestyle: like-minded friends and family who set out in their homes-on-wheels in search of adventure, camaraderie, some great food and memorable sights and sounds. It's just so much easier to enjoy those things when you're not shoveling snow in three sweaters and a parka.

We all know trips in a motorhome of any kind take a certain amount of planning and preparation, including early on in the process while selecting the proper motorhome to purchase to best suit your adventures. And though most any motorhome is self-contained and manufactured for life on the road, there are some rigs out there that have been designed for more than just a couple days at your favorite campground. These motorhomes offer the best of the best in terms of residential comfort, quality, entertainment and tank and carrying capacities. To help you begin your search for your next long-term adventure, be it as a snowbird or otherwise, we've selected

a handful of motorhomes designed to stand up to the rigors of full-time living, and which do so while offering the utmost comfort and amenities. Check out "Long-Term Thinking" on page 36 for our latest roundup.

Or, perhaps you already have the ideal motorhome for your extended travels, but are looking for some accessories to enhance your time at the campsites under sunny skies? After all, you do need a break from enjoying the sun's rays, and going inside is seldom considered while vacationing in a warmer climate. "Made in the Shade," beginning on page 44, details some of the newest and most useful awning accessories, from fans to lighting to outright patio rooms. We've included more than a dozen items designed to help you make the most of your campsite gatherings, which will be frequent and most enjoyable among other snowbirds.

It may be difficult to comprehend the cold stuff while you're on the patio, lemonade in hand. But as motorhome owners and enthusiasts, we all understand the importance of a good strategy. And Jack Frost will come a-calling before you know it. **M**

**“ Many snowbirds have been doing so for years or even decades, often beginning to plan the following year's destinations with their neighbors almost as soon as they arrive at the park or RV resort. ”**

## Contributors | August



**Ann Eichenmuller** is a freelance writer living in Virginia who loves exploring with her husband, Eric, in their Minnie Winnie. Ann is the author of the novel, "Kind Lies" ([www.hightidepublications.com](http://www.hightidepublications.com)).



**Karen Lee Ensley** is a writer with a passion to explore and photograph the beautiful, the bizarre and the places people want to see. Her work has been published in books, magazines and newspapers.



**Emily Fagan** and her husband, Mark, have been traveling full time since 2007. They chronicle their journey with lively stories and beautiful photography at <http://roadslesstraveled.us>.



**Dave Houser**, a New Mexico-based travel writer and photographer, has served as a regular contributor to *MotorHome*, *Trailer Life* and other Good Sam magazines since 1999.



**Bruce W. Smith** is a respected automotive/RV journalist who began contributing to *MotorHome* and *Trailer Life* nearly 30 years ago. He views his home state of Oregon as an outdoor-adventure paradise.



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## Have you purchased seat covers for your motorhome? If so, did you find a retailer, or were they custom-made? Or, what other methods have you employed to protect the seats?

Those are the questions we asked in the May issue, and here are some of the replies we received:



### Bath Time

We travel with a cat, and used to have two dogs. To protect our seats I made seat covers out of three very large bath towels. Depending on seat size you may have to use beach towels. I cut one towel in half to make two shorter towels. Then I sewed the raw seam of each half-towel to a full-size towel on three outer sides, making a pocket with one long side. Turn it with the sewed edges inside and slip it over the back of the seat. I slide the pocket over the back of the seat and let the long part cover the sitting part

of the seat. When we travel I flip the long part up over the back so that I can sit on the seat but not the towel. This keeps the hair and dirt on the towel, not on us, and the covers can be shaken out to get rid of the dander. This makes it easy to wash the seat covers when they get dirty, and keeps the original seat clean and free from damage. You can buy any color towels to match your motorhome. After each trip I wash the covers and put them back over the seats. They also protect the cloth from the sun.

**Jann Todd | Via email**

### ShearComfort

We own a 2014 Coach House Platinum II on a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter chassis. We put seat covers on the driver and passenger seats because we travel with two cats who like to sit on the seats, and who also perch on the top of the seats whenever we stop to camp. Cats being cats, they both like to paw and scratch on the seats. We contacted ShearComfort ([www.shearcomfort.com](http://www.shearcomfort.com)) and ordered seat covers for our motorhome. I spoke with a sales representative and had him send several swatches of material

## Featured Letter

### Sheepskin

We have been RVing for about 30 years in both personal and business use. Some years back we decided to take our cats with us. We just lost "Sugar," who was a beautiful longhair Angora, to kidney failure. But, we started with her going with us and sitting on the dash of our motorhome when she was only a few months old. Then her brother, Gus, joined her. But, cats have claws, and since we choose not to have them removed, we need to protect the seats. For at least 20 years we have used a very great grade of sheepskin covers on the driver and passenger seats. There are also some very good couch and chair covers we can get from TV shopping stores like the Home Shopping Network and QVC. They have a nonslip backing, and they cover the couch and arms very well. The latest set for our motorhome is classic sheepskin, and since we had so much invested in the motorhome already, we decided on New Zealand skins. Wow! We love the softness, and how

they can be either cool or warm and, of course, when we get up, the cats take our seats. The covers do extremely well in protecting the seats and armrests.

It does help that I am married to a "cat whisperer," as my wife knows what to get the cats so they mind their "own things" and leave ours alone. If the cats have their scratchy post, scratchy pads and places to go and lie down, they don't bother our belongings.

I know our solution may be an expensive one, but sheepskin works best for us.

**Cynthia and Steve Ecton | Heber Springs, Arkansas, and New Orleans, Louisiana**



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so that I could pick the right color and fabric. Once my decision was made I ordered the seat covers, and about two weeks later they arrived with instructions on how to properly install them. Within one hour they were in place. They fit perfectly, and look like OEM seat covers. We no longer have a problem with the cats pawing up the original seats because the new covers provide ample protection from the

claws of our cats. We are very satisfied with ShearComfort.

**Bert Wurster | Via email**

**T-Shirt Toppers**

We own a 2012 Fleetwood Storm and travel with our dogs. We wanted something to cover the seats that also reflects our personalities, and those of our puppies as well. We couldn't find any seat covers that would even fit our

seats, much less anything with style. We wound up ordering size 3X T-shirts and putting them over the back of the seats. Unfortunately, part of the seats still aren't covered, but at least the T-shirts provide some protection.

**The Hixson Herd | Via email**

**And Baby Makes Three**

We also had the same problem [with animals scratching our motorhome's seats], as we travel with two dogs and a cat. I purchased fitted baby-crib sheets, which fit perfectly over the driver and passenger seats. To cover the center console, I either use a large bath towel or an area rug. I do remove these while traveling, but leave the crib sheets to use as seat covers full time.

**Ronald Church | Lillian, Alabama**

**Rubber Back**

We have five cats, and we purchased 18-by-24-inch rubber-backed rugs to put on the back of captain's chairs and the recliners, and also on the arms of the recliners. If the cats still use the chairs for scratching, we put a strip of double-sided tape in front of the chairs.

**Gloria Sluder | Brooksville, Georgia**

**Ultraleather Upgrade**

The original Flexsteel seats on our 2008 Damon Tuscan were peeling and showing their bad side. We contacted a local furniture store and ordered upgraded ultraleather. Wow, what a difference! We even changed colors, which really made for a brighter feel.

**Robert Sloane | Quitman, Texas**

**Surge Protectors**

I just read the May issue. There were many pages devoted to protecting your motorhome from damage caused by voltage surge, etc. With the price tag on most motorhomes, installing the device at the factory would be easy and less expensive than the owner having to install it. I sold our last motorhome, but traveled full time for four years, and always checked voltage with a voltmeter. If I should ever buy another coach, I will perhaps lean toward a unit that comes with a built-in surge protection device.

**Gary Nelsen | Romeoville, Illinois**



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**Storage Security**

When not in use, my wife and I store our 2017 Coachmen Leprechaun in a local storage unit. Unfortunately, the storage unit was recently vandalized, as was our motorhome. Considering the many different scenarios in which someone could potentially break into a motorhome, is there a particular alarm system (or systems) that you or other readers would recommend for deterring such crime?

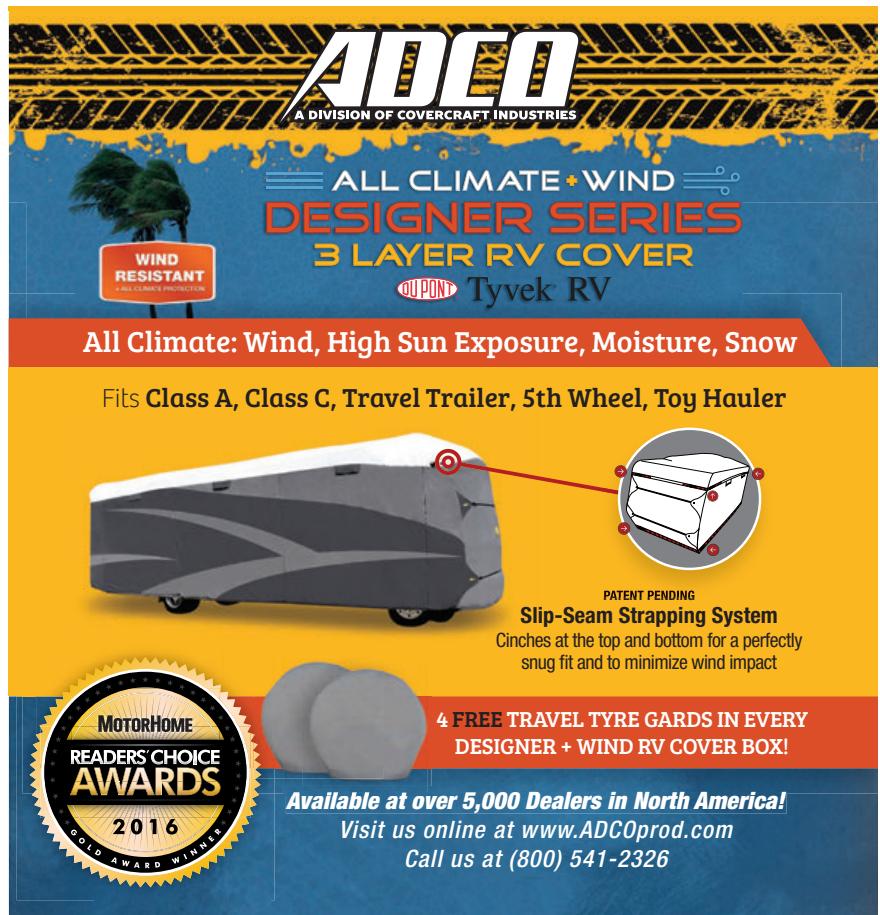
**Keith King | Ardmore, Oklahoma** 

**Question of the Month**

Do you have a security system installed on your motorhome? If so, which brand is it, and are you happy with the results?

**Send your comments to:**

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## A Royal Expansion

Elvis Presley's Memphis opens at Graceland

By Dave Houser

**C**ited as the most significant expansion in the 35-year history of Graceland, a \$45 million entertainment complex opened in March adjacent to Elvis' former Memphis mansion under the name Elvis Presley's Memphis.

One building houses Elvis' collection of flashy hot rods and classic cars, including the King's iconic pink Cadillac. Another showcases his performance paraphernalia, including sequined jumpsuits, gold-plated guitars, and an amazing display of gold and platinum records.

Leonard Bernstein once noted that "Elvis is the greatest cultural force in the 20th century," an assertion explored in "Icons: The Influence of Elvis Presley" exhibit. Created in cooperation with 25 entertainers influenced by Presley, the exhibit celebrates Elvis' status as a music pioneer who paved the way for many of today's leading musicians. Displays here feature original wardrobe, instruments and artifacts from Bruce Springsteen, Jimi Hendrix, James Brown, Elton John, Billy Joel and many more.

The new complex resembles an outdoor mall — with plenty of retail shops offering an extensive array of

Elvis-related merchandise. There's also a soundstage and theater that plays Elvis movies and concerts on the big screen and hosts live performances by top Memphis musicians.

The new facility also features two themed restaurants named for Elvis' parents, Gladys and Vernon. Gladys' Diner offers classic American fare, including Elvis' favorite — grilled peanut butter and banana sandwiches. Vernon's Smokehouse features authentic Memphis barbecue.

Alas, a victim of the expansion is historic Heartbreak Hotel, replaced in October 2016 by the lavish new Guest House at Graceland, which features 450 Elvis-inspired guest rooms/suites, a spa and, of course, a heart-shaped pool.

A variety of guided and self-guided tours of Graceland attractions are available, ranging from \$57.50 to \$159.

Camping is available within walking distance of Elvis Presley's Memphis at Graceland RV Park & Campground, featuring 78 full-hookup sites. For rates, call 866-571-9236 or visit [www.graceland.com/lodging/graceland\\_campground](http://www.graceland.com/lodging/graceland_campground).

For more information about the entire complex, call 800-238-2000, or visit [www.graceland.com](http://www.graceland.com).

By Bobbie Hasselbring

# Tomato Time



Throughout August and September, festivals celebrating all things tomato are held across the country.

One of my favorite things about summer is homegrown tomatoes, especially super-sweet cherry tomatoes. Homegrown tomatoes really taste different — sweeter, with more vibrant, tomatoey flavor notes — than the varieties found in the produce aisle at the grocery store.

Tomatoes are easy to grow and, if you're camp hosting or are settled somewhere for a few months, you can grow a plant or two in pots in your RV space. Or you can pick up farm-fresh tomatoes at the local farmers market. You'll find red, yellow, orange, purple and even green striped tomatoes — each with a little different flavor.

Tomatoes are healthful because they're loaded with carotenoids, plant pigments responsible for red, yellow and orange hues. Carotenoids act as antioxidants that help prevent cell damage. They have strong

cancer-fighting properties, are anti-inflammatory, help the immune system and may prevent heart disease. Tomatoes, in particular, contain all four major carotenoids, and they work together to promote good health. And tomatoes are a major part of the Mediterranean diet, one of the tastiest and healthiest, in my opinion.

You can hit the road in search of tomato festivals. In August and September, communities from California to Maine celebrate tomatoes.

## Got a favorite tomato recipe?

Email [bobbie@realfoodtraveler.com](mailto:bobbie@realfoodtraveler.com) with "Tomatoes" in the subject line.

## FRESH TOMATO FETA TART

This crispy fresh tomato feta tart uses a pound of beautiful, end-of-summer cherry tomatoes. And, because it uses ready-made puff pastry, it's easy-peasy. It makes a great breakfast or lunch or, served with a salad, a light supper.

- 1 piece frozen puff pastry, thawed
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes
- Olive oil
- Salt and pepper
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tablespoon cream
- 1/3 cup feta cheese
- 1/4 cup cream cheese
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 tablespoon fresh oregano leaves, chopped

► Cover a sheet of frozen puff pastry with a towel and thaw for 45 minutes.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Cut cherry tomatoes in half and scatter over parchment. Drizzle with olive oil and salt and pepper. Roast for 15-20



minutes in the oven. Set aside.

Line a second baking sheet with parchment paper. On a floured surface, roll the thawed puff pastry into a 9-by-11-inch rectangle. Transfer to baking sheet and put back into freezer to firm up.

Remove the puff pastry from the freezer and use a sharp knife to trim the pastry into a rectangle. Mix the egg and cream and brush the edges of the puff pastry. Use the pastry trimmings to create a wall around the edge to create a dam for the cheese and tomatoes. Return the pastry to the freezer for a few minutes.

Mix the remaining egg/cream with the feta, cream cheese and garlic. Spread the mixture out to the edges of the chilled puff pastry. Top with the roasted tomatoes. Add oregano and Parmesan cheese and a little salt and pepper.

Bake for 25-30 minutes until edges are done. To ensure the bottom of the pastry is baked, lift up the bottom and see if it's crisp and golden. Allow to cool for a few minutes before cutting and serving.

