

TOWING MUSCLE

RAM RAISES THE BAR...AGAIN

TRAILER LIFE

FOLLOW THE ROAD TO ADVENTURE



HOT STUFF
3 NEW GRILLS TO
MAKE SUMMER
COOKOUTS SIZZLE

Page 49

TESTED

Double Play

HEARTLAND'S TOY-HAULING CYCLONE
FIFTH-WHEEL AND CHEVY'S SILVERADO
3500HD TEAM UP FOR ADVENTURE

GET OUT AND GO!


EAST
NEW ENGLAND FISHING

MIDWEST
OLD SANTA FE TRAIL

WEST
VANCOUVER ISLAND

OUT OF THE BOX

REVAMPED WINNEBAGO SPYDER



QUALITY ADVENTURES DON'T JUST HAPPEN. IT TAKES PEOPLE LIKE MIGUEL ALVAREZ.

Bob and Judy have three kids and seven grandkids, and their Lance Camper has seen a lot of miles. But it still looks like new, thanks in part to craftsman upholsterers like Miguel Alvarez and his 40 years of experience.

It's his skill and love of what he does that's helped make Lance Camper number one in travel trailer sales* and the recipient of the *Trailer Life Reader's Choice Gold Award*. Visit your nearest Lance Camper dealer and notice the difference in Miguel's work yourself.



lancecamper.com

*In the 14'-23' segment.

Lance Campers, Circle 128 on Reader Service Card

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FAR-WEST CLASSIC

Snowcapped mountains and dense old-growth forests surround the friendly towns of Tofino and Ucluelet on Canada's Vancouver Island. Page 66

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On the Road, Too

Two TV-show hosts travel the back roads of America in a Kuralt-esque search for what makes small towns unique

While conducting technical seminars this past winter, I met with many *Trailer Life* readers, Good Sam members and other RVers at January's Colorado RV Adventure Travel Show in Denver and February's Minneapolis/St. Paul RV Vacation and Camping Show. I love the opportunity to help new and veteran RVers get the most out of their investment.

At the Minneapolis show, I met fellow seminar presenters Rodney Miller and Jann Carl who host a syndicated TV show called *Small Town Big Deal*. They were friendly and outgoing, and we hit it off immediately. I recognized one of the hosts from way back. Jann was not only a correspondent and

for an agricultural tractor manufacturer to do what he always wanted to do: produce a television show about all the great things in small-town America. When the show was announced in a network newsletter, Jann saw it, and the rest is history. "I grew up wanting to be Charles Kuralt," she says, and *Small Town Big Deal* is a slightly amped-up version of Kuralt's long-running "On the Road" segments on CBS.

Of course, starting a show without a major studio's financial and political capital can be like climbing the face of El Capitan with a broken arm. But for both of these storytellers, this was a dream they were not going to give up on. Forty-two states and seven years later, Jann and Rodney have been discovering what encouraged many of us to adopt the RV lifestyle: all that's great off the interstate. From a grits festival to a canoe marathon to a two-town tug-of-war across the Mississippi, Rodney and Jann bring out-of-the-way events and the awesome people who do them to light.


Interestingly, they don't own an RV — yet. Rodney and his family live in Atlanta where the production team is located, and Jann is in Los Angeles with her family. They both

Forty-two states and seven years later, Jann and Rodney have been discovering what encouraged many of us to adopt the RV lifestyle: all that's great off the interstate.

occasional host on *Entertainment Tonight*, she cohosted the *MDA Labor Day Telethon* with Jerry Lewis, a charity that the International Association of Firefighters, of which I was a member, supported with boot drives for decades.

Rodney, Jann's business partner and show creator, left his former career as an executive

love what they are doing and are great people — the real deal — and it comes across in their show. *Small Town Real Deal* can be seen on TV stations across America, the RFD Network on satellite, and online. Visit www.smalltownbigdeal.com for a list of channels.

Whether your RV travels take you to small towns, big cities or off the grid this camping season, we'll see you down the road! 

— Chris Dougherty, Technical Editor



PARTY LIKE IT'S 1919

This year marks the 100th anniversary of Tin Can Tourists, an RV camping club that got its start when Woodrow Wilson sat in the White House. The group's original mission was "to unite fraternally all auto-campers," but these days members also focus on preserving vintage RVs and chronicling their colorful histories. The club is commemorating the milestone with a Centennial Celebration at Camp Dearborn in Milford, Michigan, May 14 to 19, and encourages members to dress up in Great Gatsby finery and "foxtrot the night away." www.tincantourists.com




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RINGSIDE SEATS

"Rocky Mountain Road Trip" in the March 2019 issue talks about red Adirondack chairs scattered throughout Canada's national parks. We found these in New Brunswick's Fundy National Park in September 2018. Nice place to rest!

Claudia Cliffl, Livonia, New York

Parks Canada's Red Chair campaign (#sharethechair) began in Newfoundland's Gros Morne National Park in 2013 and has since spread to parks across Canada. Hundreds of bright-red pairs of chairs have been strategically placed to draw visitors to scenic viewpoints, from the Bay of Fundy to Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. For more on Pacific Rim, turn to page 66. — Editors



HAVE A COMMENT?

Write to us at info@trailerlife.com or *Trailer Life*, 2750 Park View Court, Suite 240, Oxnard, California 93036. Please include your full name, city and state or province.



Hot-Button Issue

I received my March issue of *Trailer Life* last week, and as always, the content was excellent. I especially liked Emily Fagan's "Rocky Mountain Road Trip." We have enjoyed this trip in the past, and her advice about currency and cell phones was an added and accurate bonus.

"Living Large and Light" by Donya Carlson and "Diesel Down" by Chris Hemer were enlightening on several levels. First, the 14.77 MPG on the new diesel Ford F-150 when towing the Lance 2465 was exceptionally impressive. I've owned several pickups that didn't get close to this fuel economy while running empty with no load.



POLL RESULTS: DOUBLE PARKED

WHAT'S YOUR PREFERRED RV DESTINATION?

95% National Park 5% Theme Park facebook.com/trailerlifemagazine

Regarding the Lance, I was surprised that such an upscale travel trailer was using 14-inch tires. Acceptable replacements are harder to find than those for 15-inch tires and wheels. I was also taken aback when I read that the cargo carrying capacity is 510 pounds with the freshwater tank full.

Ron Latreille, Denver, Colorado

Campsites and Canoeists

We also went to the four Canadian national parks described in "Rocky Mountain Road Trip," and like Emily Fagan, we recommend spending a month in the parks as there's so much to see. Just be sure you have campground reservations before going. We were there in July, and most of the national park campsites that had hookups were full. We did find two Alberta RV parks within reasonably close drives of the parks: Jasper Gates near Jasper and David Thompson Resort east of Saskatchewan River Crossing. Note that David Thompson is off the grid, with electricity from a generator, so your microwave will not work.

Bill Keefe and Linda Jensen
Santa Fe, New Mexico



The caption on the opening photo in "Rocky Mountain Road Trip" starts with "Kayakers glide across glacier-fed Emerald Lake," but there is no kayak in view. The canoe in the picture has two people nicely paddling with single-bladed paddles while sitting in the boat. They are not seated on the bottom with legs outstretched, using double-bladed paddles.

Love your magazine.

Don Leeger, Maidens, Virginia

Equal Exposure

In response to "Diesel Down," you might want to consider giving equal time to the GM and Ram truck brands, given their fine reputations. Sorry, not all Ford fans out here!

Bob Rushing

Grand Rapids, Minnesota

Consider it, we did, Bob. Chris Dougherty reviews the Chevrolet Silverado 3500HD on page 42, and Chris Hemer reviews the

DIESEL SHAKEDOWN

The Ford V-6 diesel reviewed in "Diesel Down" might not be new in Europe, but I would still give it a year to see how reliable it really is. As far as diesel noise goes, anyone that likes diesels likes a little noise. It is part of the culture of owning a diesel!

Albert Cerf, Mesa, Arizona



Ram HD lineup on page 18. To read our series on all of the 2019 half-ton trucks, go to www.trailerlife.com. — Editors

The Slides of March

I've been a fifth-wheel RVer for about 20 years. I've noticed over the years that RVs with one or two slideouts generally locate them on the street side. Case in point: the Lance 2465 featured on the March cover. Let's assume that you park on the road in front of a family member's or friend's home for an overnight stay. You will be unable to use the streetside slides as they will restrict traffic flow. I can see no reason why the slides couldn't be positioned on the curb side to make them more usable. If it is a weight and balance concern, the heavier appliances could be located on the street side.

Harry Jones, Brookings, South Dakota

On the Bright Side

In her March letter, "Out Like a Light," Sarah Miller wrote about replacing harsh LED lights with incandescent fixtures in her new fifth-wheel. While it's true that most manufacturers have switched to LED lighting, it's also true that many of them have used the wrong color temperature in their bulbs. Incandescent lightbulbs have a color temperature of 2,700 degrees on the Kelvin scale. That is the warm-white color we are most used to. LED bulbs are available in a range of color temperatures, from warm white to the almost blue white of 5,000 K. For some unknown reason, many RV manufacturers have chosen the 5,000 K bulbs. There is a solution. Go to your local hardware store and buy LED replacement bulbs rated at 2,700 K. The lighting will be warm and cozy, and you'll use less electricity.

Stan Woodring, Fort Collins, Colorado

I did the opposite of Sarah Miller. When turning on a couple of lights in the trailer, I could hear the converter fan start so I knew they were pulling a few amps. I decided to swap out all of the 12-volt incandescent bulbs for LEDs. I did find the same thing as Sarah, that the lights were too bright. After some

digging on the internet, I ordered LED bulbs with a color closer to 2,400 K, and that resolved the issue. My lighting in the trailer is still basically the same as it was with the incandescent bulbs, but I have a much lower amperage draw.

Dave Moore, Neoga, Illinois

A Mag for All Seasons

It's been a long and dreadful winter for most of America, and we have been

squarely in the middle of it. Record snowfall and terribly cold conditions. When I go to the mailbox and see *Trailer Life*, I get so excited and just cannot get back into the house fast enough to open it up and read it. This magazine has gotten me through the miserable winter, and very soon our beautiful Lance trailer shall be out and enjoying America.

Doug Allen, St. Charles, Missouri 

ADVERTISEMENT

ELKHART, INDIANA

Momentum 25G Toy Hauler



The 25G's interior feels like a high-end travel trailer with every amenity you have come to expect: a spacious kitchen with plenty of storage and counter space, sleeping for six including a walk-around queen bed, ample bathroom and shower, large 19' awning and high-end touches that remind you that you are not in a typical toy hauler.

The business side of the 25G can boast in ways few can match. It is half-ton towable with an average carrying capacity of 3,000 pounds. The spacious 13' 6" garage's tie downs are directly integrated with the frame, so your toys aren't going anywhere. A dovetailed ramp departure makes loading and unloading a breeze. Large holding tanks, generator option, and the onboard fuel station reassure dry campers that they were included in the design of this trailer. There is no doubt this award-winning toy hauler will be a mainstay at campsites in the near future.

Exterior Length	30' 11"
Exterior Width	101"
Freshwater Cap	100 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap	74 gal./39 gal.
LP-Gas Cap	30 gal.
UVW, Base	7,900 lbs.
Hitch Weight	1,150 lbs.
GVWR	11,500 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$52,179



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Manufacturer Spotlight



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ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Ripple Effect

Cradled by the Blue Ridge Mountains and carved by the French Broad River, one of the coolest places in the South becomes a watery playground when things heat up

— by Cate Battles

There's more to Asheville, North Carolina, than its lively urban scene and picturesque setting in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Just a couple minutes from downtown flows the French Broad River. The 218-mile French Broad is one of the oldest rivers in the world, even predating the Appalachian Mountains. For those new to the South, that's *Appa-LATCH-uhn*, y'all!

Although Asheville's nickname is Land of the Sky, in many ways, it's the land of the river. The city's vibrant River Arts District, or RAD, surrounds the French Broad and is home to restaurants, breweries and working studios for more than 200 artists. With three riverside city parks, the waterway is also a playground for outdoor enthusiasts.

To get the local pulse, visitors can spend a day floating down the river and taking out at different spots along the

way. It's easy to pick up a tube, kayak or stand-up paddleboard from a local outfitter and make a splash in the river. Take it from someone who lived in Asheville for 15 years, there's no better way to cool off on a hot summer day.