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## Rack It

For motorhome owners who enjoy pedal power around the RV park, Yakima's LongHaul bike rack has been designed to stand up to miles of rigorous demands while mounted to the back of a motorhome. The LongHaul fits 2-inch hitch receivers and carries up to four bikes in its SuperCush ZipStrip cradles, which feature anti-sway technology for a secure attachment. The LongHaul is easy to install and remove, and it includes folding arms (for improved storage) and a built-in bottle opener for a cold drink once you return to camp. Security measures have been built in with a full Same Key System (SKS) security package that locks the bikes to the rack and the rack to the vehicle. MSRP: \$299.

**Yakima | 888-925-4621, [www.yakima.com](http://www.yakima.com)**

## KING of the Roof

It's always great to have options. The KING Quick Release Roof Mount Kit is designed to allow owners to turn their KING antenna into a roof-mounted system, and then back into a portable antenna in a matter of seconds. The Quick Release Roof Mount provides a permanent, secure base for mounting a KING satellite antenna, in addition to the flexibility of allowing owners to remove the antenna for use on the ground, on a table or on the company's tripod to provide a clear line of sight to the satellite without having to reposition the motorhome. Once the quick-release mount is permanently installed, the assembly doesn't require any tools to lock in or release a KING satellite antenna, and the system has been designed to be operated with one hand,

according to the company. The Quick Release Roof Mount is for use with KING antenna models VQ4100, VQ4200, VQ4400 and VQ4500, and features an integrated anti-theft security feature. MSRP: \$109.

**KING Controls | 952-922-6889,  
[www.kingconnect.com](http://www.kingconnect.com)**



## Big and Bold



ASA Electronics has introduced the XRV10 Bluetooth Multimedia system, the company's largest in-dash stereo to date. The XRV10 boasts a massive 10.1-inch touch screen on a standard double DIN chassis. Three camera inputs eliminate the need for an external switcher box to move between camera views, meaning all views can be monitored with the simple swipe of a finger. The multimedia system also allows the driver to stream music via Bluetooth, listen to the radio or connect an external device through a USB connection and is SiriusXM-compatible. The XRV10 offers a customizable speaker zone center as well as a multitude of background illumination color choices to help match the vehicle's existing displays. Other highlights include rear HDMI connectivity, audio/visual playback via USB and wireless remote control. MSRP: \$689.99.

**ASA Electronics | 877-305-0445,  
[www.asaelectronics.com](http://www.asaelectronics.com)**



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## ESCAPES CROSSROADS

Colorado Springs, Colorado

### The Money Museum

The American Numismatic Association's Edward C. Rochette Money Museum in Colorado Springs appeals to sophisticated coin collectors as well as those whose collections consist of loose pocket change. The main gallery hosts a new exhibit roughly every 18 months. We visited during "The Olympic Games — History and Numismatics" exhibit. The "Trenches to Treaties: World War I in Remembrance" exhibit opened in May and continues through November 2018.

In 2000, Harry W. Bass, an avid numismatist (one who studies currency), donated one of the most complete U.S. gold coin collections ever assembled to the museum. A gallery is named in his honor. The "History of Money" explores the world's earliest coins of the first millennium B.C., the introduction of paper currency in the eighth century, and coinage and paper money in the U.S.

For two weeks each June, the Summer Seminar offers classes to about 500 hobbyists and young numismatists who share a passion for numismatics. Museum members have access to more than 128,000 books, auction catalogs, periodicals, videos and DVDs in the world's largest numismatic lending library located on-site. **For more information**, call 800-367-9723, or visit [www.money.org](http://www.money.org) — *Mary Zalmanek*



Photo: American Numismatic Association, Money Museum

Damascus, Virginia

### The Virginia Creeper Trail

Named after the prolific fast-growing five-leaved ivy, or perhaps after the former locomotive that lumbered up the steep grade to Whitetop Station for forest products, the Virginia Creeper Trail is a National Recreation Trail and a premier rails-to-trails destination.

Beginning as a Native American footpath, the Creeper Trail was later said to have been traveled by European settlers and Daniel Boone, before construction of the Virginia-Carolina Railroad shortly after 1900 (the railroad ran its last trip in 1977). Today, the 34-mile trail can be hiked, biked or ridden by horseback. The trail winds down the mountain along the beautiful Laurel Creek, offering stunning views of blooming rhododendrons from mid-to-late summer, or of colorful fall foliage in October.

We took a bike shuttle from Damascus to the top of the trail, and then biked back down through

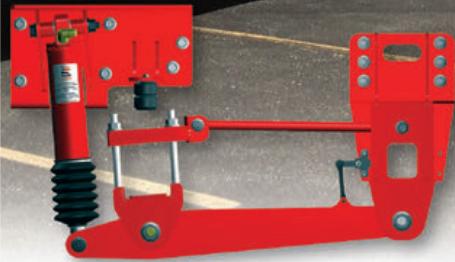
Damascus (halfway), hardly pedaling. We stopped for ice cream, then continued on the second half of the trail to Abingdon, which was much more level. In Abingdon, we dined on delicious Virginia barbecue at the Bone Fire Smokehouse before taking the shuttle back to our Damascus base.

Two RV parks in Damascus are within easy walking distance to the many bike shuttle companies. Both parks, Laurel Creek RV Park (423-440-3042, [www.laurelcreekrvpark.com](http://www.laurelcreekrvpark.com)) and Creek Side RV Park (276-475-5276), offer full hookups. — *Morey Edelman* 



Photo: Morey Edelman

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## Georgia's Jekyll Island

Time stands still at this Golden Isles gem, offering beautiful scenery, a sea turtle center and a glimpse into the area's impressive history

By Pam Windsor

**G**eorgia's Golden Isles, along the coast midway between Savannah and Jacksonville, offer mesmerizing views of the sea and all of the nature and wildlife that surrounds it. The term Golden Isles refers to St. Simons Island, Sea Island, Little St. Simons Island and Jekyll Island, all near the city of Brunswick.

One island, in particular, has a unique story as to how it got its start, with some attractions that make it a popular travel destination.

The beauty of Jekyll Island, the most southern of the Golden Isles, once drew the wealthiest men in America. The Rockefellers, the Vanderbilts, J.P. Morgan and Joseph Pulitzer were members

Driftwood Beach is a popular spot for weddings due to its scenic and unusual setting.

of a club that bought Jekyll Island in the late 1880s to use as a hunting preserve and getaway. They built an opulent Victorian clubhouse and "cottages" that were more like small mansions where their families could stay. They came to escape the snow and frigid temperatures of places like New York and Philadelphia, usually arriving on the first day of January and leaving at the end of March.

"Most came down from the north and got off the train in Brunswick," explained Jekyll Island Tram tour guide Frank Delorenzo. "They would be met by the club yacht and brought to the island. Upon arriving, the club superintendent would greet them with cigars for the men and flowers for the ladies."

The 53 men who formed the Jekyll Island Club were the movers and shakers of their time. And although they vacationed and socialized while here, they also got a lot of work done and even made some history. In fact, the first successful



### ← Getting There

The Golden Isles area is located on the southeastern coast of Georgia, approximately 75 miles south of Savannah and 65 miles north of Jacksonville, Florida. Access is via Interstate 95 (north or south) to U.S. 17 Coastal Highway. The islands are reached via causeways and bridges from the mainland.



transcontinental phone call originated from Jekyll Island on January 25, 1915. Up until then, early cables and switches could not handle phone calls across the country.

“AT&T had been working on the problem,” noted Delorenzo. “They had run new cables and new switches all over the country, so at 4 o’clock one afternoon, Theodore Vail (who was the president of AT&T and a member of the club) picked up the phone in one of the rooms and got connected to Alexander Graham Bell in the AT&T offices in New York.”

The two called Bell’s assistant in San Francisco, and once all three men had a good, solid connection, they called the White House, where the phone was answered by President Woodrow Wilson.

Above left: Anglers on Jekyll Island ply the waters for redfish, spotted sea trout and flounder, among other species. Right: The clubhouse and cottages are now part of the Jekyll Island Club Resort, but some historic sites (like Mistletoe Cottage, pictured) are open for tours.

“The four of them chatted for the next 2½ hours,” added Delorenzo.

The foundation for the nation’s monetary system, the Federal Reserve, was also created here in the dining room of the Jekyll Island Clubhouse. The room continues to be in use today, and still houses its original fireplace and stained-glass windows.

While the clubhouse and the cottages remain, Jekyll Island is now owned by the state of Georgia and operates as a state park, with only 35 percent of the island developed, the rest of it allowed to remain as natural and pristine as it’s always been. It’s

interesting to note that the entire island is only about 7½ miles long and 1½ miles wide.

The clubhouse and cottages are now part of the Jekyll Island Club Resort, but some of the historic sites are also open for tours. The island also is home to the Jekyll Island Campground, which offers 145 full-hookup sites, free Wi-Fi and DSL, laundry facilities and bike rentals.

Visitors to the island who want a glimpse inside the Jekyll Island Club Resort should stop and have lunch in the Grand Dining Room. Chef specials are available Monday through Saturday from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

“ Only 35 percent of Jekyll Island has been developed, the rest of it allowed to remain as natural and pristine as it’s always been. ”

Jekyll Island boasts 10 miles of beachfront on several different beaches.

# GETAWAY

## GEORGIA'S JEKYLL ISLAND

Dress is casual for breakfast and lunch.

Jekyll Island boasts 10 miles of beautiful beachfront with several different beaches, including one of the most photographed on the coast: Driftwood Beach. This beach, true to its name, is full of so much driftwood it resembles a tree graveyard.

"What you see on the beach are the skeletons of live oak trees, and some pine trees," said Ben Carswell, director of conservation for Jekyll Island. He explained that this was once a maritime forest exposed over time to the forces of wave action and the especially strong current along the Georgia coast.

"Basically the soil has washed out from underneath the trees as the shoreline has eroded. And these tree trunks have pretty much stayed in place."

It's a popular spot for weddings because of its scenic and unusual setting.

The island is also home to the Georgia Sea Turtle Center, an actual sea turtle hospital that allows visitors to get an up-close look at turtle rescue efforts and even watch as injured turtles are treated. Veterinarian Dr. Terry Norton created it in 2007.

"It's not an aquarium," explained Jekyll Island's Jessica Scott. "It's an actual hospital. We have a big treatment room and you can watch procedures being done whether it's a routine treatment or a special surgery.



Above left: One of the original movers and shakers who helped shape the history of Jekyll Island, J.P. Morgan is said to have lived in the apartment at top right at what is now Jekyll Island Club Resort. Opposite page middle: Georgia Sea Turtle Center is a hospital for the reptiles that allows visitors a close view of turtle rescue efforts and treatment, such as the procedure at far right.



And they'll explain what's going on while you're watching."

Visitors can also walk through other parts of the center, see turtles up close, learn how they live, watch feedings, and get a better understanding of some of the challenges they face and why they are an endangered species.

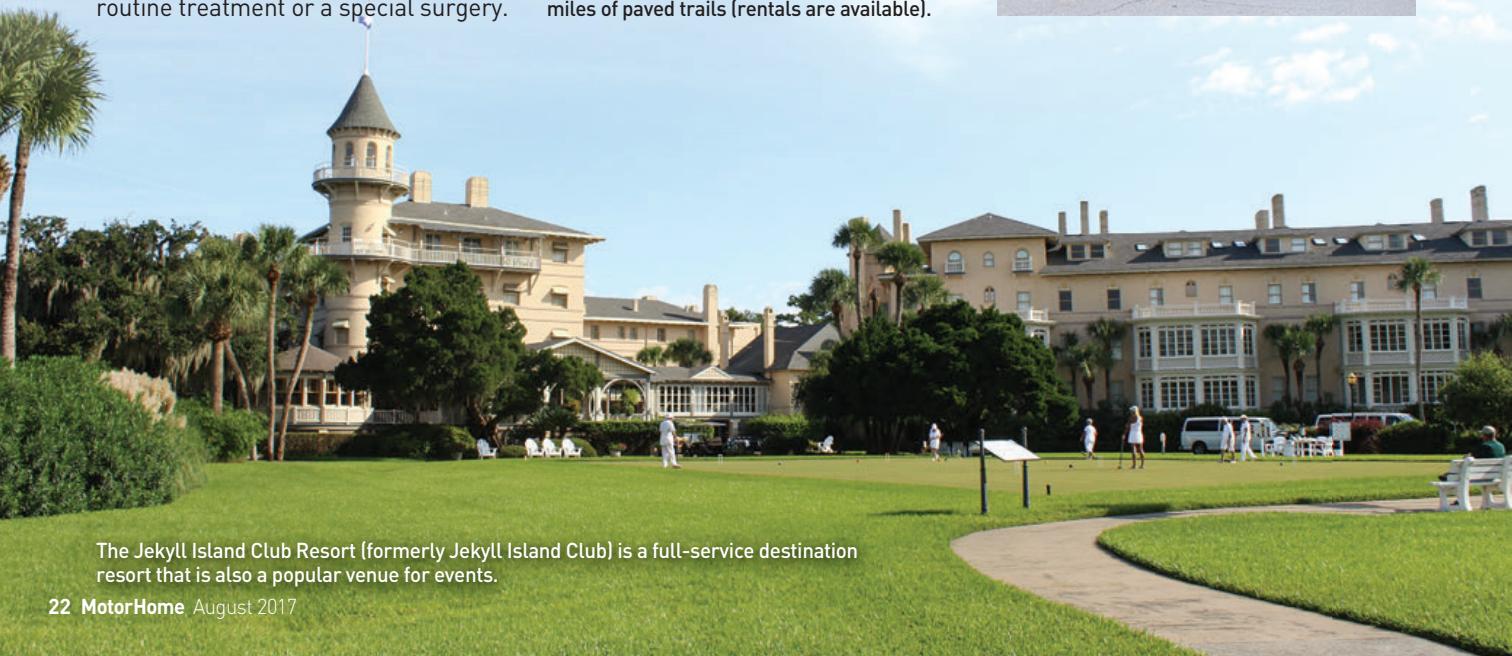
"From the time an egg is laid, the odds are about 1 in 4 that a sea turtle will make it to adulthood," said the hospital's Nicki Pinnell. "And that includes both human threats and

natural threats. If you just talk about what they naturally face in the wild the odds are not so great. But then you add pollution, marine debris, boat strikes and fish hooks, and it can be a really challenging life for a sea turtle."

Jekyll Island also offers a wide



Bikers at Jekyll Island are greeted with 20 miles of paved trails (rentals are available).



The Jekyll Island Club Resort (formerly Jekyll Island Club) is a full-service destination resort that is also a popular venue for events.



range of outdoor activities. There are historic tram tours, golf, fishing, a water park during the summer, dolphin cruises, horseback riding and more than 20 miles of paved bike trails (bike rentals are available) that allow you to ride from one end of the island to the other. Those trails take you along the ocean, the salt marsh, through the historic district, through wooded areas and more. Visitors entering Jekyll Island are required to pay a \$6 “parking fee.” The money helps fund construction of bike paths, road maintenance and other operational costs.

As you arrive, and before you go through the gate, stop at the guest information center to the left. There you’ll find brochures, people to

answer any questions you might have, and a gift shop inside.

The island strives to maintain its natural setting and has little in the way of commercial buildup. So, with a limited number of restaurants and businesses, many visiting the area end up staying in nearby Brunswick.

Earl Perry, an RVer who built and operates the nearby Coastal Georgia RV Resort, says a lot of his guests visit Jekyll Island, as well as other spots in the Golden Isles.

“There’s a lot to do in St. Simons, and a lot of good eating places. RVers like to eat,” he said with a laugh, “and we’ve probably got some of the best seafood places anywhere, here in Brunswick and on St. Simons.”

His park offers full amenities, as well as heated and air-conditioned bathrooms, laundry rooms and large private showers.

Fran Crum operates the nearby Golden Isles RV Park, also with full amenities. She also runs Fran’s Place Restaurant in front of the park, which prides itself on homemade Southern food featuring items like fresh Georgia shrimp.

Crum notes that many of those who stay at her campground visit sites throughout the Golden Isles, but the favorite is always Jekyll Island.

“It’s so uncommercialized. You have Driftwood Beach, the trail rides for the horses and carriage rides throughout the historical district. How more historical could you be?”

In some ways there’s a sense that time has stood still on Jekyll Island. It makes it easier to understand why some of the richest men in America were drawn here, so many years ago. **M**

Coastal Georgia RV Resort in nearby Brunswick is a Good Sam Park offering 65 full-hookup sites.



Photo: Earl Perry

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### Coastal Georgia RV Resort

912-264-3869, [www.coastalgarvresort.com](http://www.coastalgarvresort.com)

### Georgia Sea Turtle Center

912-635-4444, [www.georgiaseaturtlecenter.com](http://www.georgiaseaturtlecenter.com)

### Golden Isles RV Park

912-261-1025, [www.goldenislesrvpark.com](http://www.goldenislesrvpark.com)

### Jekyll Island Campground

912-635-3021

### Jekyll Island Club Resort

855-787-3857, [www.jekyllclub.com](http://www.jekyllclub.com)

### Jekyll Island Tourism

877-453-5995, [www.jekyllisland.com](http://www.jekyllisland.com)

# THE SPIRIT OF

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**T**he words “Nova Scotia” evoke an image of an exotic, distant land where wind-swept cliffs rise up from the misty, cold, gray Atlantic, and lush green hills roll down to the rocky shore. On a recent RV trip there with my husband, Mark, those impressions proved true and came to life. However, we had also expected the island to be small and compact, and that was not the case at all. Lying northeast of Maine, and requiring a 200-mile drive across the province of New Brunswick to get there, we arrived to find Nova Scotia is home to a wide variety of lovely coastal and inland scenery and that the distances between the most enchanting spots can be quite lengthy.

On our way to Cape Breton's famous Cabot Trail on the northeastern tip of Nova Scotia, we meandered along the Northumberland Shore, the island's northern central coast, and it was a delight. Following the Sunrise Trail (Route 6) from Amherst, we drove along the shoreline, passing wide-open farmland that borders the sea, and catching glimpses of the “real” Nova Scotia that is off the beaten path and

far from the tourist crowds.

In the small town of Tatamagouche, we rode our bikes on a wonderful rails-to-trails path through the woods that runs behind the town. What a thrill it was to discover that this wide path is part of the Trans Canada Trail, the world's longest network of hiking and biking trails, which spans the width of Canada. Still under construction, it will soon be possible to ride a bike on

it from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic oceans.

We rode over a trestle bridge that gave us views of the bay, and then we came to an old train depot where a series of rail cars were parked on the tracks in front. Both the depot and the train cars have been transformed into a delightful bed-and-breakfast called Train Station Inn. The train station's former men's waiting room is now a cute little café, and the dining car serves elegant lunches and dinners.

Continuing on the Sunrise Trail eastward along the coast from Tatamagouche, we drove by the pretty Barrachois Harbour Yacht Club, which was filled with brightly colored sailboats ready to take their owners for a day-sail in the Tatamagouche Bay. Then we went through the

# OF THE SEA

Nova Scotia's Northumberland Coast and the Cabot Trail



small settlement of River John and explored the Cape John Provincial Park Reserve. Farther east, our views looked out upon the Northumberland Strait. Prince Edward Island was not too far over the horizon, but was far enough that we never quite saw it.

Leaving the coast behind, the Sunrise Trail turned inland and continued to the historic town of Pictou, which is tucked into a well-protected harbor. Nova Scotia was initially settled by the French in the 17th century and — along with parts of modern-day Maine, the Maritime Provinces and Quebec — this north-eastern region of North America was a colony of New France called Acadia.

A century later, in 1773, the initial wave of immigrant Scots arrived and founded the town of Pictou. After that

first boat of Scottish colonists landed, the British sent more boats, while the French left their colony on its own. Eventually the Brits outnumbered the French by a large margin. Conflicts arose, and eventually the British exiled the French from Acadia. Some Acadians moved south and settled in Louisiana, where they became known as Cajuns, while others hunkered down in very hostile conditions.

A replica of the boat that carried the first 189 Scots to Nova Scotia is moored in the harbor at Pictou. Watching a colorful sunrise light up this peaceful harbor and taking a bike ride along a shoreline trail made us wonder what life must have been like for those intrepid colonists who first came to live in this land. It is impossible to imagine so many people

cramped onto an 85-foot vessel for the terrifying voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, but those early adventurers were determined.

East of Pictou, the Sunrise Trail



## Trail Blazing

The Cabot Trail makes a 185-mile loop around a large piece of Cape Breton Island. Visitors should allow at least eight hours to drive the loop, and spending around three days is recommended in order to take in all the sights.

took us out to the coast once again, and delivered us to the Cape George Lighthouse, a simple beacon that has aided mariners since 1861. The current building is the third lighthouse in that spot (erected in 1968), and the remote and rather barren little hill it stands on was home to four different dedicated lighthouse keepers during more than a century of manual operation.

Heading south from there, we came to spectacular Ballantyne's Cove, where lush green farmland stretches out on a high plateau overlooking the sea and abruptly drops off in dramatic red cliffs right at the water's edge. This classic Nova Scotia image was a preamble for the stunning highland landscapes that were to come on the Cabot Trail.

The town of Antigonish is the gateway to Cape Breton Island, and is a fun college town anchored by the pretty campus of St. Francis Xavier University. We were in town for Canada Day, the first of July, and the fireworks display was outstanding. Antigonish is even more well-known for its rendition of the Highland Games ([www.antigonishhighlandgames.ca](http://www.antigonishhighlandgames.ca)), which have been held every year since 1863 and are a celebration of all things Scottish, from bagpipe and drumming competitions to highland dance competitions to track and field races and clan gatherings. We were not in town

for the games, but we found a popular jogging trail at Antigonish Landing on the northeast end of town, where the local college kids and townspeople can get a morning workout.

Crossing onto Cape Breton Island took us into some of the more remote reaches of Nova Scotia. Tuning our radio to a French-language station to get a taste of the local culture, we made our way up the western coast to the town of Chéticamp. This town is primarily of French descent, and we listened with delight as some of the merchants spoke French to their customers and then turned to us and spoke in heavily French-accented English. Yet, while wandering the backstreets of town, we also heard a man singing Gaelic songs and humming to recorded bagpipe music as he puttered around on his porch.

The Cabot Trail is a hilly 185-mile loop around Cape Breton Island, with many 10 percent grades and tight turns that small, strong and nimble motorhomes can drive comfortably — but that RVers in bigger rigs may prefer to tackle as a daytrip with a dinghy vehicle. A big debate is which

direction to drive the loop, with the starting point being in the south. To maximize sunlit views of the coastal landscapes, driving counterclockwise will offer sunrise exposure in the east and sunset exposure in the west. It will also place the vehicle in the oceanside lane.



Some of the most stunning scenery is in the northwest quadrant and on the northern tip of the island, so we opted not to do a loop drive but instead to enjoy those impressive landscapes twice in an out-and-back drive, using Chéticamp on the western side of the island as our home base.

We were just a few miles out of Chéticamp when the breathtaking scenery made our jaws drop. The road soared and dipped through a series of hills and turns, and as we climbed



Lobster boats line up on the pier, ready for a day of lobstering in tiny Neil's Harbour on Cape Breton Island.



ever higher, the rich green land of the island sheered off in steep rocky cliffs that plunged to the ocean far below. This several-mile-long stretch of road is quintessential Cape Breton Highlands scenery, and driving it on a raw, gray, cold morning enhanced the experience.

Descending from those climactic views, we arrived in Pleasant Bay, a small fishing village where a handful of lobster boats were tied up at the docks. After a brief stroll on the tiny harbor front to stretch our legs, we continued on the Cabot Trail. We had seen signs for moose, but hadn't expected to see any. So, it was a total shock when we looked up and saw an enormous female moose standing by the side of the road. She was calmly

eating the grass and she paused and raised her head when we approached. I scrambled to try to get a decent photo of her, but just as I got her lined up in the viewfinder, she bolted and vanished into the thick woods. Fleeting as it was, what an exciting encounter it was to see a moose so close!

The official Cabot Trail loop cuts across the top of Cape Breton Island and skips the entire northern tip. We decided to take a detour and explore this extremely remote part of the island. Taking a left off of the Cabot Trail and heading north on Bay St. Lawrence Road, we were surprised to see the land suddenly become perfectly flat and the water turn to glass as we passed vast salt marshes.

The road narrowed and eventually

turned to dirt in the final few miles as we snaked our way through the woods to the northernmost tip of Cape Breton Island. Then, suddenly, our view opened up and we were staring at a truly majestic vista with the strange name of Meat Cove. The utterly charming Meat Cove Campground was spread out before us on velvety green grass, perched high above the ocean. Along the edge of the grass, jagged slabs of granite sliced their way to the sea, where a tiny sand beach lay at their feet.

Each campsite had a stunning view across this rugged landscape of cliffs and rock walls, and everyone was outside in their camp chairs or at their picnic table



White Point is home to a colorful fleet of lobster boats, lush green hills and craggy granite shores.

---

The Cabot Trail is a wonderfully twisty and hilly route around the craggy Highlands coast of Cape Breton Island.



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## THE SPIRIT OF THE SEA



Just in from the coast, Northumberland is lush, flat farmland dotted with barns and silos.

soaking in the view. Unfortunately, only smaller motorhomes and vans would be wise to make the journey to stay overnight, but what an incredible place to stay for those with an appropriate rig. The view in every direction seemed to come straight out of a brochure.

We retraced our steps back toward the Cabot Trail, making a brief stop at the small fishing village of Bay St. Lawrence. Once we rejoined the Cabot Trail, we continued east to picturesque White Point harbor. Like all the other villages in this corner of the world, fishing and lobstering are the mainstays of this little cove, and several brightly colored lobster boats were moored in the harbor. Red, yellow, orange and blue, there seemed to be one of every color, and they stood out against the dramatic backdrop of green grass, pink craggy granite and gray ocean.

We continued our Cabot Trail highlights tour just a little farther east to the fishing hamlet of Neil's Harbour, and then turned around to begin our drive back on the Cabot Trail to Chéticamp. The skies remained overcast for our return trip, but in a way the gloominess added to the sense of remoteness and isolation that is the very essence of this harsh coast. There are no big, vibrant towns or soft sand beaches filled with sun worshippers. Instead, this coast is only lightly touched by human hands, and those who reside here live very close to the

sea, both in proximity and in spirit.

Nova Scotia is a great destination for an RV road trip, and for us the most interesting and unusual places were well off the beaten path. The less traveled Sunrise Trail along the Northumberland Shore and the Cabot Trail detour to the northern tip of Cape Breton Island will forever stand out in our memories as very special destinations. **M**

## RV Parks and Campgrounds

### Baddeck Cabot Trail Campground

902-295-2288, <http://baddeckcabottrailcampground.com>

### Bras d'Or Lakes Campground

902-295-2329,  
<http://brasdoralakescampground.ca>

### Cape Breton Island Provincial Parks

<http://parks.novascotia.ca/content/cape-breton-island-parks>

### Caribou/Munroes Island Provincial Park

(No hookups), 902-485-6134,  
<http://parks.novascotia.ca/content/caribou-munroes-island>

### Hyclass Ocean Campground

902-232-3117,  
<https://www.hyclass-campground.com>

### Linwood Harbor Campground

866-661-9145,  
<http://linwoodcampground.com>

### Meat Cove Campground

902-383-2379,  
<http://meatcovecampground.ca>

### Parks Canada

902-224-2306 <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/ns/cbreton/activ/camping.aspx>

### Plage St. Pierre Beach and Campground

902-224-2112, <http://www.plagestpierrebeachandcampground.com>

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# FOUR PLACES AT ONCE

In the Four Corners region, RVers can visit multiple national parks, a national monument, a natural area and an amazing national monument — all in less than 700 miles

**T**wo rebellious young women boldly climbed onto a stone arch in Utah's Canyonlands National Park, proudly defying the rules, when a voice sternly called, "Get off of there!" One of the brazen women daringly called out, "Do you work here?" A crowd of determined voices responded, "Yes, we do! It's our park! It's all of ours." As the two women slinked off, I felt like applauding. The crowd was right, the national parks are our parks. They belong to all of us.

When President Woodrow Wilson signed the 1916 act known as the "Organic Act," the existing 14 national parks, 21 national monuments and two reservations were placed under the new National Park Service (NPS). Today, the National Park System includes more than 84 million acres located in every state, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. This past year, the NPS celebrated its 100-year anniversary.

A great starting spot to honor the longevity of the NPS is the only place in the United States where four states intersect at one point — Four Corners. Here, you'll find the Four Corners Monument in a remote landscape where the boundaries of Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Utah meet. Part of the Navajo Nation, the monument draws visitors from around the world to take their turn touching four states simultaneously.

## Canyonlands National Park, Utah:

Described as wild America, Canyonlands consists of three vast, rocky wilderness sections known as The Needles, The Maze and Island in the Sky. Each region is separated from the others by two powerful rivers, the Green and the Colorado, whose waters

combine in the park creating some of the country's most treacherous whitewater. Visit The Needles section, and you'll be treated to a magnificent scenic drive as turn after turn you gaze upon towering red-rock cliffs. Stop the motorhome at Newspaper Rock to see a cliff wall filled with fascinating petroglyphs created by several ancient cultures — and that's just the road going to the park. In the park you'll see so much more, including The Needles, colorful red and white sandstone spires hundreds of feet high. The Maze features four-wheel-drive roads and primitive hiking; it's one of the nation's most remote areas. Island in the Sky is like an observation tower. A high mesa, it's perched above a grand landscape with a phenomenal view. In an iconic Western panorama, you'll see sculpted canyons, three stunning mountain ranges and serpentine rivers some 2,200 feet below. View the park closely by hiking to a canyon waterfall; walk to picturesque Mesa Arch; or visit Upheaval Dome, a puzzling 1,500-foot-deep crater that has scientists wondering about its origin.

The park has two developed campgrounds: Island in the Sky (first-come, first-served) and The Needles. Maximum RV length is 28 feet.

**Arches National Park, Utah:** Living up to its name, this park has the largest concentration of natural stone arches in the world. Containing more than 2,000 arches, the park's longest arch is the impressive Landscape Arch. Imagine a professional football field from goal line to goal line; this arch would cover it with room to spare. Why are there so many arches? Geologists believe part of the reason is an ancient seabed left an unstable underground salt bed thousands of feet thick. The shifting salt layer, in conjunction with a fault and the forces of erosion, created a plethora of arches and other unique features. There's Balanced Rock, the enormous 3,577-ton boulder precariously balanced on a rock base 128 feet high. There are sandstone fins, spires and gigantic monoliths. You can see part of the largest dune field in the history of North America at Petrified Dunes Viewpoint. As you admire the extraordinary sights, don't miss those



## Getting There

Four Corners Monument, also known as Four Corners Tribal Park, is located west of U.S. Highway 160, approximately 40 miles southwest of Cortez, Colorado, and 6 miles north of Teec Nos Pos, Arizona.

ICE?!  
ional recreation



**NATURAL WONDERS**

Delicate Arch is just one of the more than 2,000 natural stone arches that can be found in Arches National Park, which contains the largest concentration of natural stone arches in the world.