Whether you plan on paddling or floating, river trips vary in length, as there are dozens of put-in and take-out spots. One of my favorites starts at Hominy Creek a couple miles upstream and winds through the RAD. At the halfway point, I like to get my grub on at Asheville's famous 12 Bones Smokehouse and grab a beer next door at Wedge Brewing. The laidback atmosphere pairs well with a day on the river, with a rustic courtyard spread with picnic tables and eclectic murals by local artists.

After lunch, continue down the

river and soak up the sunshine while you pass the heart of the RAD and New Belgium, one of the largest craft breweries in the country. A float on the French Broad can even take you past the Biltmore Estate, George Vanderbilt's 1895 home and another of Asheville's top attractions.

While planning your visit, try to time it to match a river-themed event such as RAD's Studio Stroll on the second Saturday of each month, or the Anything That Floats Parade and RiverFest, both on July 20 this year.

STAY AND PLAY

Full-time RVer and former Asheville resident Cate Battles recommends staying at Wilson's Riverfront RV Park, right on the French Broad River, or Campfire Lodgings, a ridgetop RV park where guests can watch the river from on high. www.campfirelodgings.com www.wilsonsrvpark.com

📍 Floating the French Broad is a tradition in Asheville, not to mention a social occasion, with fleets of tubers, kayakers, canoeists and stand-up paddleboarders making the scene on hot summer days.



Can I Get a “Del-Yeah!”?

● Memorial Day weekend is the unofficial start of summer, and for me it's the official kickoff of the music-festival season. For the past 12 years, I've made the journey over the Appalachians to the Allegany County Fairgrounds in Cumberland, Maryland, for DelFest, May 23 through 26 this year. What started as a family-friendly festival celebrating bluegrass icon Del McCoury has become one of the most popular music events on the East Coast for RVers and jam-grass fans alike.

What makes DelFest so special is the sense of community that is shared throughout the weekend. I'm all about the festival scene, from rockin' out in the front row with my wife to throwing a Bloody Mary party back at the site where our 1988 Airstream is set up. Over the years, DelFest has become a hot spot for RV enthusiasts because of the picturesque backdrop along the Potomac River, proximity to interstate highways and DELuxe RV packages that include full hookups — and, of course, the outstanding lineup of bluegrass musicians.

With live music on the Grandstand Stage, the Late Night Stage and more intimate “playshops,” local food vendors and a large variety of craft beer, DelFest is my idea of the perfect festival. Tickets were still available for the 2019 event at press time. For those who didn't score an RV site before they sold out, nearby Rocky Gap State Park and Green Ridge State Forest offer campsites. — **Chris Morris**
www.delfest.com

2020 Looking ahead, tickets go on sale in December for next year's DelFest, May 21 through 24. Act fast if you want an RV pass.

Campground Cooking, Gourmet Style

The Campground Gourmet: Simple, Delicious Recipes for Dining in the Great Outdoors shares recipes that go well beyond the casual meals RVers might usually enjoy at the campground. Chef Kate Dunbar not only brings her cooking expertise to the table, she offers authentic camping cred as the owner of two travel trailers, a vintage Shasta and an Airstream Flying Cloud, and as a member of Sisters on the Fly, an RV organization for women who enjoy gathering in the great outdoors.

Despite the cookbook's “gourmet” label, each of the more than 100 recipes has approachable ingredients and uncomplicated prep work, making it possible for any camper to become a true epicurean. Dunbar includes directions for preparing divine rubs and sauces, as well as spirited drinks and decadent desserts, and makes the book a feast for the eyes with photographs for each recipe.

Published by the RVFTA Podcast Network, *The Campground Gourmet* (\$9.99) is available as an e-book on Amazon. — **Kerri Cox**
www.thecampgroundgourmet.com



EASY-PULLING POP-UPS

Ultralight folding camping trailers transform from boxes on wheels to welcoming retreats — and they fit in the garage



Flagstaff Sports Enthusiast

Geared for outdoor adventure, Flagstaff Sports Enthusiast tent campers feature 12 inches of ground clearance and 15-inch mud-terrain radials. A cargo deck up front and permanently mounted cross bars on top transport bikes, kayaks and other toys. Of the six models, the 23SCSE (\$17,458 MSRP) is one of two with a dinette slide. Exterior length (folded): 22 feet, 5 inches. Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR): 3,749 pounds.
www.forestriverinc.com/flagstaff



Rockwood Premier

The 2514G earns its Premier status with heated innerspring mattresses at both bunk ends, roomy cargo trunks, a kitchen bay-window slideout and a dinette slide. The \$16,533 MSRP includes MORryde steps, aluminum wheels and a power lift system, as well as a Wi-Fi booster, an LED-lit awning, outside speakers and a roof rack. Exterior length (folded): 18 feet, 10 inches. GVWR: 3,237 pounds.
www.forestriverinc.com/rockwood

Opus Off-Road

The British-Australian Opus crossed the pond five years ago to offer a high-end folding camping trailer on an external aluminum frame. Last year the more rugged Off-Road Opus debuted. Available in the 4-Sleeper and new 2-Sleeper (\$24,499 MSRP), the Off-Road is compatible with the optional Air Opus inflating tent (\$2,499). Exterior length (folded): 18 feet, 4 inches. GVWR: 3,970 pounds.
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When it comes to RV owners' rallies, Grand Design's national gathering in Goshen, Indiana, is said to be one of the biggest. Last year's four-day event at the Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds brought together rally-goers in hundreds of Grand Design fifth-wheels, travel trailers and toy haulers. The 2019 rally takes place August 27 through 30, and it's expected to draw another sellout crowd.

Beyond the Indiana event, regional Grand Design owners' rallies take place all year long. In May alone, rallies are planned in Georgia, Tennessee and

Michigan. But August's Hoosier State affair is the main attraction.

Because of its location near Grand Design's headquarters in Middlebury, the rally gives owners an opportunity to tour the factories where the Imagine, Momentum, Reflection and Solitude are built. Back at the fairgrounds, vendors offer RV accessories, seminars cover topics from landing gear to trailer tires, and service technicians are on hand to

fix problems in rally-goers' rigs. Grand Design's CEO Don Clark even hosts an informal question-and-answer session.

For many attendees, the best part of these events is connecting with fellow RVers. "You have one thing in common. You all RV," affirms Jason Miller, a Grand Design Lifestyle Ambassador along with his wife, Rae, who attended the 2018 rally.

gdrv4life.granddesignrv.com

WATCH IT 📺 Check out the "What's an RV Rally?" video by full-time RVers and Grand Design fifth-wheel owners Jason and Rae Miller, known online as the Getaway Couple. www.getawaycouple.com

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Next Stop, Niagara Falls

Niagara Falls is one of North America's most visited natural wonders. Even without this amazing attraction nearby, Branches of Niagara Campground and Resort would be worth a visit. Located 15 minutes south of the falls in the small town of Grand Island, New York, Branches of Niagara is a true family destination, packed with amenities and activities.

The 8-acre lake at the heart of the resort is perfect for paddling or sunset walks along the shore. Each evening, the park comes alive as people return from their adventures at the falls. Families gather around the giant checkerboard sets or challenge each other to tetherball or bocce ball. Kids hop in the pool, float around the lazy river and line up for races across the lake on zip lines. From crafts to



movie nights to nature shows, there's always something happening.

The caliber of the RV campsites echoes the quality of the amenities. Sites are nicely spaced. Some have landscaping that provides separation from the neighbors, while others offer lake views. Open through October 27 this year, Branches of Niagara is a destination that families will enjoy, even if they don't visit the falls. — *Kerri Cox*

www.branchesofniagara.com



Branches of Niagara lures families with catch-and-release fishing, kayak rentals and side-by-side zip lines (top).

MORE ONLINE

For more RV news you can use, visit our website, www.trailerlife.com

RV SMART VIDEO

Bob Dawson installs custom-made fender skirts (www.youtube.com/trailerlifediary).

TRAVEL LIGHT

Our writers walk through the Droplet teardrop ("Tiny Trailer") and E-Pro bunkhouse ("Family-Friendly RV").

TOW-RATING TWEAK?

Can suspension upgrades increase a truck's tow limits? Bruce W. Smith has the answer ("Diesel Tech Q&A"). [TV](#)

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★★★★★ Carl Verified Reviewer

After installing the Six-Gun, I hit the road to set the power levels. Holy crap, I couldn't believe how much more power the truck had going through the power levels and this tuner is CARB APPROVED! I'm stoked on this setup and wish we had put in this tuner years ago!

★★★★★ David A. Verified Reviewer

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WINNEBAGO
SPYDER 28KS

SPYDER 2.0

Winnebago's reboot of its toy-hauler line nets meaningful features and great looks

QUICK INFO

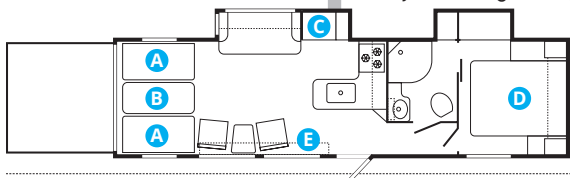
Exterior Length.....	35' 2"
Exterior Width.....	8' 6"
Interior Height.....	7' 10"
Exterior Height.....	12' 6"
Freshwater Cap.....	100 gal.
Black-Water Cap.....	50 gal.
Gray-Water Cap.....	50 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.....	10 gal.
UVW.....	8,800 lbs.
Hitch Weight.....	1,440 lbs.
GVWR.....	12,995 lbs.
MSRP, Base.....	\$55,825

As consumers, we've all grown accustomed to updates. From mobile phones and computers to cameras, televisions and even automobiles, almost any product we purchase today should come with the expectation that a better, faster, smarter version is in the works — and, in fact, may already be completed. More often than not, however, it seems like the newest versions of the items we place in our shopping cart are intended to elevate our status in some way more than to affect any meaningful improvement in our lives.

Not so with Winnebago Industries and the reboot of

its Spyder toy-hauler line. The company spent more than a few hours in consumer groups during the development stages, learning what its customers wanted, needed and expected in this fiercely competitive market segment. The result is a seven-trailer lineup (five travel trailers, two fifth-wheels) that seems to offer a nearly ideal blend of utility and comfort.

The 2020 28KS model we sampled is the largest in the Spyder travel trailer line, and like the other floorplans, is built on a new BAL Huck-bolted frame with a 12,995-pound gross vehicle weight rating. Other key improvements include 100 gallons of freshwater and a 40-gallon fuel station on all models, plus welcome features like a 4-kilowatt Cummins Onan generator (5.5-kilowatt optional), two LP-gas cylinders and a large front exterior storage compartment. It's also a great-looking rig, with gray Noble Classic



A) convertible sofas B) queen power bed above C) refrigerator D) king bed E) TV



Far left: The bedroom features a standard king bed with storage underneath. Walk-around room is limited, but there are nightstands on either side of the bed with 120-volt AC and USB outlets. A small street-side wardrobe has room for hanging clothes. Right: Rocker recliners on either side of a removable table in the living area provide a comfy spot to relax.

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Above: The U-shaped kitchen is well-equipped and puts everything within reach. The street-side slideout houses a couch that converts into a bed, and the removable table is perfect for snack time in front of the TV. Right and below right: The bathroom features a small lavatory and medicine cabinet, porcelain toilet, large corner shower with glass door and linen closet.

high-gloss fiberglass walls, plenty of tinted windows and an 18-foot awning with integrated LED lighting.

The interior offers more than enough space for motorcycles and ATVs, with its 14-foot-long garage area and 12 frame-mounted D-rings. Fold-and-tumble 60-inch HappiJac sofas are used just inside the cargo door, and are bisected by a split modular dining table. The table posts pull up easily, after which the sofas quickly convert into a 60-by-80-inch queen bed. If that's not enough, another queen bed stored against the ceiling can be quickly deployed for your crew.

Small rocker-recliners on either side of a removable pedestal table are located directly across from a streetside slideout and 70-inch sofa, which also converts into a bed and has table postholes in front of it for casual dining. It's the ideal spot to enjoy the 43-inch LED television located high on the curbside wall, but an extendable swivel mount allows comfortable viewing from elsewhere.

The kitchen comes as somewhat



The garage area is 14 feet long and has 12 D-rings bolted directly to the frame for securing your toys. The top queen bed, as well as the convertible sofas, store against the ceiling when not in use. An optional railing package turns the cargo door into a patio.



of a surprise with its U-shaped design. It's a bit snug, but it's nice to have everything — and we mean *everything* — within reach. Facing forward is a three-burner range and oven with a decorative backsplash and overhead microwave. To the left is an 8-cubic-foot refrigerator and small pantry in the sofa slideout, and to the right is a roomy solid-surface countertop with a large single-bowl stainless-steel sink.

On the opposite side of the counter, in the hallway, a small corner cabinet hides the house controls and offers a few small shelves. For the most part it all seems well conceived, but we noted a lack of interior storage space overall. There are only a few small cabinets in the living area and kitchen, and the pantry is tall but narrow. Also, the kitchen will be a tight squeeze when the slideout is stowed.

The 28KS mimics its Spyder fifth-wheel brethren with its bathroom and bedroom layout. As is customary in many similar floorplans, this one has two entries, with a bathroom door in the hallway and a sliding pocket door off the bedroom. A small lavatory with a solid-surface countertop, stainless-steel bowl and medicine cabinet are to the left, and a porcelain toilet is to the right, but the big surprise is the large radius-corner shower with a real glass door.

A linen closet and wardrobe share the curbside slideout in the bedroom. Speaking of which, all Spyder models feature a king-size bed with some under-platform storage, overhead cabinets and space for hanging clothes on either side. There's not a lot of walk-around room, and that big bed might be a challenge to make in the morning, but it should be a comfy place to crash.

The Winnebago Spyder may be a relative newcomer, but if you're shopping for a toy hauler, it could be the one you've been waiting for. **TV**

➔ Winnebago Industries

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Ⓢ The grille on the 2019 Ram HD is 30 percent larger than the previous generation, and lighting has been improved throughout the lineup.



rred

Ram Trucks deftly blends capability with luxury and technology to create its best heavy-duty lineup yet

— by Chris Hemer

In case you haven't noticed, we're living in extreme times.

There is no longer room for "almost" or "good enough," and your opinion pings the news or social-media feeds only if it completely polarizes your audience. Put up or shut up. Go big or go home. Second place is the first loser.

In the heavy-duty pickup truck ranks, however, statements are made not with words but with numbers. If you've got the biggest, then in the eyes of most buyers, you've got the best. And right now, the Big Three are engaged in what amounts to an engineering death match for HD supremacy, the likes of which we've never seen before. Rarely do all three manufacturers come to the table with their most potent weapons at the same time, but are instead content to play a monster game of Battleship as each participant launches its own salvo then waits for a response from the enemy(ies). But 2019 is a year that shall live in HD infamy.

Hot on the heels of GM's all-new HD entry, but just months before Ford's upgraded 2020 Super Duty lineup (at press time), comes the 2019 Ram HD — and it's completely bonkers. Along with a beefier chassis, sumptuous interior choices and class-leading technologies, it offers up to 1,000 LB-FT of torque, a tow rating of up to 35,100 pounds and a maximum payload of 7,680 pounds.

With apologies to Steven King's *The Dead Zone*, "The missiles are flying. Hallelujah. Hallelujah."

Pulling Power

The heart of any heavy-duty truck, and certainly a key component of its bragging rights, is the engine. Chrysler Corporation's decision to partner up with Cummins for the 1989 model year was a master stroke, and when it introduced its game-changing mini-Mack looks in 1994, it ushered in big-rig design cues to match the truck's diesel sound and reliability. Having sold millions of 5.9- and 6.7-liter powerplants, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) once again

turned to Cummins to create a next-generation 6.7-liter engine that was not only more powerful but also quieter, more efficient, lighter and smoother.

"It's basically the same architecture as the outgoing engine, but there were upgrades made," explained Ram Heavy Duty Chief Engineer Rod Romain. "First, we went to a compacted graphite-iron block, which offers three key benefits. One, it's 75 percent stronger by mass; two, it provides Noise, Vibration and Harshness (NVH) improvements;

and three, weight reduction. We also looked to Cummins to make all non-structural parts previously made from cast iron to be made from aluminum — water inlets and outlets, water-pump housing, some of the brackets and a few other items. All simple parts, but they combine for a 60-pound weight reduction.”

In addition, Romain noted that the cylinder head has been redesigned for increased strength and improved cooling, the common-rail fuel system now squirts at 29,000 PSI, and the turbocharger has been upgraded for additional flow, primarily on the compressor side. The improvements result in an even 400 horsepower and 1,000 LB-FT of torque for the high-output (HO) engine, while the standard Cummins 6.7-liter clocks in with 370 horsepower and 850 lb-ft. To quiet things down a bit, new hydraulic lash adjusters replace the mechanical units to eliminate that familiar *tick-tick-ticking* sound, while a scissor gear was added to the front gear-drive assembly to reduce noise.

With the increased engine output, the transmission had to be upgraded as well. Both the Aisin six-speed that backs the HO engine and the 68RFE that goes behind the standard Cummins benefit from hardware and software improvements for better shift quality. The base 6.4-liter Hemi gasoline V-8 engine is largely unchanged but benefits from a new eight-speed TorqueFlite 8HP75 automatic transmission. “The cool part about this transmission is that it offers 40 unique shift maps to adapt to whatever scenario you’re putting the vehicle through in order to provide the best performance, efficiency and capability,” Romain said.



Driving the new Cummins-equipped trucks on the highways outside of Las Vegas, the first thing we noticed was how effortlessly they got moving, even when pulling more than 10,000 pounds. Whether using a light or heavy throttle application, you are met with very little turbo lag — just a smooth surge of power. The engine is indeed quieter but thankfully retains that characteristic Cummins sound and satisfying growl under full throttle.



Ⓢ The Laramie Longhorn interior is swathed in more leather than any other truck, according to Ram, and is accented by real wood. The Longhorn logo on the dash is actually branded into place for authenticity.

New Chassis

Strength, of course, is a truck chassis’ reason for being, but as customers expect even the toughest trucks to provide a civilized ride and quiet comfort, tough wouldn’t be enough for 2019. Along with fully boxed frame rails and a redesigned front frame member, new cab mounts, reengineered bushings and even redesigned exhaust hangers were employed to reduce NVH. The front coil springs are now canted outward for improved roll stiffness, and on the 2500 series trucks, a new progressive-rate spring is used.

“The significance there is that we were able to reduce the unloaded spring rate by 20 percent but increase the loaded spring rate by 40 percent,” Romain explained, “so you get the stability when hauling but the comfort when you’re not.” Teamed with frequency response damping (FRD) shocks, the 2019 Ram



Cab selection has been “streamlined,” in Ram’s words, to include only the Regular Cab, Crew Cab and Mega Cab. Pictured here are the 2500 Longhorn Mega Cab (left), Power Wagon (center) and Limited Crew Cab dually.

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HD suspension provides a massive improvement over the previous-generation truck.

"The other aspect to ride quality is isolating and controlling road noise to make the overall driving experience more comfortable," Romain continued. "We did that in a couple of ways. Active-tuned mass modules, which is technology we brought in from the 2019 Ram 1500, employs a module on each side of the frame that is calibrated to seek out vibration and eliminate it. These combine with active noise cancellation to take out the audible noise, so now you don't feel it or hear it."

Those who have driven any previous-generation Ram HD truck will notice the difference immediately. Between the NVH strategies, new progressive-rate springs and FRD shocks, Romain claims the engineering team reduced overall ride harshness by 50 percent while improving ride comfort by 50 percent, compared to the outgoing truck.

Braking is something you can never get enough of, especially when you're hauling more than 7,000 pounds or pulling more than 35,000. So, the Ram engineering team also completely revised the braking system,

adding a new master-cylinder booster, calipers, larger rotors and even revised pedal ratios.

"The pedal-ratio changes that we've made reduce the amount of effort on the driver so there's more confidence with more comfort," Romain explained. "We've also reduced the stopping distance with 360-millimeter rotors and twin-piston calipers up front, and 358-millimeter with twin piston calipers in the rear." On the max towing application, 365-millimeter rear rotors are employed to better cope with heavy loads.

Efficiencies

Heavy-duty pickups have never been known for their fuel-sipping ways, and in fact aren't even under any real pressure to improve, since the EPA doesn't require "commercial" trucks to display fuel-economy numbers like their half-ton cousins do. Even so, Ram engineers took it upon themselves to improve efficiencies wherever possible to save fleet managers and individuals alike a few extra dollars at the pumps. All areas that once used mild steel have been upgraded to high-strength steel, the hoods are now aluminum, and the steel bumpers incorporate composite materials for an overall savings of up to 143 pounds, according to Romain.

Another opportunity to improve efficiency was with aerodynamics. Ram claims that the new HD offers best-in-class aero-efficiency with a .409 coefficient of drag (CD), an 8 percent improvement over the outgoing truck. "We accomplished this with active grille shutters, a new air dam and additional front-end sealing," Romain explained. "The importance of the front-end sealing is for

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two reasons: one is aero-efficiency, but the other is managing the airflow. When you are towing and you need that extra cooling, the grille shutters are open to help direct the air through the radiator where you want it.”

Trailer-Friendly

Time was short, the weather was bad, and the selection of trucks on hand was somewhat limited, so we didn't have a chance to test all of the new trailer-friendly features of the new Ram HD, but we can tell you that there are many. The side-view mirrors are vastly improved, each containing a camera and a “spotter's lamp” that shines down the side of the truck and trailer to make backing into tight spaces easier. The camera view on the center-console display can also be biased so you can see only down the blind side if you choose, and the convex portion of the mirror

⚠ The all-new Cummins 6.7-liter uses the same architecture as its predecessor, but a complete rethink of the engine netted 400 horsepower at 2,800 RPM and 1,000 LB-FT of torque at 1,800 RPM in the high-output version, and 370 horsepower at 2,800 RPM and 850 LB-FT of torque at 1,700 RPM in the standard version. Increased efficiency and quieter operation were also key objectives. The base 6.4-liter Hemi gas engine produces 410 horsepower at 5,600 RPM and 429 LB-FT of torque at 4,000 RPM. It is backed by a new TorqueFlite 8HP75 eight-speed automatic transmission with 40 unique shift maps for a variety of driving conditions, whether towing or solo.



is now power-adjustable from the driver's seat.

The back of the cab now features a so-called CHMSL camera (mounted in the Center High Mounted Stop Light) to make it easier to align a fifth-wheel or gooseneck hitch, while the tailgate-mounted camera

includes a zoom feature to make hitching a travel trailer even easier. There's also an optional 360-degree camera system, and an available auxiliary camera system that can be mounted on the back of the trailer, or even inside of it.

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ST205 / 75R15 - 6PR

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ST225 / 75R15 - 10PR

ST235 / 80R16 - 10PR*

*3 ply sidewall construction

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The Power Wagon cloth interior features seats embossed with the Goodyear DuraTrac tread. Exposed stitching is a nice touch.

a factory trailer tire-pressure monitoring system, which enables the user to monitor the pressure in up to 12 tires, on up to four different trailers.

Once the system is configured, it will automatically display the pressure values you established for that trailer through remote tire-pressure sensors installed in the trailer tires. And, when tire pressure falls below 10 percent of your preset pressure, the system will provide an audible and visual warning. The sensors are internally mounted and are available through Mopar parts.

All-New Interiors

When the now-famous “big rig” design was introduced in the 1994 model year, one of its hallmarks was groundbreaking interior design that focused on comfort, convenience and storage space for everything from laptops to Big Gulps. For the 2019 Ram Heavy Duty, once again the interior-design team put significant effort into creating a space that was not only highly functional but a very comfortable place to spend hours at a time.

“Storage, function, technology — those were our key points for our truck,” said Ryan Nagode, chief interior designer for Ram Trucks. “We wanted a very structural feel to the interior, with soft materials in all the right areas. The lower areas are still hard, which allows the truck to work...you can clean those areas easily, and a lot of trucks are still available with vinyl floors. We’ve also improved the seating — it’s more comfortable, more adjustable, with power lumbar and four-way adjustable headrests.”

Interestingly, one of the goals was to make sure that each of the six different Ram truck trim levels had a distinct personality. “The truck market is so diverse, and it’s one of our most complicated vehicles within the lineup, so we had to make sure there was differentiation,” Nagode said. “We offer the most leather, the most wood, and we make sure the wood choices are appropriate. A lot of details like embroidery on the

center console and on the seats, right down to the metal finishes throughout the interior are very unique.



Ⓢ ParkSense sensors are now mounted in plastic instead of in the steel bumper, which reduces the likelihood of freezing.

It’s almost like a bespoke type of feeling for the interiors. They really feel like they have been designed for each buyer.”

Additional comfort key points include a completely revised HVAC system for better heating and cooling, and even an available inline heater in diesel models to get the cab warm before the engine is up to temperature.