## FOUR PLACES AT ONCE?!

at your feet. Biological soil crusts are living groundcover that are critical to desert life. They help prevent soil erosion and can contain one of the oldest known life forms, cyanobacteria, along with some unexpected plants in a desert environment — fungi and moss. Watch for potholes! Not in the park roads, but in the sandstone. Potholes filled with rainwater are home to tiny creatures, including minute crusta-

Above from left: There's a reason this overlook from the Island in the Sky section of Canyonlands NP is named Grand View Point. The White Rim in the lower right is made of ancient coastal sand dunes and lies 1,300 feet below the overlook; far below the rim the Colorado River continues to carve the canyon. In the distance are the La Sal Mountains, whose highest peak is 12,721-foot Mount Peale. A family hikes to the natural rock room called the Devils Kitchen. In the distance is the town of Grand Junction, located in Colorado's wine country. After a day of sightseeing in the park, be sure to take the night off and enjoy a great meal and shopping in the pedestrian-friendly downtown where you'll see a year-round outdoor sculpture exhibit. A motorhome drives along the steep start of the park road.



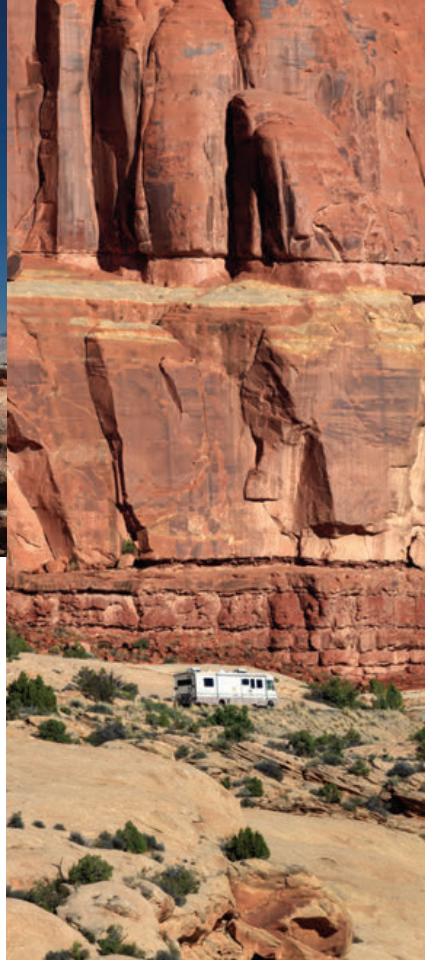
ceans known as fairy shrimp.

The park's Devils Garden Campground, located 18 miles from the park entrance, will be closed through November due to construction, though there are many other campgrounds in the Moab area.

**Colorado National Monument, Colorado:** What's in a name? The difference between a national park and national monument is simply that

a park takes an act of Congress and a monument is established by presidential proclamation. In 1906, when John Otto arrived near Grand Junction, Colorado, and saw the rugged red-rock canyons, he advocated for a national park. Using a pick and shovel, he labored to create trails to share the scenic treasures hidden in the canyons. He collected signatures for petitions, wrote editorials and rallied the citizens of Grand Junction to send





letters to politicians in Washington, D.C., to support his idea. President William Taft established Colorado National Monument in 1911. For magnificent views of the scenery, take the 23-mile Rim Rock Drive; be prepared for tunnels, sharp turns and steep drop-offs. The park's brightly colored rock formations have intriguing names like Kissing Couple and Devils Kitchen. The 450-foot-tall natural rock formation known as Independence

Monument was named and climbed by Otto; his tradition of raising the American flag on top of the monolith continues every July Fourth. For an easy hike, take the trails near the visitor center and see breathtaking canyon views or stroll the nature trail where you'll learn interesting facts including: why Native Americans used juniper tree bark for diapers, and why you're walking into the middle of an ancient sand dune.

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*Some features not available on all models.*



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This plaque identifies this location as “the only place in the United States marking the common corner of four states — Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Utah.” Beyond it is the actual Four Corners marker, surrounded by booths where Native Americans sell an array of special items. Be sure to try a delicious piece of traditional Navajo fry bread.

The only established campground within the monument, Saddlehorn, does not have hookups or shower facilities.

**Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Colorado:** It's no wonder this steep V-shaped chasm is named Black Canyon; it's so deep and narrow that little sunlight reaches between the jagged, dark rock cliffs. Early travelers found it foreboding and surveyors deemed it inaccessible. Yet in 1933, it was designated a national monument; in 1999, it

became a national park. The Gunnison River, named for explorer Capt. John Gunnison, makes a steep, 2,000-foot drop as it travels through the canyon. The sharp descent creates a powerful river that when undammed during spring runoff could easily carry boulders weighing 700 pounds; due to the hardness of the rock, the water carves the canyon only 1 inch per century, or the width of a human hair per year. The park offers dramatic overlooks of the deep, sharply cut canyon. Be sure to stop at the Painted Wall. Here you'll see natural three-dimensional light stripes decorating the dark rock of Colorado's highest

## WHEN YOU GO

The best seasons to travel in this region are spring and autumn, when the temperatures are more moderate. Beware of the elevations, as most of the parks are more than 5,000 feet above sea level. You may start and stop your tour at any point. Feel free to skip locations or add as many other destinations as you're able to fit into your trip.

As you settle into the motorhome after your adventure, remember this loop tour highlights only a tiny sampling of the National Park System as a whole. Remember, they're your parks. Enjoy them.

Fees are charged for admission to some NPS locations; they vary by park. There are a few dates each year when fees may be waived. Check [www.nps.gov/findapark/feefreeparks.htm](http://www.nps.gov/findapark/feefreeparks.htm).

cliff. Measuring 2,250 feet, the Painted Wall is so tall that if you placed the Empire State Building on the canyon floor, it would only reach about halfway to the top of the cliff. Interestingly, the canyon's top rock layer sits on the oldest rocks in the canyon — more than a billion years of layers are missing from the geologic record in Black Canyon.

The park has two campground options for RVers: the South Rim, which offers electric hookups during the summer in Loop B, and the North Rim, which offers dry camping only and is not recommended for RVs longer than 35 feet.

**Curecanti National Recreation Area, Colorado:** Adjacent to Black Canyon, Curecanti shares a unique history with

One of the majestic landscapes you'll see from the Island in the Sky section of Canyonlands NP is at the Green River Overlook. Among the sights along the skyline is Cleopatra's Chair, a sandstone formation in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. Far below you'll see the White Rim Road, a 100-mile backcountry four-wheel-drive wilderness road.





the dark canyon. In 1901, Abraham Lincoln Fellows and William Torrence used a rubber mattress to float on the Gunnison River, entering the formidable canyon searching for a place to make a tunnel. They hoped to bring reliable irrigation from the river through the canyon wall to the nearby Uncompahgre Valley. Despite treacherous travel, they deemed a tunnel would be feasible, and construction began in 1905. Digging from both ends of the tunnel, workers dug 6 miles through parts of both parks, meeting in the middle in July 1909. The Gunnison Tunnel still brings water to the valley today. There are many recreational opportunities in the park. Formed by three reservoirs, the park includes Colorado's largest body of water, 20-mile-long Blue Mesa Reservoir. Bring your fishing rod because it's the largest kokanee salmon fishery in the state. Visit the Morrow Point Dam, go swimming, hiking or take a scenic drive. Enjoy railroad exhibits at the Cimarron Visitor Center or park the motorhome and let someone else drive you on a pontoon boat tour through the upper Black Canyon.

There are 10 campgrounds in the park. The three most suitable for motorhomes are Elk Creek (some electric sites, dump station and showers), Lake Fork (dry camping, dump station and showers) and Stevens Creek (dry camping).



Above from left: Views of Black Canyon as seen near the visitor center. Notice that despite the enormous cliff, you can't see the river bottom. Abraham Lincoln Fellows described a portion of his 1901 float trip into the canyon saying, "... we saw before us the mighty jaws, from which there was to be no escape, a feeling of nervousness and dread came over me for the first time." The largest cliff dwelling in North America, Mesa Verde's Cliff Palace is housed in an alcove about 215 feet wide, 90 feet deep and 60 feet high. It was home to an estimated 100-120 people. Above the cliff overhang, on the surface of the mesa, is a red soil called loess. Spring windstorms bring this fertile soil from northeastern Arizona providing an environment that can support plants, including four types of wildflowers found nowhere else in the world. Mesa Verde means "green table."

### Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado:

The land formation isn't a mesa. A mesa is a high landmass with steep cliffs; since one side gently slopes, it's actually a cuesta. The 52,000-acre park was established in 1906 by President Theodore Roosevelt as the only U.S. national park created to preserve Ancestral Pueblo culture and prehistoric architecture. In 1978, the park became one of the country's first World Heritage Sites, when the United Nations selected it, along with Yellowstone National Park, as two of the first 12 sites in the world to receive the recognition. The park showcases 600 cliff dwellings and nearly 5,000 known archaeological sites. With so much to see, where do you start? Park at the Mesa Verde Visitor and Research Center, where you can use a touch screen to browse nearly 3 million objects in the park's collection. Drive through the park, stop at the overlooks and see the astounding architecture. Hike to a cliff dwelling for a close-up look. Cliff Palace is the largest in North America, with nearly 150 rooms. Spruce Tree House is the best preserved, and

while the site is closed as of press time, it can be viewed from overlooks near the must-see Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum. Here you'll see intricate Native American beadwork, early decorated pottery and learn about the ancient people who used river stones as tools to build elaborate cliff dwellings.

The park's campground, Morefield, has 267 sites (15 full-hookup sites), showers, laundry facilities and a dump station. **M**

### For More Information

#### Arches National Park

435-719-2299, [www.nps.gov/arch](http://www.nps.gov/arch)

#### Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

970-641-2337, [www.nps.gov/blca](http://www.nps.gov/blca)

#### Canyonlands National Park

435-719-2313, [www.nps.gov/cany](http://www.nps.gov/cany)

#### Colorado National Monument

970-858-3617, [www.nps.gov/colm](http://www.nps.gov/colm)

#### Curecanti National Recreation Area

970-641-2337, [www.nps.gov/cure](http://www.nps.gov/cure)

#### Four Corners Monument Park Office

928-206-2540, [www.navajonationparks.org](http://www.navajonationparks.org)

#### Mesa Verde National Park

970-529-4465, [www.nps.gov/meve](http://www.nps.gov/meve)

# LONG-TERM THINKING

These highly livable motorhomes designed for extended stays are great for snowbirds, full-timers and weekend warriors looking for a true residential experience

**L**oading up your motorhome and heading out for a weekend adventure is a great way to relax and to get away from the stressful workaday life. But sometimes, you need more than a few days to recharge your body's batteries, so you in turn need a bit more from your beloved home-on-wheels. Though all motorhomes are the perfect homes away from home for a short stint, there are certain

motorhomes that have ramped up the livability factor above and beyond, mirroring the residential experience through higher-quality appliances, increased tank and cargo capacities, more robust chassis and upgraded four-season packages. So, with snowbird season just around the corner, we've rounded up some of the top higher-end coaches that should make your long-term stay more enjoyable than ever.

## AMERICAN COACH

With a massive 30-inch-deep full-wall slideout, American Coach's bath-and-a-half American Eagle Heritage Edition 45A offers plenty of interior space to make long-term living comfortable. But it may be the luxurious appointments inside that have owners thinking about selling the stick home. The master bathroom runs the full width of the rear of the 45A, with overhead cabinets, a full-length wardrobe and shower with a bench seat. The bedroom offers a king

memory-foam mattress, in addition to a dresser, dual wardrobes and 32-inch LED TV. A curbside half-bath located between the bedroom and the galley adds versatility and keeps foot traffic away from the master.

The galley is top-notch, with solid-surface countertops, decorative tile backsplash, a French door refrigerator with icemaker, a convection microwave and a dishwasher. An Aqua-Hot furnace delivers comfort heating

and delivers hot water throughout, including the stackable washer/dryer combo. Entertaining is easy with a 48-inch LED TV in the living area, viewable from the 91-inch curbside sofa with air mattress or additional 79-inch sofa streetside. Outside, the gelcoat fiberglass side walls are constructed without using wood substrate, and the premium full-body paint features a stunning high-gloss finish.



Chassis	Freightliner Liberty
Engine	Cummins ISX15
Fuel Cap	150 gal
GVWR	51,000 lbs
Exterior Length	44' 11.5"
Exterior Width	8' 6"
Exterior Height with A/C	12' 11"
Wheelbase	302"
Freshwater Cap	100 gal
Black-/Gray-Water Cap	40 gal/ 60 gal
LP-Gas Cap	N/A
Base MSRP	\$755,203

**American Coach**  
800-854-1344, [www.americancoach.com](http://www.americancoach.com)



## ENTEGRACOACH

With a beefy diesel capable of 605 HP and 1,950 LB-FT of torque, the Entegra Coach Cornerstone 45Y makes the journey between long-term stops as rewarding as the trips themselves. The Cornerstone 45Y comes standard with a large L-sofa (optional theater seat) and electric fireplace in the living area, plus a new-for-2018 medicine cabinet in the lav area. Long-term residents will appreciate the king bed, large wardrobe and washer/dryer in the master bedroom, while the double vanity in the split bathroom and dimmable LED-lit quartz countertops, residential appliances and dishwasher in the galley add to the luxurious conveniences. Outside, owners can enjoy a movie under the stars with the 40-inch LED TV and sound bar, while the dual-pitched patio awning features integrated LED lighting. The heated and closed exterior utility center and voluminous exterior storage with powered slide-out cargo trays are also attention-grabbers. The Cornerstone 45Y comes with all of the top construction features of an Entegra Coach: a Spartan K3 raised-rail chassis, the exclusive X-Bridge frame, wood floor construction, tile around the cabinetry (not under it) and residential-style walls and roof, plus a two-year limited warranty and three years of roadside assistance.

Chassis	Spartan K3 raised-rail
Engine	Cummins ISX15
Fuel Cap	150 gal
GVWR	54,000 lbs
Exterior Length	44' 11"
Exterior Width	8' 5"
Exterior Height with A/C	12' 11"
Wheelbase	320"
Freshwater Cap	100 gal
Black-/Gray-Water Cap	41 gal/ 62 gal
LP-Gas Cap	N/A
Base MSRP	\$692,646

**Entegra Coach**  
800-517-9137, [www.entegracoach.com](http://www.entegracoach.com)

## FLEETWOOD RV

Boasting what the company refers to as the F-21 Advantage (the F is for Fleetwood, the 21 is for 21st-century materials and construction techniques), the Fleetwood Discovery LXE 40D features the latest in method and technology. Such highlights include the Firefly Integrations Electronic Control System, 20-foot electric awning with integrated LED lighting and wind sensor, and an induction cooktop in the galley — plus

the latest in home-entertainment features.

The bath-and-a-half 40D is outfitted with a streetside full-wall slide, resulting in a highly livable floorplan with plenty of available storage. The rear lav runs the width of the motorhome and houses a wardrobe in addition to the sink, porcelain toilet and molded Granicoat shower enclosure.

The bedroom features a king

bed with adjustable head section, plus lighted cedar-lined wardrobe, stackable washer and dryer and 32-inch LED TV. The 22-cubic-foot refrigerator in the galley combines with the dishwasher, faucet with pullout sprayer and solid-surface countertops to ease your food-prep fears. The living area is highlighted by an expandable jackknife sofa with footrest and 49-inch LED TV.