As we spend more and more time in our vehicles, technology that keeps us entertained and informed has become as important as comfy seats. So this year, the 2019 Ram features the fourth-generation U-Connect system with an available 12-inch reconfigurable touchscreen. “It’s like having a tablet with pinch to zoom and multitouch gestures, and you can go between 2D and 3D with your fingers,” Nagode said.

“Another little-known feature, something that really hits home with the truck customer, is the ability to reconfigure that lower bank. Touching the center area gives you a big menu, and you can drag and drop any of those features to put what you want at your fingertips,” he added. The system also offers SiriusXM with 360L, a new service that includes exclusive content, more than 200 channels and access to thousands of hours of recorded on-demand programming.

Having spent time behind the wheel of the new Ram in a variety of configurations, both gas and diesel, it’s hard to imagine how this truck could be better, more capable or more RV-friendly. Ram has indeed dropped a bomb on its competitors, but unlike true warfare, the response will undoubtedly benefit all of us. **TL**

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LURE OF NEW ENGLAND

For those hooked on fishing, the Northeast is full of treasures for RVing and angling where you can reel in from a shoreline, in the water or an inflatable kayak

— by *Lisa Ballard*

Folks began fishing in New England after the last Ice Age receded, 12,000 years ago. When the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620, they ate fish to survive but also thought locally abundant cod might prove economically worthwhile. Fishing quickly became an important part of all the coastal European settlements that followed. Then, as explorers penetrated deeper and deeper into New England, usually along its waterways, they fished (and hunted) for sustenance, as did the pioneer families that followed them.

Today, fishing is not only part of New England's heritage and economy, but also fun to do on an RV trip, particularly with a trailer, which you can unhook at a campground and then travel by personal vehicle to any nearby public fishing access. The fish you catch are many of the same species that the early settlers hooked.

GONE FISHIN'

The author's husband, Jack, casts for rainbow trout near a classic New England covered bridge, in the Mascoma River near Lebanon, New Hampshire.

GLAND

My husband, Jack, and I are avid anglers. We typically look for trout, and often wade for them in a river. We also love to reel in bass and pike, which we usually target from a canoe or inflatable kayak. It depends on where we camp and what's close. There's always someplace to fish nearby! That's one of the things that makes camping in New England special. Here are some favorite places to cast a line, state by state.

MAINE

Maine has been a sport-fishing mecca since Cornelia "Fly Rod" Crosby wrote nationally syndicated articles enticing anglers to the region in the latter half of the 1800s. Crosby, the first registered Maine guide, convinced thousands of fishing enthusiasts to head to the Pine Tree State, and for good reason — *lots of fish!* Angling opportunities in Maine abounded during Crosby's lifetime. They still do, both along

its 228-mile coastline (and actually more, if you count all the nooks and crannies) and on its thousands of miles of inland lakes, rivers and streams.

I caught my first striped bass while casting from a rocky outcropping on the coast near Portland, but over the years I've found the inland fish even more appealing. Brook trout, rainbow trout, brown trout, lake trout, landlocked salmon, large and smallmouth bass, pike, musky...many popular gamefish can be found in Maine.

For warmwater freshwater species, the northern half of the state has a reputation for largemouth bass. The southern half is smallmouth-bass territory. A 4-mile stretch of the Kennebec River, from the mouth of the river inland, is known as East Outlet, but it should be renamed Salmon Central. You'll also find salmon in Sebago Lake, as well as bass, crappie, trout, whitefish and pike. The lake is more than 300 feet deep, the deepest in the state, with more than a hundred miles of shoreline. The 1,400-acre Sebago Lake State Park, one of the five original state parks in Maine, has two public boat launches and 250 campsites.

If you have kids, consider throwing out your line in northwestern Maine, at Rangeley Lakes. This remote lake contains landlocked salmon, Atlantic salmon, brook trout, bullhead, perch and whitefish. It drains into the Androscoggin River, another great place to fish. Haley Pond Outlet, by the village of Rangeley, is restricted to anglers

Right: The author fishing on the Upper Ammonoosuc River near the base of Mount Washington in New Hampshire. Below: Largemouth bass (left) and smallmouth bass (right) are common gamefish in New England's warmwater ecosystems.



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under age 16. Kids can hone their skills without competition from other anglers and do it in a quiet, sheltered place.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Granite State is another fishing nirvana. One of the hot spots is Umbagog Lake on the Maine border. Though it's technically a warmwater ecosystem, Umbagog Lake attracts migrating brook trout each winter, then again in the spring. The lake is relatively shallow, 48 feet at its deepest point, and accessible from Umbagog Lake National Wildlife Refuge. In addition to brook trout, it harbors landlocked salmon, which go for streamers near the surface during the

spring. By summer, anglers troll deeper as the water gets warmer.

Smallmouth bass lurk around underwater ledges and submerged stumps in Umbagog Lake, and love live bait and spinners. Yellow perch go for almost any tackle. You can also catch strong-fighting chain pickerel in the shallows, which can weight up to 5 pounds. Bullhead, colorful pumpkin seeds (a kid-friendly sunfish) and scaly fallfish also fin this fish-friendly lake.

If you're near Mount Washington, the upper Ammonoosuc River is a favorite trout stream. Scenic, too. There are several places to wade where the river departs from



Right, from top: Flounder, with their eyes on one side of their head, are a common catch along the southern New England coast. Northern pike, nicknamed "the toothy terror," are fun to catch in grassy freshwater estuaries when they spawn in the spring.

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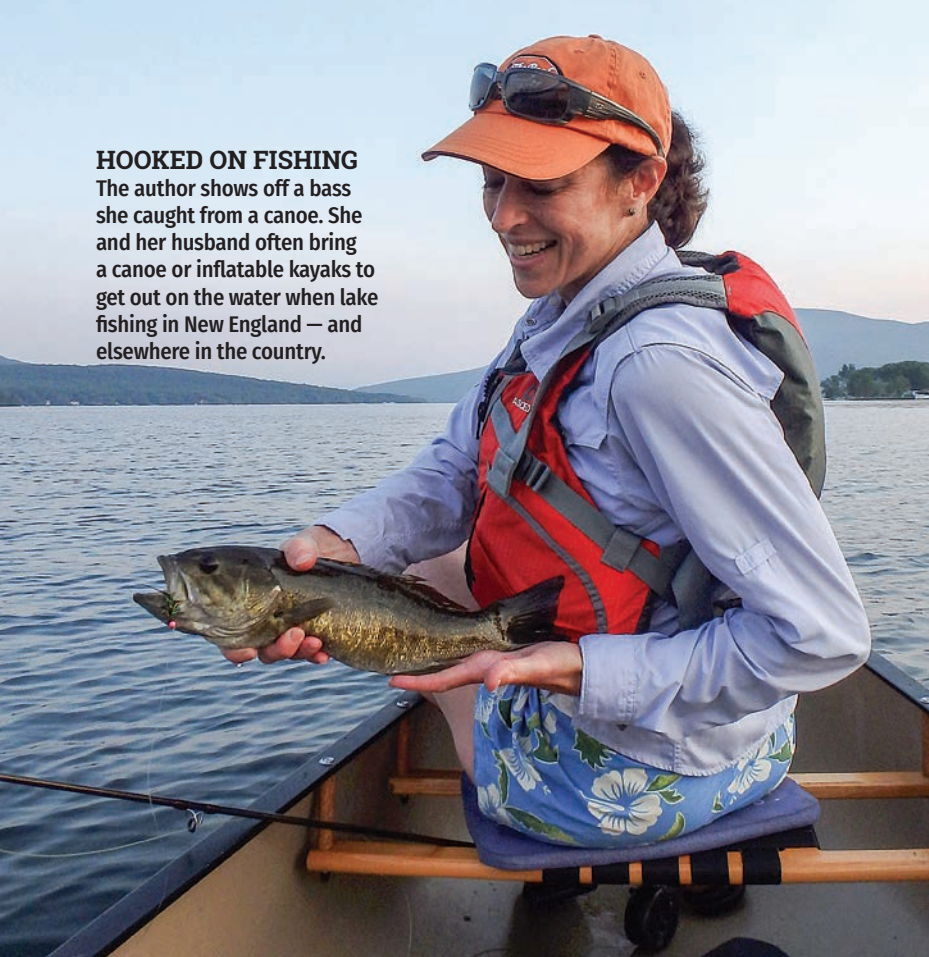


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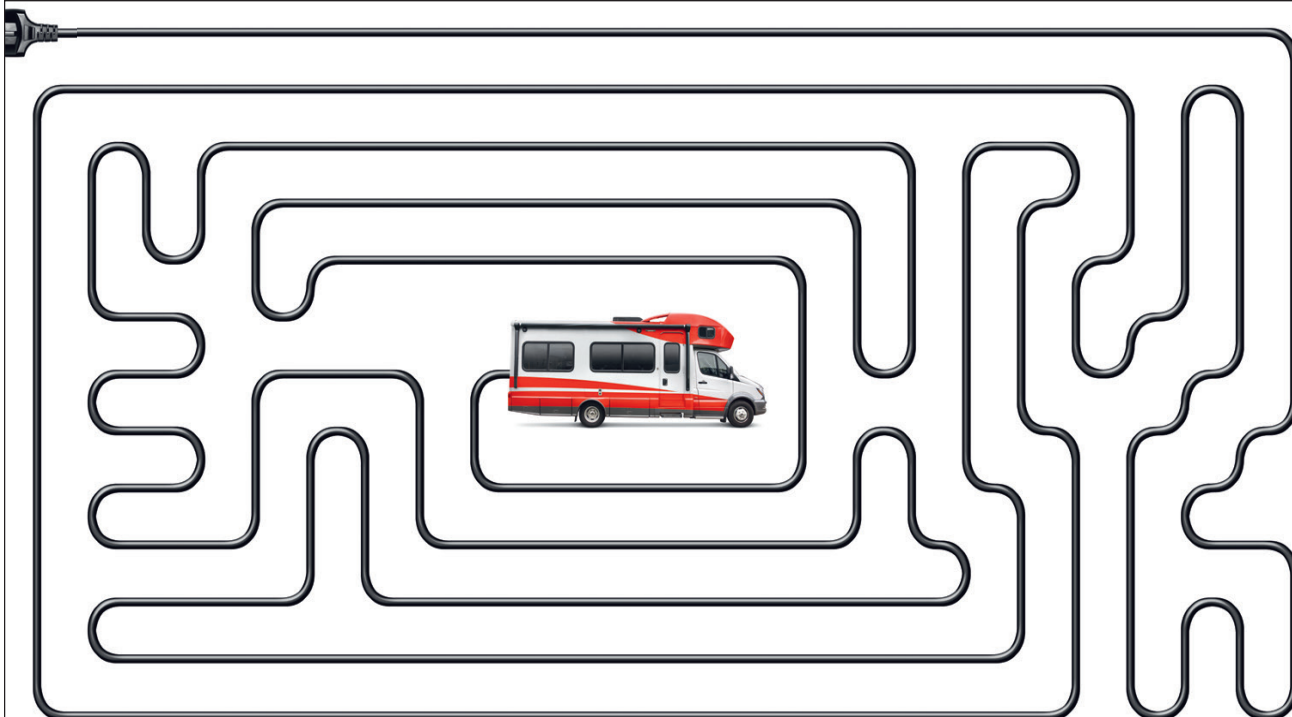
HOOKED ON FISHING

The author shows off a bass she caught from a canoe. She and her husband often bring a canoe or inflatable kayaks to get out on the water when lake fishing in New England — and elsewhere in the country.



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Fishing seasons vary by state, but prime time is usually from mid-May (just after ice out) through September.
- Each state in New England requires a fishing license for that state, which can be purchased online. States that share bodies of water on their borders usually have interstate fishing licenses. Licenses are also different for inland and ocean fishing.
- Wear a personal flotation device (PFD) if you are in a boat. It can save your life.
- Watch the tides if you are on the coast. The fishing is often best as the tide is coming in or going out. If you don't pay attention, you might get stranded far from shore.
- Get a guide. If you're new to an area, hiring a fishing guide for a day is an efficient way to learn where the fish are and what they are taking for flies, lures or bait.
- Bring bug spray. Black flies can be brutal during the spring and early summer.
- Poison ivy commonly grows in riparian areas and by put-ins. Remember: "Leaves of three, let it be."



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A father and son canoe and fish on the Connecticut River near Guildhall, Vermont.

WISHIN' I WAS FISHIN'

Keep track of the state's catch limits and licensing rules, particularly when fishing in more than one state. Research what bait and lures work best, but be prepared for surprises!

the forested flanks of New England's highest peak. The water has a clear-green tint, which, combined with the lush woodlands on each riverbank, feels like an Elven Enchantment, but the feisty rainbow trout are real and fun to catch.

VERMONT

Fishing in Vermont is almost as legendary as Maine. The Orvis Company was founded in Manchester along the famous Battenkill River, which has attracted fly-fishers since Henry David Thoreau cast a line there. Personally, I find the Battenkill and most other trout streams in southern Vermont to be challenging. The fish are "educated," meaning they get a lot of pressure. That said, hiking the relatively flat 3.8 miles into Stratton Pond with a rod is one of my favorite things to do, both for the exercise and for the fishing.

Another favorite place to fish



Jack Ballard casts for trout on the Ammonoosuc River, with New Hampshire's Presidential Range as a scenic backdrop.

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is the Black River. There's a 2-mile stretch of designated trophy water near Cavendish that the state stocks annually in May with two-year-old rainbow trout.

The Tweed River, near White River Junction, is another productive trout stream. And then there are Vermont's two mightiest waterways, the Connecticut River on the New Hampshire border and Lake Champlain on the New York

border. I pulled the biggest pike of my life out of the Connecticut River between Thetford and Norwich — a 40-incher! Unless you have a motorboat, the fishing is more accessible in both of these oversize ecosystems in backwaters and tributaries.

MASSACHUSETTS

You can follow the Connecticut River by RV, camping and fishing here and there

STAY, PLAY AND FISH

RV parks and public campgrounds can be found near many of New England's favorite fishing destinations. To reel them in, use the Find a Campground search tool on the Good Sam Club website. www.goodsam.com/campgrounds-rv-parks

through Massachusetts and Connecticut, to its mouth on Long Island Sound.

For saltwater fishing, Cape Cod is the place for full fishing immersion. The quaint fishing villages along this arching peninsula transport you back to another era. You can reel in striped bass, sea bass, flounder and bluefin tuna from its salty bays during the day, then feast on lobster at night. (A lobster dinner is a must in Maine, too.)

I love to visit Cape Cod National Seashore and have fished from boats, piers and the shore. With sandy beaches, marshes and ponds, historic lighthouses, wild cranberry bogs, biking and hiking trails, it's a place where you can park for a week and not get bored.

Inland, Savoy Mountain State Forest is another good place to go fishing. There's handicap-accessible camping, and pets are allowed. You can cast for trout from a canoe or from the shore of its two ponds.

CONNECTICUT AND RHODE ISLAND

In addition to the Connecticut River, Connecticut boasts 180 public lakes and ponds, and miles of rivers loaded with fish. The Farmington and Housatonic rivers are both well-known for trout.

In Rhode Island, the manicured 464-acre Colt State Park, by the seaside town of Bristol, has a boat ramp and dock for fishing on Narragansett Bay, but you can cast from anywhere along the west side of the park for flounder or bass while ogling the ocean view.

There are so many options when it comes to fishing in New England. These are just a handful of the hotspots. The possibilities are infinite for saltwater and freshwater fishing, as well as warmwater and cold-water species, which is one of the reasons we return over and over again. **TV**



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Eye of the Storm

Heartland's Cyclone 4007 fifth-wheel toy hauler offers convenience, style and luxury for adventurous families

— by Donya Carlson

Years ago, a group of us would head to Hungry Valley in Southern California with dirt bikes piled in the back of pickups, and mounds of riding gear, camp stoves, ice chests, sleeping bags, tents and food stuffed into

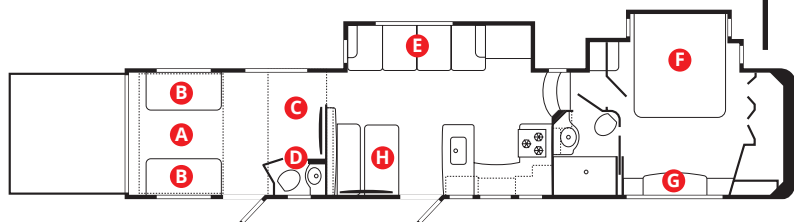
every crevice inside the vehicles. Loaves of bread were stuck inside helmets in the hopes that they wouldn't get smooshed on the journey. When we reached our campsite and opened the truck doors, bags of potato chips — which were now dust — and cans of soda and clothing would tumble out. This was longer ago than I care to admit, but now we have better options. The steady evolution of toy haulers greatly simplifies taking motorized toys on vacations. Loading and unloading is easy, there are handy places to stow gear and food, and at the end of an invigorating (and sometimes exhausting) day of riding, there's a comfortable place to lay your head.

Heartland's 43-foot Cyclone 4007 fifth-wheel toy hauler lets you go in style with residential amenities to keep a family of seven or more in the lap of luxury while securing motorized toys in a 13-foot-long garage wide enough to park a side-by-side. And if the only toys you want to bring — along with your kids — are teddy bears, Hatchimals, toy trucks and tractors, and game consoles, the garage works as a spacious bunkhouse. During our time with the three-slide Cyclone, we encountered a couple of thunderstorms that were too nasty to go out in, but all was calm and cozy inside.

The triple-axle “four-double-O-seven” rolls along on G-rated



Dynamic duo: Heartland's Cyclone 4007 and the Chevy Silverado 3500HD High Country 4x4 make a supersized pair that exudes high-end living.



wide garage-door opening, and carefully steered clear of the toilet.

An optional MORryde Rail Kit that includes an electric ramp-door awning converts the 8-foot ramp into a patio, and the ramp opening has locking sliding-glass doors (another option), though they won't stop a thief. Six steel D-ring tie-downs are set into the marine-grade plywood floor, with black "diamond plate" TPO covering, and attached to the 12-inch steel I-beam. A steel storage box is incorporated into the floor by the ramp.

When it's bedtime, the garage's bench seats convert into

- A) queen power bed**
- B) split-bench seat/bed**
- C) loft bed**
- D) half bath**
- E) reclining sofa**
- F) king bed**
- G) dresser/fireplace**
- H) bar-height table/bench seat**

a queen-size bed, and a second queen bed with a 4-inch-thick foam mattress lowers electrically from the ceiling. A 3-foot-wide loft bed spans the 8-foot width of the Cyclone's garage, with a railing to stop kids from rolling out. The glass door separating the living area from the garage allows parents to peek in occasionally to see what mischief the kids may be up to.

The garage bathroom's unique folding wall, with spring-loaded hinges at the ceiling, can be moved to accommodate a larger "toy."

tires, and has a Nev-R-Adjust Brake System built onto the chassis with a 20,000-pound gross vehicle weight rating. When you reach your destination, six Lippert auto-leveling jacks and an electric power reel for the 50-amp cord make setup more convenient. The Cyclone is also designed for cold weather with its three-season walls, heated and enclosed underbelly, and laminated and sealed slideout floors.

TOY BOX

One could make a case that the heart of a toy hauler is the garage, and, as in most models, this one doubles as a second living space with an entry door (in addition to the ramp), four-seater split-bench sofa, freestanding table, built-in cabinets, an entertainment system with a 40-inch HDTV and a Boss Audio Systems Bluetooth/DVD/MP3/CD/AM/FM receiver, plus a half bath. The bathroom's unique folding wall, with spring-loaded hinges at the ceiling, can be moved to accommodate a larger "toy." We drove a 2018 Polaris Turbo S RZR through the 7-foot, 10-inch-



Above, from left: The master bathroom has a 9-inch-deep tub, solid-surface counter and porcelain toilet. Outfitted with residential-style appliances, the U-shaped kitchen has bright LEDs for tasks like chopping, plus softer mood lighting.

HOST A PARTY OR PARK A SIDE-BY-SIDE IN THE GARAGE



FOUR-DOUBLE-O-SEVEN

Above: Split-bench seats raise electrically to join the queen bed above (not shown), making a wide-open garage with available sliding-glass doors. An optional MORryde Rail Kit with awning converts the 8-foot ramp into a patio. Above right: A loft bed resides above the garage's half bath and has a folding wall to create more space for a side-by-side. Right: A bar-height table with bench seat sits just inside the entry door, with a 55-inch HDTV overhead and a stereo soundbar with Bluetooth connectivity behind.



RELAXATION AND COOKING IN STYLE

Stepping into the main living area, we had a change of heart about where the heart of the Cyclone resides. An overstuffed residential four-seat reclining sofa, Ashland dark hardwood cabinets, white marble-look solid-surface kitchen counters, high-end appliances, a bar-height table, luxurious trimmings, a Connexx soundbar stereo with Bluetooth connectivity, and LED light strips give the 4007 a rich feel that invites occupants to kick back, put up their feet and unwind. There are no light switches by the entry door, so when going out in the evening, we left the cool vertical LED light strips that frame the slideout on to find our way around when returning. Outside, an LED porch light illuminates the MORryde foldout quad entry steps.

The galley slide houses the sofa and refrigerator. When the slide is retracted, access to the kitchen is blocked, unless you want to try some yoga moves to climb over the counter or the sofa. In that case, you can maneuver around in the U-shaped kitchen to get to everything, but access to the steps leading up to the master bathroom and bedroom is blocked.

Lounging on the sofa, which is upholstered in water-repellant gray fabric, placed us at the center of the action. From here we could enjoy the goings-on outside through the kitchen's three windows, have front-row seating for the

55-inch HDTV (tied to a King Jack antenna and cable-TV hookup) and get a straight-on view of the entry door so we could greet friends without having to get up. A large window, which slides open on the lower half, is at your back when seated on the sofa and was wonderful for warming us up with the sunlight pouring in. Pull down the MCD Day-Night Roller Shades, and the light-filled living area darkens considerably — and with the shade covering the entry-door window and another on the ceiling vent, it's almost as dark as night inside. The Cyclone has a variety pack of shades: mini-blinds in the garage, MCD shades in the living area and pleated ones in the bedroom.

The sofa's two center seat backs flip down to reveal a tabletop with cupholders and USB charging stations, plus the end seats have a lighted cupholder and swingout tables that contain yet another cupholder. Once seated on the comfy sofa, it was hard to leave. One afternoon, Tech Editor Chris Dougherty and I were reclined on the plush sofa, feet kicked up and surrounded by paperwork for the Cyclone, when photographer Shawn Spence stepped inside and laughed at us for "looking quite comfy for being hard at work." Half an hour later, we were laughing at him; having carted in a ladder and a camera bag



+ WHAT WE LIKED

Comfy four-seat sofa, modern decor, numerous windows, spacious master bedroom with a huge picture window.

- WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE

More counter space and a towel rack in the bathroom, shorter shower curtain, light switches by the entry door.



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SPECIFICATIONS

2019 HEARTLAND CYCLONE 4007

Exterior Length	43'
Garage Length	13'
Exterior Width	8' 5"
Exterior Height	13' 2" (with A/C)
Interior Width	8' ½"
Interior Height	8' 4¼" living, 6' 4" bedroom
Construction	12-inch I-beam powder-coated steel frame, aluminum framing, high-density block-foam R-11 side-wall insulation, fiberglass skin, EPDM roof, R-45 laminated and sealed floor, heated and enclosed underbelly
Freshwater Cap.	100 gal.
Gray-Water Cap.	98 gal.
Black-Water Cap.	80 gal.
LP-Gas Cap	14 gal.
Water-Heater Cap.	12 gal.
Refrigerator	18 cu. ft.
Furnace	35,000 Btu
Air Conditioners (3)	15,000 Btu
Converter	80 amp
Inverter 1,000-watt (with residential refrigerator)	
Battery	Dealer supplied
Tires	ST235/80R16 G
Weight (freshwater and LP-gas full, no cargo)	17,140 lbs.
Hitch Weight	5,500 lbs.
Axle Weight	11,640 lbs.
GVWR	20,000 lbs.
GAWR (3)	7,000 lbs.
Cargo Carrying Cap.	2,860 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$107,576
MSRP, As Tested	\$116,986
Basic Warranty	One-year bumper to bumper, three-year structural

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and getting lights set up, he was kicking back with us on the sofa watching *Star Trek* reruns. Work could wait.

Lighting throughout the four-double-O-seven is excellent, and the mood can be set with dimmers. The efficient kitchen has under-counter LEDs, and more lighting frames the top of the many cabinets. The counter housing the 25-by-14-inch stainless-steel farmhouse-style sink and hidden waste bin is set a couple of inches higher than the other surfaces, which placed the sink at a perfect height to hand-wash dishes (I'm 5 feet, 9 inches). Making that chore even easier was the pull-down faucet with a sprayer on a spring mechanism. The waste bin can be accessed from the cabinet near the entry door so you can get to it without stepping inside the RV.