Chassis	XCM PowerBridge
Engine	Cummins ISL9
Fuel Cap	100 gal
GVWR	36,400 lbs
Exterior Length	41' 4"
Exterior Width	8' 6"
Exterior Height with A/C	12' 10"
Wheelbase	276"
Freshwater Cap	100 gal
Black-/Gray-Water Cap	50 gal/ 75 gal
LP-Gas Cap	38.7 gal
Base MSRP	\$317,952

**Fleetwood RV**  
800-854-1344, [www.fleetwoodrv.com](http://www.fleetwoodrv.com)





### FORETRAVEL MOTORCOACHES

Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, Foretravel Motorcoaches offers custom and specialized luxury coaches sold directly from its factory in Nacogdoches, Texas. All Foretravel motorhomes begin on the manufacturer's proprietary Travel Ride chassis, and feature fully custom paint, graphics and flooring; in fact, the buying process often begins with a blank sheet of paper and takes form as customers collaborate with the designers. The ih-45 featured here is built to last, with an aluminum structural floor, 10-inch steel channel rails and 3/8-inch steel tubing modules, with an HWH Air System to smooth out the ride. The interior is upscale residential-grade in every sense of the word, with quartz countertops, premium stainless-steel appliances, heated flooring, LED accent lighting and handcrafted cabinetry. Apart from the striking full-body paint and graphics, exterior highlights include two electric awnings, a stain- and UV-resistant one-piece CosmoLite roof, color-changing ground accent lighting and a handy utility station. The cockpit, as the rest of the coach, contains the latest in comfort and technology, including a SilverLeaf 12-inch glass dashboard, air-ride seats, infotainment system with monitors for pilot and co-pilot and power everything. Floorplans and options vary; basically, if you think it (and can afford it), Foretravel will happily oblige, and include it on your custom coach.



Chassis	2018 Spartan Travel Ride III
Engine	Cummins ISX 605
Fuel Cap	200 gal
GVWR	54,000 lbs
Exterior Length	45'
Exterior Width	8' 5"
Exterior Height with A/C	13' 2"
Wheelbase	293" Drive/ 344" Tag
Freshwater Cap	135 gal
Black-/Gray-Water Cap	145 gal combined
LP-Gas Cap	N/A (available option)
Base MSRP	\$1,350,000

**Foretravel Motorcoaches**  
800-955-6226, [www.foretravel.com](http://www.foretravel.com)



### NEWELL COACH

In order to meet its own rigorous standards for quality, Newell constructs its luxury chassis and coach bodies in-house at the company's Miami, Oklahoma, manufacturing facility. The highly customizable coaches have always been sold directly from the factory, and with nearly 40 years in business, the results speak for themselves. This includes the Show Coach 1622. Finished in contrasting dark laminates and white tile flooring, the interior is as comfortable to use as it is to look at. The four-slide, bath-and-a-half design gives the owner plenty of space and, like all Newell coaches, the



premium residential-style appliances ensure maximum livability. Some of the more unique snowbird-friendly highlights include underlit galley countertops; porcelain tile flooring; electronically expandable dinette seating; an Intrepid House Management system; a booming bedroom/rear salon cinema package with a top-shelf Marantz receiver, Anthony Gallo surround sound and 49-inch Samsung curved 4K TV; and premium LED accent lighting throughout the coach. Most everything here is showroom quality, including the Aqua-Hot hydronic heating, high-pressure laminate

cabinetry, deluxe furniture and whole-house water filtration. Plus, the Class V hitch out back is rated to tow up to 25,000 pounds (staying within weight limitations), in case you need even more luxury — though we bet you won't.

Chassis	Newell
Engine	Cummins ISX15
Fuel Cap	200 gal
GVWR	63,300 lbs
Exterior Length	39' - 45' 8"
Exterior Width	8' 6"
Exterior Height with A/C	13' 1"
Wheelbase	308" (on 45' 8" exterior length)
Freshwater Cap	143 gal
Black-/Gray-Water Cap	143 gal combined
LP-Gas Cap	N/A
Base MSRP	\$1,944,675

**Newell Coach**  
888-363-9355, [www.newellcoach.com](http://www.newellcoach.com)





## NEWMAR CORP.

Newmar's brand-new (and aptly named) New Aire is a diesel pusher that comes in at less than 34 feet in length. But don't be put off by the size; the New Aire delivers luxury living with aplomb. Newmar and Freightliner have partnered to create an entirely new platform, which offers a lower profile but retains 22-inch tires and an entry height where the first step is only 4 inches off the ground with the air dumped. Mechanicals on the 3343 include a 360-HP Cummins ISL engine with side radiator, plus Comfort Drive Steering, V-Ride and independent front suspensions, in addition to an easy-to-read dash with digital instrumentation

and push-button ignition.

Standard luxury comes via hardwood cabinets with matte or high-gloss finish, plus solid-surface countertops, tile flooring, power shades on all the windows and an eye-catching cathedral bedroom ceiling. Livability is delivered with all-electric appliances including an induction cooktop, hydronic heating and hot-water system, power electrical cord and water hose reels, an 8.0-kW Onan generator and automatic generator start. Entertainment will be provided by Sony HDTVs, a Winegard Rayzar automatic digital TV antenna, Bose Solo 5 sound bar, an Xite dash

radio with a Harman JBL 180-watt sound system, and Rand McNally navigation.

Chassis	Freightliner
Engine	Cummins ISL
Fuel Cap	75 gal
GVWR	38,600 lbs
Exterior Length	33' 10"
Exterior Width	8' 5.5"
Exterior Height with A/C	12' 3"
Wheelbase	206"
Freshwater Cap	75 gal
Black-/Gray-Water Cap	40 gal/ 60 gal
LP-Gas Cap	N/A
Base MSRP	\$357,918

**Newmar Corp.**  
800-731-8300, [www.newmarcorp.com](http://www.newmarcorp.com)

## RENEGADE RV

The Renegade IKON's extended-living roots start with a commercial-duty chassis from Freightliner, offering superior drivability, stability and safety. In addition to an engine that delivers 600 HP and 1,850 LB-FT of torque, the IKON offers a rear air ride axle, full air brakes and a multistage engine compression brake. But beyond the driving experience, the IKON has been manufactured with all of the luxury and comforts of a well-appointed residential home.

Standards like polished-quartz countertops, high-end solid-wood cabinetry with soft-closing door and drawer hardware, Villa furniture covered in ultra-leather fabrics and porcelain tile floors in all living areas lend the feeling of a high-end loft apartment, while LED lighting, Aqua-Hot hydronic heat and water system, dual-pane windows, power day and night shades, premium stainless-steel appliances and Danze kitchen and bath faucets prove to be invaluable long-term additions. Electronics include Bose home-theater systems, Samsung UHD 4K TVs, multiplex lighting and a perimeter observation camera system. Available solar panels provide additional charging power to the batteries. The 22.5-cubic-foot Samsung residential refrigerator is designed for efficiency, while double pullout pantries store enough food for a large family.

Chassis	Freightliner Cascadia Tandem Axle
Engine	Cummins ISX15/Detroit Diesel DD16
Fuel Cap	120 gal
GVWR	54,000 lbs
Exterior Length	45'
Exterior Width	8' 4"
Exterior Height with A/C	13' 5"
Wheelbase	340"
Freshwater Cap	150 gal
Black-/Gray-Water Cap	75 gal/ 75 gal
LP-Gas Cap	Optional
Base MSRP	\$742,477

**Renegade RV**  
574-848-1126, [www.renegaderv.com](http://www.renegaderv.com)





### THOR MOTOR COACH

Thor's quad-slide Aria 3601 diesel pusher features an open floorplan with opposing slides in the living area to improve space for long-term living. But, with a length of just over 36 feet, it's still compact enough that it should be able to go most anywhere your snowbird travels take you, even if that includes national parks or state campgrounds.

In the bedroom, the king bed, stackable washer/dryer and an electric fireplace in the living area (located below the 43-inch LED TV) are all luxury, as is the multiplex, whole-coach wiring system that controls many of the electronics.

Also in the living area, a drop-down overhead bunk, Dream Dinette and 78-inch sofa bed up the sleeping ante, while the split-lav configuration results in a large 42-by-30-inch shower and spacious commode room. The galley is well-appointed with an induction cooktop, tile backsplash and stainless-steel residential refrigerator with icemaker. Outside, automatic leveling jacks make for easy setup, and owners will surely appreciate the dual patio lights, electric awnings and exterior entertainment center.

Chassis	Freightliner XC-R Raised Rail with Atlas Foundation
Engine	Cummins ISB-XT
Fuel Cap	100 gal
GVWR	32,400 lbs
Exterior Length	36' 3"
Exterior Width	8' 5"
Exterior Height with A/C	12' 6"
Wheelbase	228"
Freshwater Cap	91 gal
Black-/Gray-Water Cap	51 gal/ 51 gal
LP-Gas Cap	25 gal
Base MSRP	\$274,015

**Thor Motor Coach**  
800-860-5658, [www.thormotorcoach.com](http://www.thormotorcoach.com)

### TIFFIN MOTOR HOMES

When it comes to long-term living, storage is key. Tiffin's Allegro Bus 45 OPP floorplan offers plenty of storage, most notably two full-size floor-to-ceiling pantries with adjustable shelves. And, to ensure that the pantries are secure while underway, an electromagnetic lock engages once the engine is started (a release button allows access when the engine is running). The 45 OPP includes a TV lift behind the passenger-side furniture, while furniture options include theater seating, double sofas or two recliners with a fireplace cabinet.

The large master bath features a large vanity with two custom solid-surface sinks, storage above and below the countertop, and an impressive shower with glass enclosure. The rear master closet includes a stackable washer/dryer cabinet to accommodate the optional appliances, and a floor-to-ceiling cabinet with pullout drawers and baskets for keeping clothing organized. The entire back wall offers a hanging rod for items on hangers. A thoughtful in-wall shoe cabinet rounds out the rear closet. With plenty of pass-through underfloor storage, all-position anti-lock brakes, independent front suspension and standard air and hydraulic leveling, the Tiffin Allegro Bus is fun to drive. Add to that the exterior entertainment center, dinette workstation, convenience of a bath-and-a-half floorplan and residential appliances, it's easy to see why the 45 OPP demands the attention of long-term motorhomers.



Chassis	Tiffin PowerGlide
Engine	Cummins ISL
Fuel Cap	150 gal
GVWR	51,000 lbs
Exterior Length	45'
Exterior Width	8' 5"
Exterior Height with A/C	12' 7"
Wheelbase	326"
Freshwater Cap	90 gal
Black-/Gray-Water Cap	50 gal/ 70 gal
LP-Gas Cap	N/A
Base MSRP	\$423,500

**Tiffin Motor Homes**  
256-356-8661, [www.tiffinmotorhomes.com](http://www.tiffinmotorhomes.com)





## WINNEBAGO INDUSTRIES INC.

The quad-slide Grand Tour 45RL is the largest and, well, grandest Winnebago motorhome. The amidships half-lav helps keep the little ones out of the master bath, the latter of which is clearly suited for full-timers. The rear master bath features a wall-to-wall wardrobe, his-and-hers sinks, a washer/dryer and an optional TV (you read that right). The large 42-by-35-inch shower with fold-down seat makes bathing more pleasant than ever. The master suite offers an adjustable king bed, wardrobe, dual nightstands and a stand-alone seat, all marks of a long-term rig. Highlights of the galley include a double-tier quartz-topped island, residential French door refrigerator, stainless sink and a drawer-style dishwasher. The living room boasts an 11-speaker surround-sound system with retractable 60-inch TV and Blu-ray player, an electric fireplace and sofa bed with separate ottoman. A buffet table on the dinette wall helps with food prep and service.

Up front, the cab seats are heated and offer a massage function, plus dual GPS screens aid with navigation. The entire coach features heated polished-porcelain floor tiles and solid-wood cabinetry. An available tailgate package includes an exterior refrigerator/freezer, wet bar, induction-range cooktop and HDTV with sound bar.

Chassis	Freightliner Maxum
Engine	Cummins ISL
Fuel Cap	150 gal
GVWR	45,660 lbs
Exterior Length	44'
Exterior Width	8' 5.5"
Exterior Height with A/C	12' 11"
Wheelbase	291"
Freshwater Cap	85 gal
Black-/Gray-Water Cap	51 gal/ 95 gal
LP-Gas Cap	5.6 gal
Base MSRP	\$472,741

Winnebago Industries Inc.

641-585-3535, [www.winnebagoind.com](http://www.winnebagoind.com)



"I was ready to trade my RV for lack of power. A friend installed Banks on his RV and bragged so much, I had to try it on mine. Banks PowerPack works great and improved the power to my satisfaction. Believe me, I'm not ready to trade anymore."

Harold C.  
Londonderry, NH

## Cheaper to Keep'er!

Have you been considering a new motorhome but are hesitant because, in today's economy, that's quite a costly proposition? Getting more years of service from your motorhome is a smart alternative.

**Banks PowerPacks** can transform your rig into a hill-flattening monster by adding up to **94 more hp** and **214 more lb-ft of torque**. She'll stay in higher gear longer, become up to **10% more fuel efficient**, and renew the excitement you felt the day you bought her!

Watch real life experiences at [youtube.com/bankstestimonials](http://youtube.com/bankstestimonials)

"I had a PowerPack put on my old gas motorhome—gave me lots more horsepower and more importantly—gave me more miles to the gallon. That was 10 years ago—it still works great."



Mike R.  
Orange County, CA



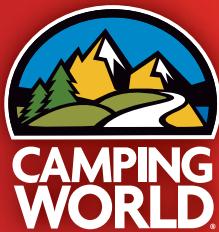
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# Made in the Shade

Accessorizing a motorhome's patio awning is a sure way to maximize the functionality and comfort of your outdoor living space

**T**hey shade us from the blazing midday sun, protect us from passing rain showers, help keep interior temperatures cooler, provide a comfortable outdoor area to take in surrounding vistas and become a natural focal point for entertaining family and friends. Patio awnings are a valued component of any motorhome.

Like the patio covers of conventional homes, motorhome awnings fitted with a few of the right accessories will bring even greater functionality, convenience, comfort and enjoyment regardless of the season or application.

Whether you are a first-time owner who uses the motorhome just a few times a year, or a seasoned full-timer, we are sure at least a few of the newest awning accessories and products we've highlighted here will be of interest.

They can be found at Camping World and other RV stores or online. Utilizing a couple of the right awning accessories can make a big difference the next time you step out the door.

---

## All Bowed Up

Tired of having rain showers creating a puddle on top of the awning fabric? Lippert Components' Awnbrella kit, available at Camping World and other RV centers, solves that issue with rust-resistant aluminum bows that keep the fabric taut and arched. Easy to install, the 8-foot extendable bows help shed water and debris. A two-bow kit handles awnings from 10-14 feet in length, while a three-bow pack will support 14- to 18-foot awnings.

**MSRP: From \$166.99**

**574-537-8900;**

**[www.lci1.com](http://www.lci1.com)**



## Power Rail

Many motorhome owners roll out the patio awning and then string extension cords so they can plug in fans, lights, speakers or other electrical accessories to bring some of the indoor enjoyments outdoors. Dometic's PowerChannel Awning Hardware Rail, which mounts directly onto the arm of the awning, eliminates the need for messy extension cords, providing power to dedicated accessories (LED light, a wireless speaker and a fan) by twist-locking them into the rail's channel, in a similar manner to those found in residential homes. The PowerChannel is available in either black or white, is UV-resistant, and can withstand harsh weather conditions.

**MSRP: \$49.99, accessories sold separately.**

**[www.dometic.com/en-us/us/products/climate/awnings/accessories](http://www.dometic.com/en-us/us/products/climate/awnings/accessories)**



## Zip It Up

An awning is great, but having additional shade, protection and privacy greatly improves its functionality, and also the comfort of those who enjoy being outdoors. The EZ ZipBlocker from Carefree of Colorado is designed to do it all without blocking the view. It's easy to install with a two-piece design. One piece is the main body panel (with 7- to 9-foot drops), and the other is a 1- to 3-foot zippered insert that can be left in the roller-tube slot during retraction. The zippered insert makes installation

and removal as simple as zipping and unzipping your jacket. EZ ZipBlocker works with both power and manual-crank awnings, and comes in 10-, 15- and 19-foot lengths.

**MSRP: From \$146**

**303-469-3324;**

**[www.carefreeofcolorado.com](http://www.carefreeofcolorado.com)**

◀ The Lippert Awmbrella kit includes metal bows to keep the awning fabric arched and taut, which helps eliminate pools of water on top of the awning.