Opposite the sink is a Furrion 9,000-Btu stainless-steel oven and a three-burner Furrion range topped with black cast-iron grates, with an oblong flex burner for a griddle option located in the center. While there's room for two people in the U-shaped kitchen, floor space between the sink and range is 3 feet, so if someone leans over to check inside the oven just as the person opposite reaches down to get something from the cabinet under the sink, for instance, well...bottoms are going to meet.

White subway tile makes cleanup

on the wall between the range and 1.5-cubic-foot High Pointe convection microwave a snap. Complementing each other, the white tile and counter-tops brighten the kitchen and contrast beautifully with the dark cabinetry. The solid-surface countertops are built in-house at Heartland using LG Hi-Macs material. There was lots of room to prepare multiple dishes on the 5-foot long, 2-foot-deep main counter, and we enjoyed a nice view out of the side-by-side windows, all of which open.

Storage is plentiful, with deep drawers, a 13-inch-wide three-shelf pantry and overhead cabinets. As usual in RVs with high ceilings — this one is more than 8 feet — access to the top shelves in the cabinets can be out of reach for some folks, even though these cabinets are mounted 8½ inches from the ceiling. Items in baskets can also be tucked out of the way on top of the cabinets but should be removed before travel.

The 18-cubic-foot Frigidaire stainless-steel four-door residential refrigerator (a no-charge option is an 18-cubic-foot LP-gas/electric unit) is placed across from the galley, providing lots of room to swing the doors wide without getting in the way of another person working in the kitchen.

Keeping the Tavern Plank vinyl floor clean is simplified with the InterVac central vacuum with a connection located in the kitchen. A smart move

Side-by-side fun: The Cyclone 4007 toy hauler accommodated this Polaris RZR. With the garage free of motorized toys, it turns into a living area and can sleep five or more.





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TEST / HEARTLAND CYCLONE 4007

was placing a floor-mounted heat register to the right of the sink in the living area rather than in the central “U” part of the kitchen where we did most of our chopping and prepping, so bite-size morsels stayed out of the register. The panel for the 4007’s command center is conveniently located near the kitchen at the base of the steps heading up to the bathroom and bedroom.

The dinette table is bar height and can seat two or three, or maybe even four little ones, side by side, on its bench seat. This was a great place to set up shop with my laptop on the

large table, with GFCI outlets and USB charging ports behind me, and a lovely view of the grass-covered campsite outside the entry door and windows. If you want more seating at the table, you could bring along barstools (not included), though they’d be blocking part of the entry; backless barstools could slide under the table when not in use.

BED AND BATH

At the top of the stairs, the bedroom feels like a retreat featuring calming tones, a king-size bed, a large window set over a six-drawer dresser with an

Living in the High Country

I’ll take a Chevy 3500HD – supersize, please

– by Chris Dougherty

It’s a requirement. If you’re going to haul a supersize fifth-wheel or truck camper, you’re going to need a heavy-duty truck. And, if you’re spending a lot of time on the road, you’ll want to be comfortable. The 2019 Chevrolet Silverado 3500HD High Country dually is a well-mannered, refined machine that delivers on both counts.

GM has injected some Cadillac-like features into its trucks for years, and if that kind of style is what you’re longing for, and you have the pocketbook, then this truck will grab your attention. The High Country package packs just about as much plush and tech into a truck as possible. Supple-leather front 12-way power seats with heated surfaces and air conditioning are embroidered with the High Country logo on the back, while the rear seating is similarly comfortable and roomy. Back-seat passengers will be kept to their own devices with the optional rear entertainment system integrated

into the front seat backs (\$1,620).

In the cockpit, the Chevrolet MyLink Infotainment System, with an 8-inch touchscreen, provides access to all the integrated features, including Apple CarPlay and onboard navigation. The tunes, provided by every source imaginable, including SiriusXM, are belted out via the Bose seven-speaker sound system with subwoofer. Most of this can be controlled using the buttons in the heated leather steering wheel.

The jet-black interior complements the Cajun Red Tintcoat (\$495) single-tone exterior with chrome accents and 17-inch polished aluminum wheels. A spray-in bedliner is standard, and a fifth-wheel prep package (\$370) makes installing a puck-mount hitch a breeze.

The Duramax Plus Package (\$9,645) includes the 6.6-liter Duramax eight-cylinder turbo diesel, six-speed Allison transmission, 3.73:1 axle ratio, exhaust brake, chrome



electric fireplace center, expansive tiered solid-surface countertops, mirrored closet doors and generous floor space. The fireplace has various heat settings that can be controlled with a remote and timer, and additional drawers bookend the main dresser. After leaving the comfort of the living-room sofa, the bed was on trial to see how it would compare, and the 7½-inch-thick Evergreen mattress did not disappoint. There's storage under the bed, accessed by a platform fitted with gas struts.

The expansive 6-foot-long, 2½-

foot-wide window that slides open is the largest one we've seen in a fifth-wheel toy hauler's bedroom, and it offers an unobstructed view. A 32-inch flat-screen HDTV is housed in the closet, out of sight (where washer and dryer hookups reside), and glides out on a sliding bracket. If you like a dark bedroom, you may want to swap out the pleated shades with blackout counterparts like those in the living area.

As if the bedroom is not roomy enough, floor space between the foot of the bed and fireplace can be doubled with what the company calls

recovery hooks and more.

In comparison to the competition, the Chevy's towing capability is at the back of the pack, with a maximum fifth-wheel-towing capacity of 22,700 pounds for the 4x4, and 23,100 for the two-wheel-drive model. This is adequate for the majority of RVers, however, and given the proper manners this truck exudes, the lower rating is a minor compromise for most.

The 3500 High Country diesel is remarkably quiet and handles competently, whether loaded by the test Cyclone on the interstate or running empty around town. The dual-wheel skirts gracefully extend from the molded bedside panel but, like most duallies, can impact parking in narrow spaces in shopping areas. Then add the Crew Cab, and you're walking a mile from the outer parking lot.

While this truck does a good job towing larger trailers, GM announced at press time that an all-new-from-the-ground-up 2020 Silverado HD will be released. This new truck moves Chevy to the lead spot in towing capacity at an astounding 35,500 pounds, which 99 percent of all RVers will never test — a 52 percent increase over the 2019 Silverado HD. The completely redesigned chassis features the new 6.6-liter Duramax diesel and a 10-speed Allison transmission. The truck, via the myChevrolet mobile app, will integrate with

the iN-Command system in many Keystone trailers, allowing control of numerous trailer features right from the truck's radio head.

SPECIFICATIONS

CHEVROLET SILVERADO 3500HD HIGH COUNTRY 4WD WITH DURAMAX PLUS PACKAGE

Fuel Economy, Towing	9.1 mpg
Engine	6.6L V-8 turbo diesel
Horsepower	445 @ 2,800 rpm
Torque	910 lb-ft @ 1,600 rpm
Transmission	6-speed auto
Axle Ratio	3.73:1
Fuel Cap.	36 gal.
Tires	LT235/80R17
Suspension, Front	Independent short and aluminum long arm
Suspension, Rear	Multi-leaf
Brakes	Four-wheel disc
Tow Rating	20,000 lbs. conventional/ 22,700 lbs. fifth-wheel
Length	21' 6"
Wheelbase	167.7"
MSRP, Base	\$59,500
MSRP, As Tested	\$73,450
Basic Warranty	3 years/36,000 miles
Powertrain Warranty	5 years/100,000 miles

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Above, from left: Connectivity is the name of the game, with dual USB ports that charge and connect to Chevrolet's MyLink. The Duramax 6.6-liter powerplant is quiet and refined, with 445 horsepower to move just about any RV along effortlessly.

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a telescoping slide. The slide-within-a-slide propels the bed out to make 5 feet of walk space. Behind three mirrored closet double doors is plenty of storage space and shelving, and push-button LEDs light up the inside. The closet's clothing rod was set at 44 inches, so part of my one dress hung down on the floor.

The bathroom has two entries, and it seems as if a bit of space may have been sacrificed in favor of a larger bedroom. It's roomy enough, but it's small in comparison to the enormous bedroom, and counter space is limited. Entering the bathroom from the bedroom through the pocket door, there's about 14 inches of floor space between the porcelain toilet and 24-by-44-inch shower. Set at 9 inches deep, the shower/tub is great for bathing kids, and the drain stopper actually worked! The shower curtain's color scheme nicely matches the decor, but it's too long. About 4 inches of dry-clean-only material hung on the floor in the shower.

The brushed-nickel-plated shower sprayer with height adjustment (albeit topping out at 3 inches shy of 6 feet) and shutoff switch provided a good shower, and with the skylight, there is 6 feet, 6 inches of headroom. Lighting in the bathroom is good, with an LED positioned in the ceiling next to the skylight and over the mirrored medicine cabinet, and the power bath vent worked well to pull steam out. There was no towel rack, so owners will have to add an over-the-door towel holder to their shopping list.

PARTY ON THE PATIO

The Cyclone's exterior is set up to move the party outside, with two separate patio areas. The rear ramp entry door with optional rail kit and awning makes for a great elevated deck off the garage/converted living space. Then, on the Cyclone's entry side, there's an outdoor kitchen and 32-inch HDTV, two electric awnings (19 and 11 feet), outdoor marine-grade speakers and a quick-connect for an LP-gas grill. And if the TV residing in the outdoor kitchen isn't big enough for you, an optional 40-incher can



Above, from left: An outdoor kitchen under lock and key houses a 32-inch HDTV. The 4007's bedroom is resort-worthy with a huge picture window, electric fireplace centered around abundant drawers and solid-surface countertops, mirrored closet doors and lots of floor space.

be attached via a bracket inside the lockable pass-through storage compartment.

Speaking of which, this compartment, located under the bedroom, is enormous and measures 4 feet wide at its narrowest point. There are two outside water-sprayer ports, one conveniently located on the entry side, so you can hook up a hose to rinse off a dirt bike — or yourself — after a day of play. A 5.5-kilowatt generator with fuel station and timer is standard, and the ramp door is rated for 3,000 pounds.

Also standard is a plug-in portable solar-kit connection on the side, which connects to a 100-watt solar control module. There's a 20-watt solar panel on the roof, good for not much more than maintaining a trickle charge for the batteries, which can be expanded if the owner wishes.

Our earlier dirt-bike-riding adventures with tents and pickups were tremendously fun, but if you like spending time with family in comfort and luxury, with or without the toys, the Cyclone 4007 may be just the ticket. **TV**

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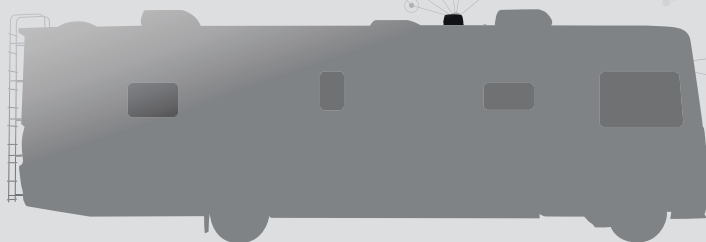
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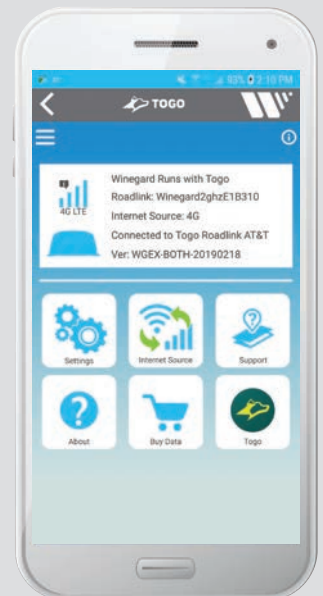
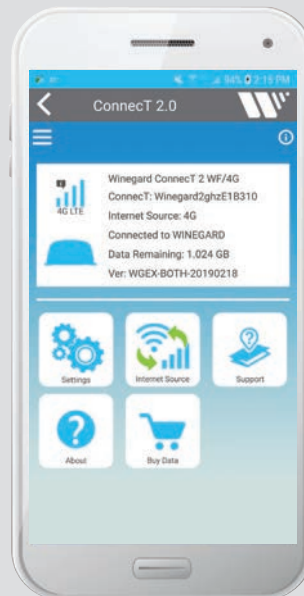
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GRILLAPALOOZA: ROADTRIP VS. TAILGATER

WE PUSH TWO POPULAR CAMP GRILLS TO THE LIMIT AND TAKE OUTDOOR MEALS TO THE NEXT LEVEL

— by Bob Dawson

Outdoor chefs, rejoice! There has simply never been a better time for cooking al fresco, as the selection of grills and accessories is nearly endless. Grills range from the sub-\$25 tabletop variety to bumper-mounted propane behemoths that are custom-made and so pricey you have to get a quote from the company. Whether we go big or small, outdoor cooking is an integral part of the RV lifestyle, and some of us pride ourselves on our grilling dexterity, even taking it to the level of culinary art.

SO MANY GRILLS. WHICH TO PICK?

Beyond recipes and ingredients, the debate about grilling methods never ends, and the search for the perfect setup is perpetual. On my home patio, I have three Weber kettles and have cooked Thanksgiving turkeys over coals for more than 30 years. I also have a Weber gas grill that is my go-to outdoor cooker because of its convenience and simplicity. And I always have a gas grill and a Smokey Joe when we're camping.

There's definitely something artful and even a little profound about preparing the charcoal and getting it to just the right temp. It's a challenge to do multiple courses on multiple charcoal grills, but there's no denying the flexibility and instant gratification of a gas grill. Even as I largely concede the argument to gas, though, how does one narrow the choices? There are little ones and big ones galore, and different genres such as griddles, griddles with grills, and grills that convert to griddles.

Trailer Life's marketing manager, Loris Pierson, and her husband, Ron, have become

Blackstone Griddle evangelists. They are members of the Blackstone Griddle Owners group on Facebook, which has more than 33,000 members, and they've been cooking up a storm on their RV camping trips. The Piersons recently upped their game from a Blackstone Tabletop Griddle to the Blackstone Tailgater Combo. It's a combined grill box and griddle plate on a stand with 477 square inches of cooktop and 35,000 Btu from two burners — and I'm pretty sure I've heard Ron swear it gives him mystical powers.

I'm more of a traditional grill aficionado and currently have a grill-crush on a recently acquired Coleman RoadTrip 285. The latest in the RoadTrip line, it's among the "Cadillacs" of portable gas grills, with such niceties as three burners and up to 20,000 Btu of ahi-searing energy. I cannot tell a lie, though — a little case of FOMO drove me to get the RoadTrip Swaptop Cast-Iron Griddle and Stove Grate accessories.

So the gauntlet is down: the RoadTrip 285 versus the Blackstone Tailgater. It's lunch, dinner, dessert and breakfast, and our families, friends and colleagues will be the judges.

A BUNCH OF LUNCH

Our grill-versus-grill adventure began with a Friday lunch to kick off a weekend at Lake Casitas in Southern California. It was classic Southland weather: sun shining, mid-70s, the universe seemingly telling us that every day is meant for outdoor cooking. Lorisa and Ron had carne asada, chicken tacos and refried beans on their menu, and my wife, Seana, and I had ingredients at the ready for grilled onion and ham melt sandwiches and a grilled apple tossed salad. And we were off and cooking.

Both grills, it was immediately clear, were up to the task. The Piersons' lunch was tailor-made for the Blackstone, and Ron put a nice char on the beef on the grill side and cooked the chicken to perfection on the griddle side. They brought the frijoles up to temp by leaving the pan to sit on the griddle side, but they could also have used the handy stovetop that can be accessed simply by removing the grill box.

Bonus points to the Blackstone for having enough griddle area to warm several tortillas at once.

On the RoadTrip side, a big high-five goes to the

Top right: With grilled cheese sandwiches on the griddle side and apple wedges for the salad on the grill side, the Coleman RoadTrip is the stage for the Dawson lunch. Right: The Piersons are all in with the Blackstone Tailgater for grilled chicken and refried beans for tacos.



Friendly rivalry: The Dawsons and Piersons fix side-by-side dinners.

Swaptop accessories, as we used the stove grate to toast walnuts in a pan for the salad and the griddle to grill the onions, and then the sandwiches. Using the standard grill top, we put a nice char on the apples, complete with classic grill marks. The only demerit on the RoadTrip was the need to take care when swapping the hot grill, griddle and stove grate. (Note to self: Find the perfect barbecue tongs for changing grill tops.)

Sitting back in our camp chairs while enjoying our lunches, enveloped by the green hills and sunshine, it was clear that both meals were a big hit with family, friends and coworkers.

THE MAIN EVENT: DINNER

After a lively cornhole tournament, it was time to roll right into prep for dinner. Seana and I lined up the ingredients for flatbread-pizza appetizers and grilled chicken skewers, sweet-potato wedges and veggies. Meanwhile, Ron and Lorisa prepped bacon-wrapped smokies and shrimp for appetizers and Philly cheesesteak sandwiches as their main course.

Switching out cooktops on the RoadTrip was key to the Dawson meal. We went for nice grill marks on the flatbread and random char on the artichoke hearts on the griddle. We then removed the flatbread to a plate where we built the pizzas with pesto sauce, the artichoke hearts, goat cheese, sliced tomatoes (sun-dried tomatoes on some) and fresh basil leaves. Putting the pizzas back on the griddle side, the RoadTrip allowed us to cover them and use indirect heat to bake them to perfection without worry of burning the bottom of the flatbread.

In the neighboring campsite, the Piersons took advantage of the Tailgater's 256-square-inch griddle surface to cook up enough bacon-wrapped smokies and shrimp to feed, well, more than our group. Delicious and plentiful.



GRILL VS. GRILL

The Coleman RoadTrip 285 and Blackstone Tailgater Combo share a number of features, among them built-in pushbutton igniters, independently adjustable burners, integrated thermometers, and trays that catch grease to simplify cleanup. Both grills run on disposable 1-pound propane canisters and can be powered by 5-gallon cylinders with the available adapter hoses. Folding stands and optional carrying cases make them a breeze to transport and store. The grills are sold on the Coleman and Blackstone websites and at Camping World, Gander Outdoors and other retailers.

ROADTRIP



+ What We Liked

Interchangeable grill, griddle- and stove-top accessories. Three burners with a combined 20,000 Btu and an indirect-heat option. Slide-out side tables. Folding legs and wheels for portability.

- What We'd Like to See

An easy way to swap hot cooktops and a slightly bigger carrying case.

What It Costs

Coleman RoadTrip 285\$229.99
Swaptop Cast-Iron Griddle\$39.99
Swaptop Cast-Iron Stove Grate\$19.99
Rolling Case.....\$59.99
Bulk Tank Adapter Hose\$19.99
www.coleman.com

TAILGATER



+ What We Liked

Griddle, grill and grill box in one. 20,000-Btu and 15,000-Btu burners for a combined 35,000 Btu. Vast 477-square-inch cooking surface. Deep drip trays on both sides. Independently adjustable leg height.

- What We'd Like to See

Wheels for moving at the campsite and extendable side tables.

What It Costs

Blackstone Tailgater Combo\$199.99
Griddle Accessory Toolkit.....\$39.99
Breakfast Kit with Bacon Press..\$29.99
Tailgater Carry Bag.....\$49.99
High-Pressure Propane Hose.....\$29.99
www.blackstoneproducts.com



The true Grillapalooza winners are the ones with the biggest appetites. Far left: The Dawsons pile chicken skewers and sweet-potato wedges on the RoadTrip. Left: The Piersons double down on the Tailgater with grilled rib eye and all the fixings for Philly cheesesteak sandwiches.

But this meal was just getting started and, again, Seana and I were swapping out cooktops on the RoadTrip so we could use both sides to put a nice sear and grill marks on the chicken. Then we piled the chicken skewers on one side to slow cook and start the glazing. With high heat on only one side, we grilled the potato wedges there, which provided a good temperature for the skewers to cook through but not too fast.

Slapping some glaze on the potato wedges and allowing

it to caramelize just a bit, we then moved them to a covered plate and swapped out that grill for the griddle. We let the chicken cook on indirect heat while the griddle heated up, and when it was about done, we spread out the veggies on high heat and splashed them with some dressing from the lunch salad. When they were cooked through and had a nice char, we plated our dinner, and the RoadTrip stood

stoically, as if not to notice the praise we were heaping on it for rising to the task of a pretty complicated camp dinner.

Not to be outdone, Ron and Lorisa grilled up a mountain of steak, onions, peppers and mushrooms, swapping between the grill side and the griddle side of the Blackstone, and assembled a gorgeous spread of sandwiches. Again, the Tailgater dominated the campsite's patio with its size and penchant for large quantities. Now that's comfort food, and again, plenty of it.

NOT JUST ANY DESSERTS

When planning to use a grill to prepare dessert, you almost have to be thinking fruit. Paired with a little extra sugar and maybe some citrus juice, fruit on the grill is deliciously transformed.

For Seana and me, it would be red pears with lemon juice, white sugar and cinnamon. For Ron and Lorisa, it would be sautéed apples. Both the RoadTrip and the Tailgater were perfect for these dishes, and the fruit was warm, soft and extra sweet, with just a bit of crunch from the caramelization. We paired the apples with ice cream and the pears with gelato and a raspberry Grand Marnier sauce.

Finishing the evening in what could only be described as a collective food coma, we roasted marshmallows for s'mores over the roaring fire at our feet and made a toast to our good fortune.



The easily portable Coleman RoadTrip scores big points for its folding stand on wheels, three burners, two side tables and swap-out cooktops.

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SANDWICH VS. SANDWICH

Sandwiches are staples of campsite meals, and toasting them definitely ups the ante, especially when cheese is involved. Here are a couple of crowd-pleasing recipes that are made to order for grills with griddles.

Grilled Onion and Ham Melt

– **Bob and Seana Dawson**

- 1 onion, small, peeled and thinly sliced
- olive oil
- margarine
- 4 slices sourdough bread
- 2 slices American cheese
- 2 ounces white cheddar cheese, thinly sliced or crumbled
- 2 ounces orange cheddar cheese, shredded
- 3 ounces Black Forest ham, thinly sliced
- 1 medium tomato, thinly sliced
- Dijon mustard

Grill onions in olive oil over high heat on the griddle until tender and some caramelization appears, and set aside. Spread margarine on the outer side of the bread slices, and spread Dijon mustard on the inner side of two slices. Layer cheese, ham, tomato and onion on two bread slices. Top with the remaining slices of bread and place on the griddle on medium-high heat. Grill until toasted, then flip and reduce heat, grilling again until toasted. If needed, remove to indirect heat on the other side of the grill until the cheese is fully melted.

Philly Cheesesteaks

– **Lorisa and Ron Pierson**

- ½ stick of butter
- 1 red onion, medium size
- 1 green bell pepper
- 1 package mushrooms, presliced
- ¾-1 pound rib eye, thinly sliced
- salt, pepper, garlic powder
- 1 package (6) Francisco French sandwich rolls
- 1 package Swiss cheese, presliced

Melt butter on the griddle. Grill sliced onion, bell pepper and mushrooms until soft, then add the rib-eye slices. Season the meat and vegetables with salt, pepper and garlic powder, and continue grilling until the meat is done. Separate the two halves of the french rolls and place a Swiss-cheese slice on the bottom half of each, then load on the grilled veggies and rib eye. Cap each sandwich with the top half of the roll.

Extolling the merits of the Tailgater, Lorisa Pierson bites into a Philly cheesesteak.



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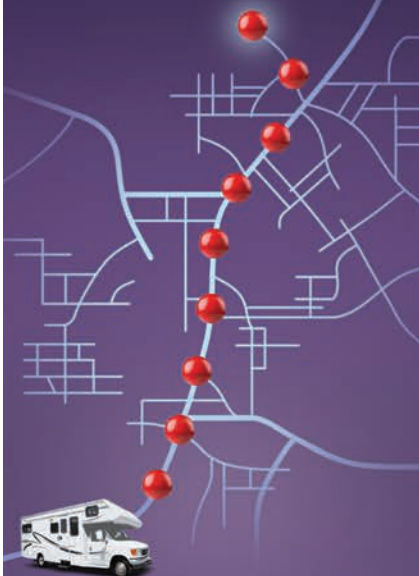


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GRILLAPALOOZA: ROADTRIP VS. TAILGATER

THE FINAL COOK-OFF

Saturday mornings are made for brunches on the RV patio. After our food fest from the day before, we were all a little slow getting moving, but move we did, as we began preparing the fixings for the morning fare on our competing grills.

For Lorisa and Ron, a classic camp breakfast of bacon strips, scrambled eggs, hash browns and pancakes topped the menu. And the

Blackstone is ideal for this meal. Its huge griddle made short work for Ron as he flattened the bacon with a pair of bacon presses, then rolled through the eggs, hash browns and pancakes, removing each to a warming pan over low heat on the grill side of the Tailgater. That breakfast and the Blackstone are a match made in RV heaven.