## Boogey Lights

When it comes to lighting up the area under an awning and making a statement, there's nothing quite like Boogey Lights. Most motorhomes today come with some kind of outdoor lighting, but few compare to the brightness, capabilities and convenience of Boogey Lights RV Awning Lights. These cool awning lights are offered in single and multicolor 12-volt DC/120-volt AC LEDs, and can be operated via a wide variety of controller options, including Bluetooth. Boogey Lights RV lighting products are designed, assembled and supported in the United States.

**MSRP: From \$139.99**

**800-847-1359; [www.boogeylights.com](http://www.boogeylights.com)**

### Light Works

Lippert Components' LED Awning Light Kit is designed to integrate seamlessly with Solera patio awnings to provide soft, bright, indirect lighting whether the fabric is extended or retracted. The waterproof light strips, which are powered by the motorhome's 12-volt DC system, are available in several lengths up to 21 feet, providing the perfect illumination for gatherings under the awning or under the stars. The kit is easy to install, and an optional dimmer allows users to adjust the light's brightness to fit the mood.

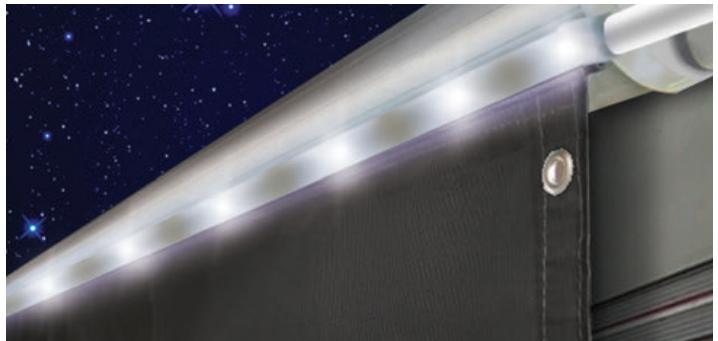
**MSRP: From \$120**  
**574-537-8900; www.lci1.com**



### Happy Hooks

A floppy awning is an unhappy awning. That's easily cured with Valterra's Happy Hooks awning tie-downs. These nifty C-shaped hooks fully rotate around the awning tube; the cinching hardware keeps the tie-down pressure on the main support. Simply unhook for quick awning takedown. The spiral stakes are designed to securely anchor the awning in normal or sandy soil. Happy Hooks come with bright white cords for quick visibility and safety.

**MSRP: \$24.77**  
**818-898-1671; www.valterra.com**



### Drape Lighting

Valterra's Awning Drape with Solar Rope Lights is a great awning accessory because it allows you to enjoy shade by day with the added convenience of lights at night. With a 7½-foot drop, you can extend the drape farther away from the wall for more usable space. The waterproof LED lights come on automatically at night, and you can choose from on, off or blink mode. The all-in-one kit contains a 15-foot awning drape, 15 feet of clear solar rope lights, five 3-foot Rope Light Traks, three tie-down stakes with cords and a carrying bag.

**MSRP: \$199**  
**818-898-1671; www.valterra.com**

### Quick Fix

One way of fixing a torn awning or, for that matter, any other torn fabric like a pool toy, raft or even Sunbrella fabric, is a product called TEAR-AID. Available in two types, depending on the material being mended, TEAR-AID is a strong and flexible patch that is clear, so it will work with any color material, and will not fade or turn gummy. It cuts easily, is UV-resistant and requires no glue tubes to install, according to the company. The elastic nature of the product allows it to move with awning fabrics and inflatable items.

**MSRP: Starts around \$9.99, but varies on type and size of kit.**  
**800-937-3716; www.tear-aid.com**



## ➡ Awning Care Tips

RV awnings need to be maintained just like any other component on a motorhome that's exposed to the elements and has moving parts. This is true even more so for awnings because the fabric is constantly exposed to the deteriorating elements of both the weather and the sun.

Paul Forester, the awning expert at Camping World's corporate headquarters, offered these cleaning/care tips:

1. Clean the underside of the awning, but don't use any bleach-type product that might cause fading.
2. Choose a small spot to test the cleaner to see how the awning reacts to the cleaner before you spray it all over.
3. Awning cleaners, such as those from Thetford and Camco, are designed specifically for use all over the awning, top or bottom.
4. Remove all debris and as much moisture as possible from awnings prior to closing up to eliminate any issues with fabric and mold/mildew growth. If the awning must be retracted in the rain, open it up as soon as possible and allow it to dry thoroughly.
5. Roll out awnings at least once a month to let them air out and dry so mold doesn't grow and they smell fresh, not musty.



### Cool Track

Forget about tying a loop in a garden hose's spray nozzle around an awning arm so it showers those sitting under the awning on a hot, steamy day. Valterra's 15-foot RV Mister Trak keeps everyone pleasantly cool in hot temperatures with a fine, adjustable, evenly spread mist from the awning's roller tube. This awning accessory misting system comes preassembled so it will easily slide into a roller tube utility slot. The misting supply tube extends 25 feet beyond the misting jet assembly for easy water source hookup. The Trak includes an additional utility slot for extra accessories. It also includes a misting tube with six powerful metal jets, 15 feet of RV TwinTrak, hose "Y" shut-off, pressure control valve and a handy nylon storage bag.

**MSRP: \$68.42**

**818-898-1671; [www.valterra.com](http://www.valterra.com)**

### Family Room

Turn the space under your motorhome's awning into an enclosed outdoor patio with the Solera Family Room kit. Add up to 160 square feet of enclosed space so you can enjoy meals without battling pesky insects. Or roll down the all-weather panels and use as a cozy outdoor sleeping area for kids. Its neutral tan material helps to block out extra heat, making the Solera Family Room perfect for outdoor dining, board games and social gatherings on hot summer days. Fits most 10- to 21-foot-long manual and power awnings with awning rail-to-ground measurements of up to 130 inches.

**MSRP: From \$888**

**574-537-8900; [www.lci1.com](http://www.lci1.com)**



## Remote Control

Wind is one of the biggest threats to lateral-arm awnings, and by updating your motorhome's old awning motor with one from Somfy System's Simu line, you no longer need worry about it. Simu's Type 6 HZ wireless awning motors communicate with a full line of companion sensors, receivers and controls



including a motion sensor, which detects wind and automatically retracts awnings to protect them from damage. The 120-volt AC motors also feature a manual override in the event of a power failure. Owners can extend the awning effortlessly, as well as protect it from damage and create evening ambiance with the simple touch of a button.

**MSRP: From \$549**  
**866-518-1909; www.somfysystems.com**



## Double Tracks

Make the most out of the outside space under your motorhome's awning by sliding Valterra's Rope Light With Traks into the awning's utility track. The 18 feet of clear LED rope light bathes the area with soft lighting, perfect for any occasion. The track system is simple to install into the roller tube utility track, and the kit comes with a second utility track for additional awning accessories. Includes 1/2-inch-by-18-foot UL-listed 120-volt AC clear rope lights and 18 feet of Rope Light Trak. Made of UV-stabilized materials.

**MSRP: \$72.55**  
**818-898-1671; www.valterra.com**



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## Another Quick Fix

A falling limb pierces the fabric, or a piece of debris gets trapped when the awning is being retracted, creating a tear. Camco's Awning Repair Tape, available in both 3- and 5-inch-wide rolls, easily handles rips and punctures, keeping them from getting worse. The UV-coated, tear-resistant tape, available in clear or multicolor, is designed specifically for permanent canvas and awning repair. The aggressive adhesive fuses the tape to the awning fabric, and the tape works equally well, repairing everything from rain gear and backpacks to seat covers and tents.

**MSRP: \$14.49 (3-inch wide);**  
**\$15.99 (5-inch wide).**  
**800-334-2004; www.camco.net**



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By Chris Hemer

# POWER UP

Installing a Banks PowerPack system in a 2017 Ford V-10 Class A motorhome nets more horsepower and better sound

**“Y**ou know, I really like this motorhome — but the darn thing just has too much power!” said no one. Ever.

The journey may indeed be as important as the destination when it comes to motorhome travel, but it’s safe to say that no one enjoys crawling up a grade, or trailing behind a smoking semi because there isn’t adequate power on hand to safely pass it. Ford’s ubiquitous V-10 might be reliable, but when it comes to motivating a full-size Class A, it’s no barnstormer — and the larger the coach, the more profound the dearth of power becomes.

In bygone years, there was virtually no limit to what you could unleash if you had the budget for aftermarket parts and premium fuel — a bigger carburetor, exhaust headers, camshaft and a hotter ignition system were all on the table. But with the EPA and California Air Resources Board (CARB) cracking down on aftermarket upgrades, especially after OBD II systems were phased in during the mid-1990s, performance-enhancing options became increasingly limited.

Thankfully, there is still hope for Ford V-10 motorhome owners (both

Class A and Class C) who would like more emissions-legal power. Banks Power has been an icon in the performance aftermarket industry since 1958, and the company’s patriarch, Gale Banks, has vast experience in almost every type of motorsport competition, plus standing records in everything from drag racing to Bonneville and Pikes Peak. While racing may have little to do with motorhomes in general, the performance principles remain the same: More airflow into and out of the engine means more horsepower, and in

some cases, even better fuel economy thanks to greater efficiency.

To this end, the greatest improvements in the Ford V-10 come from installing the company’s entire PowerPack system, which entails replacing the restrictive air intake system, cast-iron exhaust manifolds and factory muffler. The Banks Power Ram-Air system nets a claimed 60 percent improvement in airflow over the stock system, and contains a high-flow air filter element that is larger and is both washable and reusable. The Banks TorqueTube stainless-steel exhaust headers feature beefy  $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch flanges that won’t warp; tuned length, mandrel-bent primary tubes; and the company’s patented “PowerPickle” pulse converter that optimizes exhaust gas velocity for improved low-end torque. Finally, the stock exhaust is upgraded with a Banks DynaFlow high-perfor-



1



2



3



4

mance muffler and tailpipe section, which not only improves exhaust flow, but creates a nice, mellow sound.

To see what is involved with the installation of the PowerPack system, we recently visited Gale Banks Engineering headquarters in Azusa, California, and observed as a No. 49383 system (2016-2017 Ford V-10 Class A motorhomes, \$2,330) was installed on a 2017 Tiffin Allegro Open Road. Although Banks does not have performance figures for the 2017 model yet, the company's previous systems have netted best gains of 55.6 HP and 69.5 LB-FT of torque, along with a fuel economy improvement of roughly 0.5 MPG. In our brief road test following the installation, the coach did feel stronger than stock, and the

[1] The first step was to disconnect the exhaust system aft of the factory catalytic converter by unbolting the flange. [2] The factory exhaust manifolds are then unbolted and removed. [3] The Banks TorqueTube exhaust header (top) shown with the factory cast-iron manifold. Compared to early "race" headers, which were often associated with warped flanges and excessive heat, these application-specific Banks TorqueTube headers have meaty 5/8-inch-thick flanges and integrated heat shields. [4] Holding the exhaust header flange gasket in place while jockeying the header into position is always a challenge. To make this step easier, the technician sprays the flange with common spray adhesive, applies the gasket and allows the adhesive to cure.

intake/exhaust sound under hard acceleration was satisfying.

If more power is something you've been craving from your Ford V-10-powered motorhome, Gale Banks

Engineering is the answer. Quality components, combined with more than 50 years of experience in the performance aftermarket industry, can't be beat.

[5] Here, one of the headers is shown with the flange gasket in place. [6] On the passenger side of the engine, a heat shield is installed around the starter motor where the header tubes will pass over it. [7] Heat shielding that looks like common kitchen foil, but is much thicker and double walled, is placed around any hoses that pass near the exhaust header tubes. [8] The header flange bolts are installed using a swivel attachment wrapped in tape (arrow). This allows the swivel to articulate without flopping around. Note the thick, flame-cut header flange and precise welds.



5



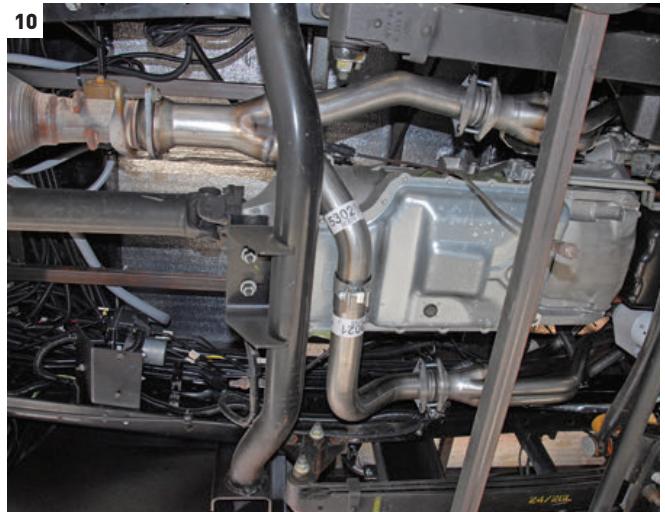
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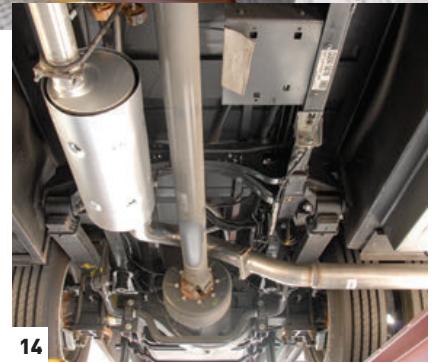
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[9] Here, the driver's-side header is shown installed. Note heat shielding to its left. [10] Looking up from the passenger side, you can see the Y tube that is bolted into place between the two header collector flanges. It routes the exhaust gases from both header assemblies into the original exhaust pipe and catalytic converter. [11] The original exhaust tailpipe after the muffler is cut where it passes over the driveshaft and exits the driver's side just in front of the rear tires. [12] The technician then uses a pry bar to remove the original muffler and tailpipe assembly from its hanger.



[13] The new Banks tailpipe section and muffler assembly is pushed into place. Because not all motorhomes are built the same way, the pipe that exits the side of the coach is made extra-long and may need to be trimmed. Here, the technician takes a rough measurement; a few inches were cut off the end so that the tip will fit flush with the side of the coach. [14] Here, the completed tailpipe section and muffler have been installed and the tip trimmed. [15, 16] A polished, rolled exhaust tip included with the kit is the finishing touch.





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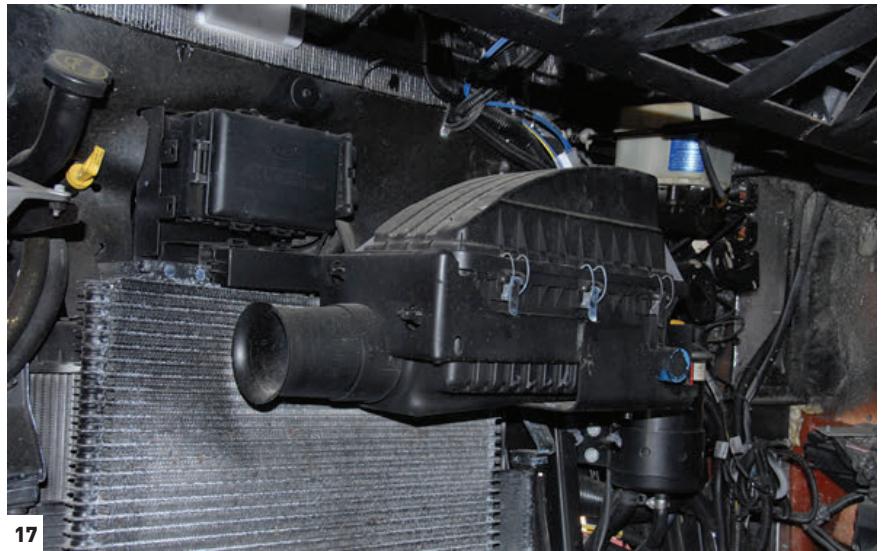
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BANKS POWERPACK INSTALLATION



17



18

[17] Now that exhaust flow has been improved with the installation of the Banks headers and exhaust, optimizing air intake flow is the next step. Note that the stock air box has an inlet tube mounted to the side, away from incoming airflow and contains a restrictive paper air filter element. [18] Removing the “doghouse” over the engine can vary in difficulty depending on the coach — be sure to take your time and make sure all fasteners have been removed. Once the doghouse is out of the way, you can clearly see the air intake tube that comes from the back of the air box, passes through the bulkhead, and mounts to the engine’s twin throttle bodies. This entire assembly will be removed and replaced.



19

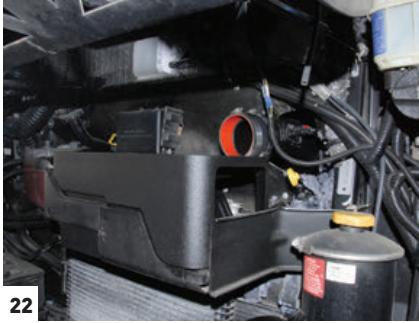


20

[19] Here the stock air box has been removed from the tray, and the tube removed. The large clamp at the throttle body is removed and the connection loosened, then the entire assembly is simply pulled out through the hole in the bulkhead. Depending on the motorhome, there may be quite a bit of spray foam in this area that needs to be removed before the tube can be pulled free. [20] The new Banks Ram-Air box is a direct replacement for the original, except note that the air inlet is larger and faces directly into the incoming air stream.



21



22



23



24

[21] The Banks Ram-Air inlet tube is passed through the bulkhead and attached to the throttle bodies using the original clamp. [22] Here you can see the air box base with the new air tube ready to be attached to the air box lid. The base contains a high-flow air filter element that is washable and reusable. [23] The Banks PowerPack system is an ideal complement to this 2017 Allegro Open Road Class A. [24] The Banks DynaFlow exhaust system produces an exhaust note that is deep and pleasant, but not overbearing. **M**

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 EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

# A GOOD FOUNDATION

WITH ITS SOLID STRUCTURE, THIS 1994 GULF STREAM SCENIC CRUISER 34 HAS ENABLED ONE HANDY RVER TO TRANSFORM AN OLD COACH INTO A MODERN MASTERPIECE

*This article is part of a continuing series looking at motorhomes that have stood the test of time. They may have miles under their wheels, but they can still make dreams come true. Each has earned the right to be called “the classic ride.”*

“Who would put a slideout in a 17-year-old motorhome?”

It is a rhetorical question because Phil Millett already knows the answer: He would.

For anyone who has ever pictured buying an older Class A for a song and making it better than new, Millett’s 1994 Gulf Stream is a dream come true. The retired Air National Guard pilot first got the idea of buying a motorhome during a deployment in 2007. When he wasn’t on duty, he spent his time researching motorhomes. He decided that what he wanted was a 7- or 8-year-old diesel pusher that would come in at

under \$80,000, but on his return to the States he soon discovered that finding what he was looking for was nearly impossible.

“It seemed like each one I looked at had a variety of major problems, from water damage to body damage to bad paint,” Millett recalls. “So I changed my mindset and began to look for something I could tackle as a project.”

He narrowed down his wish list to a Spartan chassis with a Cummins engine, and in March 2008 he found a 1994 Gulf Stream Scenic Cruiser 34 on eBay that seemed to fit his requirements. He was attracted to the coach’s modern-looking body design, and the photos showed it was in good shape for



The Milletts appreciate the family time spent in their Scenic Cruiser.

its age — basically it had good bones. As a UPS pilot he was able to jumpseat to Palm Beach and then rent a car for the drive to Okeechobee, Florida, to look at the motorhome. Unfortunately, photos can be misleading.

“In person, the RV really looked rough,” he says, shaking his head.

A barn had partially collapsed on the Gulf Stream during a 2005 hurricane, damaging the roof and causing localized water damage. It had been sitting derelict since. Millett, an experienced handyman who had previously renovated several boats and an airplane, was



Photos: Will Millett



undeterred. The motorhome was mechanically sound with all systems functioning. After a test drive during which the 5.9-liter B Series Cummins “purred like a kitten,” Millett offered \$20,000 for the Gulf Stream. Then, having never even driven a motorhome before, he set off for his home in Kentucky.

His wife, Elisa’s, reaction when he pulled up in the driveway was not exactly what he had hoped.

“I can’t believe you bought this,” she said. “You look like Cousin Eddie in ‘National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation.’”

Still not discouraged, Millett parked the Gulf Stream in a hangar at the local airport and went about the grueling and sometimes stressful job of bringing the coach back to life. He pulled off the damaged radius metal and peeled off the badly weathered EPDM rubber roof. He was pleased to find the wood beneath was still sound, but the metal definitely needed to be replaced. He contacted Gulf Stream in Nappanee, Indiana, and it shipped him enough 25-foot sections

Above left: The Gulf Stream’s interior walls and flooring were replaced, and the furnishings reupholstered as part of the renovation. Above right: The color scheme of the renovated bedroom, like the exterior, reflects the family’s support of the Virginia Tech Hokies.

of metal roof radius metal to do the job. Millett decided that while he was there he would replace everything from the roofline up, so he installed new vents, skylights and two Coleman Mach 15,000-Btu air conditioners. It took two months of bloodied knuckles and hard labor, utilizing every spare minute of time, but it resulted in a watertight and functional motorhome.

Unfortunately, water damage seldom stops at the roof. Several of the walls were soft, as was a spot in the kitchen floor. Millett moved out some of the cabinets and then all of the furniture, which he sent out for reupholstering. He tore down most of the interior walls to the frame and replaced them with synthetic bead board from a home improvement store, using a seemingly endless number of tubes of Sikaflex 221.

One small section of kitchen flooring had also sustained damage and had to be replaced. He then added

new linoleum in the kitchen and bath, recarpeted the bedroom and replaced the carpet in the main living area with wood laminate flooring. He added a new convection microwave to the galley to complement the existing four-burner stove, and also installed a new Dometic refrigerator. Cabinetry was still in good shape, as were the Corian countertops. In the bathroom the vanity needed repair, so he customized a new one using Formica. In terms of systems, the furnace and water heater, though working, were old enough that Millett decided it was a good time to replace them as well.

With the interior looking like new, Millett turned his attention to his Gulf Stream’s dated teal-and-white exterior. He chose Precision Painting in Bremen, Indiana, for the repaint, and settled on a color scheme that reminded him of his beloved Virginia Tech Hokies. The cost of the new paint was \$12,000, and the results were

## A TAXING DECISION

There are pros and cons to renovating an old or damaged motorhome and, even if you do the labor, it is highly unlikely that you will recoup those costs later. Millett estimates that he has about \$100,000 invested in his RV, but he points out that it would be difficult to find a coach for that price as well-equipped and in as pristine condition as his Scenic Cruiser is today. He also points to personal property tax as a factor to consider when choosing a project over a newer RV. At a 4.5 percent rate in Kentucky, the low valuation of an older unit can be a big plus. Bottom line: If you have the requisite handyman skills, a 1994 Gulf Stream Scenic Cruiser 34 diesel pusher (\$19,000-\$25,000 on the used market) can be a good choice.



► The new paint job on the Milletts’ Gulf Stream may have been pricey, but the results are well worth the cost.

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## The Classic Ride



Above: The custom-designed 15-foot-long slideout not only provides much-needed additional interior space for the Milletts, but it also houses an exterior entertainment center.

stunning. No one could accuse Millett of looking like Cousin Eddie anymore.

Though they were new to the RV experience, Millett and his family immediately put their motorhome to good use. With their two young sons, they traveled to Florida, the Indy 500 and to the popular Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) annual Airventure in Wisconsin eight years in a row.

"My boys, Andy and Will, are 15 and 13 years old now, and I have marked their years growing up by our RV trips to Oshkosh," Millett says.

Millett and his college buddies, all Hokies season ticket holders, also used the motorhome to attend Virginia Tech football games. Since so much of the Milletts' time was spent dry camping, he upgraded to Lifeline batteries. It's a change he recommends for anyone who goes "off grid" for several days. "Our furnace used to shut off at 2 a.m. because it had drained the batteries. Now we can go all night."

During the next few years, Millett completed rehabs of all of the other systems, overhauling brakes and the cooling system, replacing the transmission control module and converting the chassis air conditioning from R-12 to R-134. He jokes that he is "on a first-name basis" with technicians at his local Freightliner, Cummins and Allison service centers, all of whom he credits with making the renovation possible.

With all of the work he had put into his Scenic Cruiser, you might think Millett was done, but a 2011 deployment to Afghanistan started him thinking again. What was the one thing that would truly "kick the RV up a notch"? He knew the answer at once — a slideout.

He researched the companies that were experienced in that kind of work and went with MasterTech RV of Elkhart, Indiana. The company came up with a design that included a 15-foot single slide with a built-in exterior entertainment system. At a cost of \$23,000, it was a big expenditure for a then 17-year-old motorhome. But Millett points out that the rest of the coach was already like new, so it made more sense to continue to upgrade the Gulf Stream rather than sink three or four times that amount in a younger model. When the slideout was completed, he knew he had made the right call. "People look at this now, and they can't believe it is not a new motorhome," he says proudly.

Millett accepts that it is unlikely he will ever get his investment of sweat or dollars back out of his Scenic Cruiser should he want to sell it and "move up" to a newer or larger motorhome. Then again, he is not sure that he wants to part with his project. He found the work to be fun and rewarding, and he has the advantage of knowing his Gulf Stream inside and out. His last few years of ownership have been trouble-free, and with 115,000 miles on the diesel engine, it is barely broken in. Besides, he says, "I am emotionally attached to this one."

When asked whether he would undertake a project like this again, knowing what he knows now, he laughs. "No way, but it's been an interesting ride." He pauses a moment, thinking, then adds, "And what great memories we have made!"

Memories that began with a labor of love and will continue for years to come in this 1994 Gulf Stream, a true classic ride. **M**

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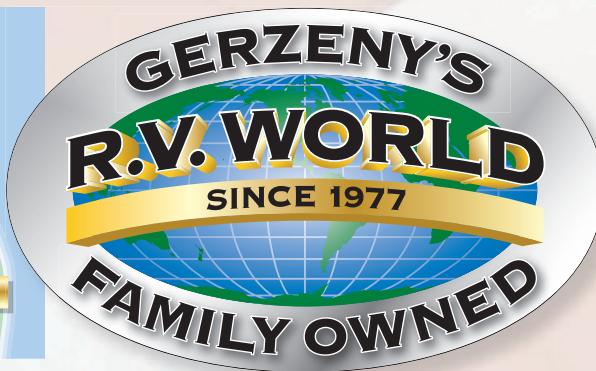
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## Vinyl Answer

On our way home after picking up our new motorhome, my wife and I experienced a blinding glare from a reflection of the sun off the horizontal portion of the sideview mirror support arms. After a bit of discussion, we hit upon the idea of covering the arms with matte or flat black sticky-back vinyl. It is quite thin (only a few thousandths of an inch thick) and quite tacky. A bit of care is needed to ensure the material is applied evenly to avoid small bubbles of trapped air. I cut the material to width and length, and peeled off the backing. I then gently folded the material in half lengthwise with the sticky side out, placed it on the center line of the mirror support arm and allowed the light vinyl to drape smoothly over the arm. Carefully done, it will lay down almost bubble-free. If bubbling does occur, puncture it with a sharp pin or needle and press out the air with your fingertips. This quick trick has virtually



eliminated any glare from the mirror arms.

Sticky-backed vinyl is available in many sizes, colors and textures in hobby and craft stores as well as online.

**Anice and Tom Walker | Iuka, Mississippi**



## Have Some Funnel

Changing the oil on our Class A gas motorhome can be a hassle with the not-easy-to-reach oil inlet that is set back from the front of the coach. Using a large funnel and large clear plastic tube — with the funnel attached to the windshield wiper with a ball-bungee cord — makes the task easy.

The large plastic tube can be found in most hardware stores. Duct taping the tube to the funnel should keep the assembly from coming apart.

**Bob Fraenzimmer | San Clemente, California**



## Mirror, Mirror

Finding a place to display family photos can be difficult with limited wall space. We used 3M Command Spring Clips on our factory-mounted mirror to make a photo display. The clips (we use the black ones) are small enough that the slideout can operate without any problem. We also hang decorations above the mirror using stick-on clings, and they have stayed secure through many extreme temperature changes.

**Cheryl McClellan | Knoxville, Tennessee** 



### Have an Idea?

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# Mail Call



Looking for reimbursement for an expedited mail charge as the result of a recall, two readers turned to Hot Line for assistance. They wrote:

“ We are writing to ask assistance in receiving a refund for the cost expended in obtaining a Winnebago recall repair for our 2015 Itasca Cambria. We had to pay \$200 in freight charges to get an automatic transfer switch in time to take a trip that had been planned for more than a year. Any assistance you could give in getting the \$200 refund from Winnebago would be appreciated.

**H. Ray and Paula Calvert | Irving, Texas**

The original recall stated the power-cord connection switch may not have been torqued properly, which could lead to an unsafe buildup of heat and, potentially, a fire. The recall also said that the automatic transfer switch (ATS) may be replaced if any resultant damage occurred, which was apparently the case with the Calverts. We do know that recalls can be frustrating, but they're absolutely necessary as manufacturers discover that something is wrong with their product. In the case of the Calverts, that frustration undoubtedly grew as they realized they would be unable to make a trip unless they had the part expedited to them. And, while Winnebago wasn't necessarily under any obligation to help the Calverts, the case ended with positive results.

Winnebago responded:

Under the circumstances, because it is a recall, we will reimburse the customer the \$200 for paying the overnight freight.

**Brian M. Golwitzer | Service Advisor, Winnebago Industries Inc., Forest City, Iowa**

## Fan Frenzy

Upset that his motorhome's new refrigerator failed to cool properly in hot weather, a reader turned to Hot Line for help. He wrote:

“ We purchased a new Norcold refrigerator for our motorhome after our old 1995 Norcold finally failed.

Immediately after the new model was installed, it would not maintain temperature while in the LP-gas mode. We called Norcold, but when we arrived at our destination we did not seem to have any more issues when it was on electricity.

We started documenting the problems, and by the end of June we again called Norcold. The freezer in midday only went down to 32 degrees on the highest setting. We have since taken it to RV Outlet in Eugene, Oregon, to investigate the problem.

RV Outlet had numerous conversations with Norcold, which said we

needed to install a fan kit. We then ordered and installed a kit.

Our original Norcold refrigerator lasted for 20 years and more than 100,000 miles, and did so without a fan.

Can Hot Line help?

**Jim Loveall | Eugene, Oregon**

When ambient temperatures run high, a motorhome's refrigerator can have trouble keeping up without the addition of a fan to cool the fins. Considering Loveall's fridge was brand-new when he experienced this situation, his frustration is understandable. Norcold appears to agree. The company wrote:

We received a letter regarding your Norcold NXA841 R fan installation. Based on the information documented within our call logs, it appears you were experiencing poor cooling when the ambient temperatures were above 100 degrees. As 100 degrees and above are considered extreme temperatures, a fan is recommended to increase airflow and dissipate the hot air around the back of the unit to allow optimal performance.

When the initial purchase was made, it should have been determined if a fan or cold-weather kit would be suitable depending on the planned camping conditions. In either case this unit is available with those options. However, due to the inconvenience you've experienced, a check will be mailed tomorrow for the [\$157.50] labor costs you've incurred to have the fan installed after the date of purchase.

**Kimberly Gordon | Senior Manager, Customer Service, Norcold/Thetford, Ann Arbor, Michigan**

## Take Action

## Contact Hot Line for Help

Hot Line assists in mediating conflicts between consumers and RV dealers and manufacturers, accessories suppliers and service providers. After exhausting all other resources, send typed letters to *MotorHome* Hot Line, 2750 Park View Court, Suite 240, Oxnard, CA 93036 and enclose copies of appropriate bills and correspondence, plus a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Selected letters will be edited and published unless otherwise requested.

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By Ken Freund

## Back-Issue Bingo!

**Q** In this column, you frequently reference articles from back issues. However, after searching the *MotorHome* website, there is no archive of back issues that I can locate. Now obviously, no one spending much time in an RV has the space to store back issues of old magazines, so how is a reader supposed to locate the articles you reference?

**George R. Woodside | Via email**

**A** Good news, George. Thanks to digital technology, you no longer have to leave your spouse at home when you go on trips in order to have space to carry a full stack of back issues! *MotorHome's* article index page at [www.motorhome.com/article-indexes](http://www.motorhome.com/article-indexes) features the following link, where archives are available back to 2009: <http://www.motorhome.com/digital-edition-archives>.



### Tossing Wheel Covers

**Q** Our 2015 Leisure Travel Vans Unity built on the Mercedes-Benz 3500 chassis has shed three rear wheel covers in 50,000 miles, two from one side and one from the other. We really enjoy everything else about this motorhome. At almost \$200 each, I feel these Dacor Corp. wheel covers need to stay on the motorhome longer. I have received no easy answers from either Leisure Travel or Dacor. Do you have any suggestions?

**Steve Brownell | Brevard, North Carolina**

**A** Did you bang curbs with any of them? That will often cause them to come off. Have you managed to recover any of them to see what failed? The J hooks may be coming unscrewed, or the hooks unbending. I'd take a look at upgrading the hardware and using locknuts. Most of the references to this problem I see online are regarding the front wheel covers. Some owners add cable ties to secure them, using at least three thick ones spaced evenly through the existing holes

in the sides of the rims to secure the wheel covers. Some owners switch to aluminum wheels and do away with the wheel simulators altogether. Others simply paint their wheels silver. Camping World ([www.campingworld.com](http://www.campingworld.com)) also offers a number of brands and models of wheel covers.

### Dirty Radiator

My motorhome was often overheating, and I finally identified that the problem was due to dirty radiators on my diesel pusher. I recently purchased a 2001 Monaco and later found that the radiators were dirty on the outside. We found that the crankcase breather tube runs down beside the engine and stops about where the oil pan is. That is fine on trucks that pull air through the radiator and past the engine, but motorhomes pull air by the engine and push it out through the radiator, where the oil fumes collect dust on the fins. I used some heater hose and routed the breather tube out the rear past the radiator. I cleaned the radiator with lots of hot soapy water and a hose with a nozzle.

Now might be a good time to

look at the breather tube on your diesel engine. The fix is easy and not expensive. Cleaning the oil off the radiator fins is easy and inexpensive if you do it yourself, and it makes a good weekend project, albeit a dirty one.

**Lloyd Kurtz | Ellinwood, Kansas**

Thanks for writing, Lloyd. We had a rash of these problems some years ago and I covered this subject at that time. I'll take this opportunity to remind readers of this problem.

I recommend using Gunk Engine Cleaner, or equivalent, as a detergent. If you apply it while the radiators are still warm, it works better. Be careful if using a pressure washer because some models may be too powerful and bend or flatten out the fins. Don't use heater hose for the breather extension, as it's not compatible with engine oil and will swell and eventually fall apart. Instead, use a neoprene hose designed to work with oil and fuel. Also, many owners route it into an open catch container, which captures the oil drips but allows the fumes to vent. If you tow a dinghy vehicle or trailer, it will likely end up with oil specks all over the front from the blowby fumes.

## Dinghy Speed Limits

In the June issue you covered many of the important points about dinghy-towing speed limitations, such as control and braking. You might have forgotten that most dinghies on the road have ST-type tires with a maximum speed rating of 65 MPH. Even the newest ST tires that have a Service Description are still load-rated based

on formulas developed with a 65-MPH maximum speed in mind.

**Roger Marble** | Via email

Thanks for writing, Roger. My definition (and *MotorHome's* definition) of a dinghy vehicle is a motor vehicle that is capable of being driven by itself when unhitched from the motorhome. This is reflected in our annual Guide to Dinghy Towing. This definition would preclude

trailers, which of course are also popularly towed behind motorhomes, including boat trailers, cargo trailers, etc. That said, this is certainly a good time to remind readers that ST (special trailer) tires used on trailers are generally rated for 65 MPH. Check with their manufacturer; in some cases they can be driven somewhat faster (say, up to 75 MPH) if they are inflated to a higher pressure and carry less load. However, I recommend for safety and fuel economy that towing speeds be maintained at or below 65 MPH (some states have lower limits).

## House Batteries and Solar Panels

**Q** We have a 2007 Fleetwood Excursion 39S with four 6-volt house batteries. Located on top of one of the air-conditioning units is a small solar panel used for charging the four house batteries. I noticed the small red indicator light inside the coach does not ever light up to show that it's charging. I checked the voltage right out of the panel on top and it only shows 0.30 volts in bright sunlight.

I have researched this solar charging system and found it to be a 5-watt output unit. I read an online post that said this 5-watt system is basically "useless" and is underpowered for what it was designed to do.

My question is whether to buy the same solar panel (\$75) or upgrade to something with a higher wattage output? Should I even bother?

If I go with a different solar panel, can I just mount it and plug it right back in to the two wires up top or would I need to run all new wires with a new controller, etc.?

**Bruce Neumeister** | Fairfield, Ohio

**A** With four large batteries to "feed," a 5-watt-rated panel is too small. Based on your voltage reading, it's also likely that it has failed. Many RVers, including me, like solar panels because they provide essentially free, quiet power, even when there's no shorepower available. If you store your coach in a location without

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shorepower, solar panels can keep your batteries charged and extend their service lives.

I would add one or more panels, depending on how often you visit primitive campsites, and install a new controller that is designed to work with the panels. If you only add a small amount of capacity (say, 45 watts), you may need to upgrade the wiring. Just make sure it is heavy enough to handle the maximum output.

### Does it Have a TPMS?

**Q** When we turn on the ignition and start our 2005 Itasca 31W built on a 2004 Workhorse 8.1-liter gas chassis, a TPMS symbol appears on the dash. Does our motorhome have the ability to read tire pressure sensors on the wheels? If yes, which sensors should we install?

**David and Gwen Oren | Via email**

**A** No; the only part of the system that came from the factory is a place for a warning-light bulb. If you were to install a tire-pressure monitoring system (TPMS) aftermarket kit, you could conceivably use that light to warn of a tire failure with your added system, provided the kit somehow worked with the dashboard array.

### Brake-Switch Question

**Q** I have a 2012 Forest River Class C built on a Chevy Express 3500 chassis. I own a car trailer with electric brakes, and I'm currently using an electric brake controller made by PowerStop (500-PS). The controller is activated by 12-volt DC power that comes from the brake switch. It appears that the four wires that come off of the brakelight switch work only in ohms. So, can you tell me where I can connect to a 12-volt DC wire that would activate my brake controller so it can send power back to the trailer to apply the electric brakes on the trailer?

**John Riley | Via email**

**A** GM has gone to 5-volt DC proportional-type sensors on some

of these, so that's why you don't get the usual 12-volt DC signals at the brake switches. They act like variable resistance sensors. There should be a stop lamp relay in the underhood fuse block. This is what supplies the voltage to the brake lamps. You can also find the auxiliary stop lamp fuse, which should be 15 amps. Check that the voltage comes on and off at this fuse when you brake. If so, take your signal from the output of that fuse.

### Tire Load Ratings

**Q** I need to replace my motorhome's tires. The current tires are marked load range "F," but the tires my local dealer wants to sell me are marked load range "G." Are these compatible?

**Larry Simpson | Via email**

**A** You didn't mention what make and model coach you have. Tires with a higher load rating tend to ride

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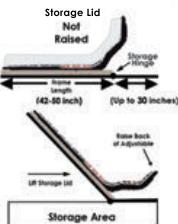
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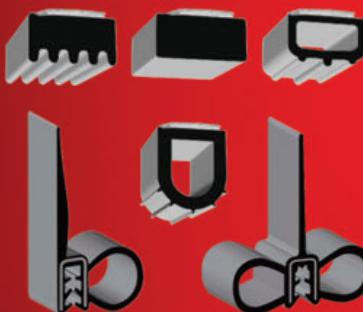
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a little harder and cost a bit more. The tires should be compatible if they are the same size and the wheels are rated for the load rating and pressure. Never go down in load rating. Going up in load rating can provide a safety cushion, particularly if your motorhome's tire loads are near the limits of the old tires. This could be helpful if you have had problems with tire failures. However, going to a higher tire load rating does not increase the axle ratings, spring ratings, brake capacity, etc.

### Satellite Signal Searching

I came across a tech question in the May issue ("KING Satellite Antenna Issue") regarding a satellite antenna that continues to search for signals even when the TV and receiver are turned off. Your answer to prevent this was to unplug the receiver completely. My antenna also continues to search for signals even when I am rolling down the

road. I attribute it to being DC powered. It does have a switch where I can turn off the antenna alone and disconnect it from the DC power. I used to forget it often until I added it to our departure checklist. Maybe ours was wired differently, but that's my two cents' worth.  
**William Kilpatrick and Janes Will | Via email**

Thanks for writing, William. My original reply was based on a conversation I had with the manufacturer's technical guru about the specific problem the reader was having. I believe that any way you can solve the problem, without causing other problems, is a good one! You didn't mention what make or model you have, but the manufacturer is usually the best source of information.

### Comment — Shifting Advice

In regard to "Shifting Advice" in the May issue, my shifting inquiries lead me to climb hills **(continued on page 73)**

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## COACH & POWERTRAIN

(Continued from page 69)

with the engine near maximum torque for best efficiency. I can drive faster and burn more fuel, but I prefer to adjust speed and transmission gear to stay near maximum torque. In a rig without a tachometer, calculations can be performed to determine, for each gear, the speed of peak torque. With the modern lock-up torque converters this should be a good guide, especially since torque curves have somewhat broad peaks. The data necessary are tire outside diameter (or circumference), differential ratio and transmission ratios.

**Rick Keaton | Altadena, California**

I, too, prefer to run at or near torque peak when climbing hills. Tire diameters can be obtained from [www.thetirerack.com](http://www.thetirerack.com). A Google search (or the owner's manual) should also bring up the peak torque of a particular engine, and hopefully the gear ratios of the transmission. There are a number of online sources for understanding and making calculations. I've included one from my friends at Hot Rod magazine: [www.hotrod.com/articles/speed-rpm-gear-ratio-tire-size-formula](http://www.hotrod.com/articles/speed-rpm-gear-ratio-tire-size-formula).

### To Unhitch, or Not?

**Q** Do I need to unhitch my tow dolly when leveling my motorhome?  
**Sabrina Osterling | Via email**

**A** The short answer is "no." In some cases, however, such as on seriously uneven ground — where the tongue of the dolly would perhaps be twisted at a steep angle when the motorhome is leveled (and/or you have a heavy vehicle on it) — then you should unhitch first.

### HHR Towing — Tip

This is in regard to a letter in the May issue. I flat tow a 2008 HHR with the original battery. I have towed it more than 21,000 miles with no problems. This is the procedure that I use: With the vehicle in PARK I pull fuse #8 (I leave the fuse puller on it all the time). I then turn on the key (the instrument light

### E-Z Snap

Outdoor storage can wreak havoc on snaps, zippers and hinges. Even after washing off the dirt, the fasteners can still be sticky and tough to use. Things can even get so bad that the attached fabric will actually tear before the fasteners work. Iosso Products' E-Z Snap is formulated to free the most stubborn fastener back to a like-new condition. Made in the USA, E-Z Snap lubricates and reduces friction. It's waterproof and won't melt away in hot weather, so it doesn't have to be constantly reapplied throughout the season, according to the company. Beyond its uses on outdoor canvas hardware, E-Z Snap works on drawer slides and other places where a little added slip is needed. The formula is said to be nonhazardous and doesn't contain any solvents or silicone. It comes in a 1.5-ounce easy-to-dispense tube and has an MSRP of \$5.80.

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comes on), put the car in NEUTRAL and turn off the key. When the key is turned off, the instrument lights go out and the key is locked into the ignition and can't be removed. The battery never hasn't ever discharged, even on the three-day trip to Florida.

**Ed Sigmund | Chesapeake, Virginia**

Thanks for sharing your experiences towing the HHR. I see quite a few of them on the road being towed behind motorhomes. **M**

### Have a Tech Question?

#### Contact our experts:

Email [tech@motorhomemagazine.com](mailto:tech@motorhomemagazine.com) or write to *MotorHome*, 2750 Park View Court, Suite 240, Oxnard, CA 93036 (please include your name, city and state). Selected letters will be answered in the magazine, but time does not permit individual replies.

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# The Road Goes On Forever

Get out and live life to the fullest and you'll never run out of new roads to explore

By Alan Rider

**R**egular readers may recall me going on about how “The Road Goes On Forever” by Robert Earl Keen should be this column’s unofficial theme song. It seems a fitting ode because, when you stop to think about it, the road really never does end. It just heads off in a different direction, practically daring you to follow along to see where it’s off to next.

My best friend, Mike, and I recently put this idea to the test when we drove nearly 5,000 miles coast to coast on the Trans-Canada Highway. And, as predicted, just when it seemed we’d run out of pavement at the Atlantic Ocean, a convenient right turn led us back toward the U.S. border and home.

As it turned out, I was mulling over this idea of the road going on forever a few days later when I stopped in Indianapolis, Indiana, to celebrate my friend Tudor’s 39th birthday. Which brings me to the literal heart of this story.

You see, Tudor Van Hampton is one of those unforgettable people I often meet in my travels. After being randomly paired up on a test drive event, Tudor and I quickly bonded when, having had our forward progress blocked by a herd of cows on a Texas backroad, without a word the two of us leaned out the windows and began mooing loudly until those pesky — and clearly confused — critters hauled their bovine behinds out of the roadway.

So when I got word a few weeks before leaving for Canada that Tudor had been diagnosed with a rare, inoperable brain tumor — a glioblastoma, the docs called it — I knew I had to attend his annual summertime birthday soiree. Despite the fact that we kept the mooing to a minimum at the event, a good time was had by all.

A few weeks after the party, Tudor called to tell me he and his wife, Jenie, were hopping a plane to visit the awe-inspiring Canadian Rockies. Before we hung up, I asked him what prompted him to make the trip, and his straightforward answer was quite a surprise to me.

You see, after a near-fatal motorcycle accident a couple of

decades ago, I came to the conclusion that the only antidote to the uncertainty inherent in our daily existence was to go out and live one’s life to the fullest. So when Tudor told me, “You’re the person who taught me that life was short, so you better make the most of it,” I was touched that he’d taken my words to heart.

Sadly, Tudor succumbed to his illness a few months back, an event I marked with two of his favorite things: a good pulled-pork barbecue sandwich and a beer. Neither of which is much of a memorial, I admit, but knowing the man, the tribute seemed somehow fitting.

What does all this have to do with motorhome travel, you ask? Well, a lot more than you might think. First, don’t leave that rig parked in your driveway — it was meant to roll. It’s hard to make the most of your days if you never leave home.

Second, and perhaps most importantly, is the fact that we’re all going to reach that place where the pavement of life just peters out. But, if we make the most of the time we’ve been given, in some ways — like the road itself — we really do go on forever.

At least in the hearts and minds of the people who really matter. The very kind of people you meet out there along The Road Ahead. **M**

“ Don’t leave that rig parked in your driveway — it was meant to roll. It’s hard to make the most of your days if you never leave home. ”

## Faces and Places

Right: The author and Van Hampton perfected the art of mooing for most any occasion. Van Hampton and his wife, Jenie, enjoyed a bucket-list trip to the awe-inspiring Canadian Rockies.



Photos courtesy Jenie Van Hampton

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