Seana and I were enamored with the stove grate on the RoadTrip. With that



There's nothing like an al fresco breakfast. Above, from left: The Dawsons demonstrate the versatility of the Coleman RoadTrip with an omelet and hash browns, and the Piersons do the same on the Blackstone Tailgater with the classic camp breakfast.

THE GRILL NEXT DOOR

FROM LOW AND SLOW TO HOT AND FAST, THE TRAEGER RANGER BRINGS WOOD-FIRED GRILLING TO THE CAMPGROUND

If you frequent RV parks and campgrounds with hookups, the electric Traeger Ranger Pellet Grill is an interesting variation on the portable-grill theme. The magic of the Traeger cooking system is the Traeger Digital Arc controller. Once plugged in, the system automatically feeds just the right amount of wood pellets into the fire pot where they are ignited by the "hot rod" and stoked by a fan to precisely control the grilling temperature in 5-degree increments.

From 170 degrees for smoking, all the way up to 500 degrees and back to 165 degrees for warming, the Ranger claims the ability to grill, smoke, bake, roast, braise and barbecue all on the same setup. To enhance the flavor, Traeger's hardwood pellets come in 11 varieties from alder and cherry to hickory and mesquite.

We tried a few recipes and were impressed with the precision cooking we could do on the Traeger Ranger. We prepared a batch of pork shoulder steaks, cooked at 250 degrees for almost three hours, a salmon fillet that we grilled at 350 for 30 minutes,

and a one-pan dinner with roast chicken, veggies and potatoes cooked at 450 degrees for about 75 minutes.

All were smoky and delicious. From our perspective, though, the Traeger's greatest advantage shines through when slow cooking meat. Because you can control heat at low temperatures for long periods, and do that over a wood fire that imparts the smoky flavors of barbecue, the Traeger makes you look like a true grill master when serving up those briskets, ribs and pulled-pork sandwiches.

The Ranger isn't the most portable of grills. Weighing in at about 47 pounds, plus another 12 pounds for the cast-iron griddle, it will likely be a two-person job to heave it in and out of an RV storage bay for all but the stoutest of campers. Without wheels or its own stand, it won't be moving far once it's heated up. To avoid the heave-ho, many Traeger owners stow the grill in the bed of their truck and fire it up tailgate-style.

The buttons, arrows and LED readout on the Ranger's Mission Control-like panel can take a little getting used to, but once you get

new toy in mind, we combined some traditional breakfast ingredients into an omelet. First, we cooked the bacon on the griddle, then we heated a skillet on the stovetop and started the egg whites cooking. We griddled the hash browns and kept them warm, while the omelet heated through and the cheese melted.

Side by side, the two breakfasts were made for Instagram, but wound up more like Snapchat as they disappeared in what seemed like seconds.

We had set out the day before to do an aggressive comparison between two popular camp grills. Beyond mission accomplished, though, both grills shone like the sun on that classic Southern California weekend. And the true winners were all of us who got to show off our favorite recipes and enjoy some amazing fare, courtesy of the Coleman RoadTrip 285 and Blackstone Tailgater Combo. **TL**



the hang of it, you can pretty much set it and forget it — though you'll want to keep an eye on the pellet level in the hopper. For versatility and precise cooking of just about any cut of meat, the Traeger Ranger might be the next great add to your outdoor cooking ensemble.

+ What We Liked

Precision heat control. Smoky flavor, especially when slow cooking.

- What We'd Like to See

Clearer instructions for a shorter learning curve. Foldable or collapsible wheeled cart.

What It Costs

Traeger Ranger\$399.99
Wood Pellets\$18.99-\$29.99
Grill Cover.....\$29.99
www.traegergrills.com

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TRAILBLAZING
MIDWESTERN
ROAD TRIP

CROSSING KANSAS

Following the historic Santa Fe Trail, rut by rut, through America's heartland for a glimpse into the Old West and pioneer life

— by Pamela Selbert

I've been fascinated with the Old West and the historic wagon roads that led there for as long as I can remember. A nonfiction book called *Westward the Way*, a gift from my father when I was nine, helped fuel the passion — and it's not showing any sign of letting up. My husband, Guy, and I have followed several of the old trails, in entirety and in part, a number of times — the Oregon, California, Mormon, Southwest, Santa Fe — and can never seem to get enough of them.

There was a time when I thought traveling in a caravan of covered wagons in 1840 would have been as close to heaven as you could get on earth. But I was born way too late for that, and instead, the “covered wagon” we travel in is an air-conditioned



RV, which no doubt is a bit more comfy. In it, we recently retraced the Kansas stretch of the Santa Fe.

The National Park Service and Santa Fe Trail Association have cobbled together a mosaic of modern roads that, for the most part, closely parallels the 900-mile Santa Fe National Historic Trail. Using the Park Service map and guidebook *The Santa Fe Trail Revisited* by Gregory M. Franzwa, you can practically follow the trail rut by rut, watching for the frequent historical markers that make the trip easy.

BLAZING TRAILS

We recommend making a couple of stops in western Missouri: at the visitor center in Arrow Rock, an invaluable Santa Fe

Trail resource, and the National Frontier Trails Museum in Independence. Arrow Rock is 22 miles north of Interstate 70 on Missouri Highway 41 about 100 miles east of Kansas City; Independence is in the Kansas City metro area.

Arrow Rock, where the whole town is a state historic site, today has just 50 residents. But a century and a half ago, there were 1,000, most making a living outfitting folks heading west on the Santa Fe. The town still maintains its early 19th-century appearance and has no stoplights, service stations, fast-food restaurants or shopping malls.

With maps, historic photos, artifacts, paintings and other displays, the visitor center tells the stories of all the early trails that fanned west from Missouri. The Santa Fe was begun in 1821, when St. Louis trader William Becknell, dubbed the Father of the Trail, set out from Old Franklin (across the Missouri River from today's Boonville), leading six Missouri traders and a string of packhorses bound for Mexico. They left with \$1,000 in cloth goods and returned with donkeys — later bred to create the famous Missouri mule — and vast amounts of silver. Some accounts say they turned a profit of 1,500 percent. Old Franklin got washed away seven years later during one of the chocolate river's rampages, and the trail head moved west, eventually to Independence.

Michael Dickey, administrator at the historic site's visitor center, says with a smile that Becknell "had left Old Franklin in a mad rush and probably wasn't wondering if the trail he was blazing would be a success. The sheriff was after him, and he barely got away." Becknell was deeply in debt and faced



Above: A lone tourist on Point of Rocks looks out over the deserted valley of the ephemeral Cimarron River. This shortcut on the trail was normally used for the westward-bound springtime journey when the river flowed. **Below:** Road signs mark the route in Independence.

going to debtors' prison, Dickey explains.

"There was also a good chance he'd land in jail at the other end of the line if he got caught, because Mexico was still a Spanish colony and trade with the United States was illegal," Dickey adds. "But that was hundreds of miles and many weeks away. Becknell was desperate and probably thought he had nothing to lose."

The prospect of trading in Santa Fe, which then was part of Mexico, was enticing. Mexico was rich in silver, so much so that horses were rumored to be shod with it, but badly in need of cloth and clothing and articles of cast iron, Dickey says. Friends were willing to front Becknell the money to buy the trade goods.

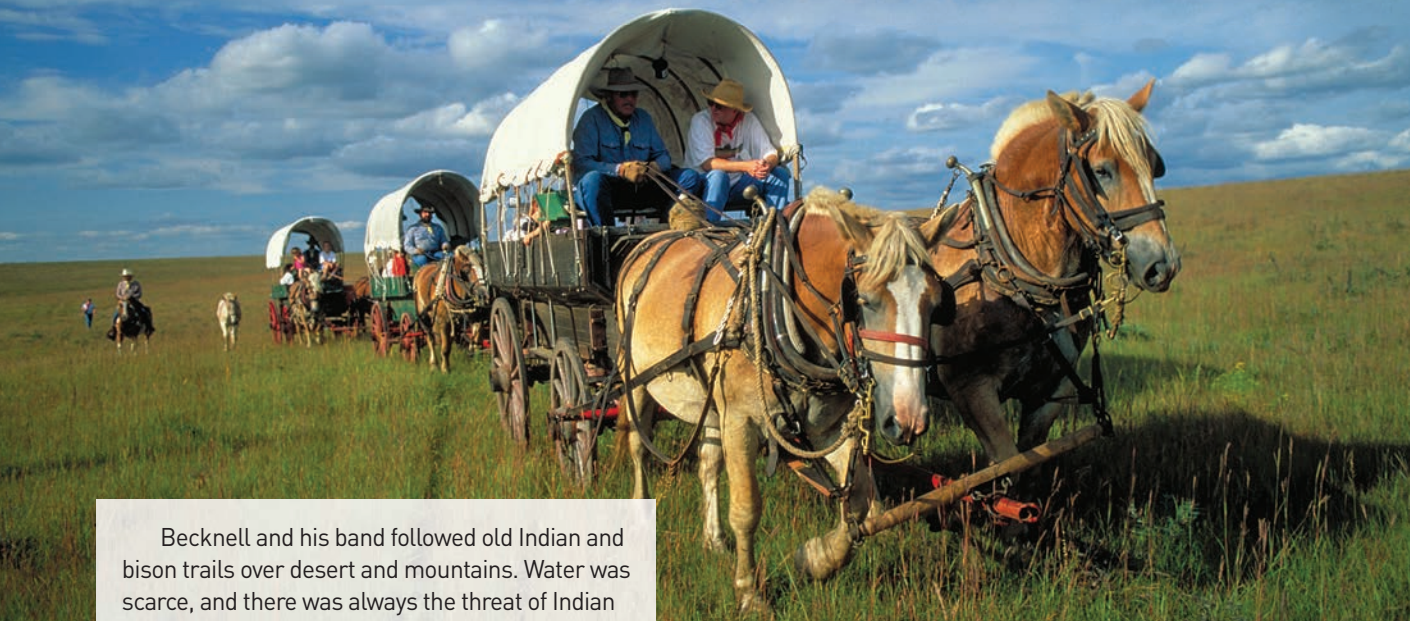


HALFWAY POINT

Sightseers enjoy the scenery from Pawnee Rock State Historic Site. A location for Indian councils, this high ground was a favorite lookout spot for travelers on the trail.



ACROSS CIMARRON NATIONAL GRASSLAND'S SEEMINGLY ENDLESS MILES, ROUGH PRAIRIE GRASSES RISE AND FALL IN THE PERSISTENT WIND LIKE WAVES ON A GOLDEN SEA.



Becknell and his band followed old Indian and bison trails over desert and mountains. Water was scarce, and there was always the threat of Indian attack. But they made it to Santa Fe 10 weeks later and learned their mission was no longer illegal — Mexico had declared independence.

The traders were welcomed and forged a commercial link that lasted nearly 60 years. Becknell returned to Missouri, paid his creditors and the following spring led a caravan of freight wagons back along the route. He made only the two trips, but they set him up financially for life. Thousands of others followed, cutting deep swales and ruts into the rock-hard soil, before the first locomotive chugged — *backward!* — into Santa Fe in 1880 along a spur up from the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway line and made the old trail obsolete.

Travelers on the Santa Fe followed two basic routes: the Mountain Route, which led along the Arkansas River and over formidable Raton Pass in southeastern Colorado, and the Cimarron

Cutoff, which diverged from the main trail at Fort Dodge, Kansas, on a shorter-by-10-days but more perilous route. We chose the Cimarron route for our recent trek, ending at Elkhart and the Cimarron National Grassland, just north of the Oklahoma state line, about 450 miles total.

A BATTLE, A TREATY AND FRONTIER LIFE

In Kansas, you follow the Santa Fe for the most part on U.S. Highway 56. It's easy to miss a turn and mess up in Kansas City; we've done it several times. Take Interstate 35 and start the "trail" at lovely Olathe, a town of tree-shaded streets lined with fine Victorian homes.

Drive toward Baldwin City, watching for the sign for Black Jack Park, 3 miles east of town. There, a wooden footbridge leads to the Ivan Boyd Prairie Preserve and rolling grassland where the Battle of Black Jack, a clash between abolitionist and pro-slavery forces, took place in 1856. Deep swales of the Santa Fe Trail are still visible here. There's a replica cabin, typical of a bygone era, with murals, maps and artifacts that tell the story of the trail and the battle, which was one of the many events that led to the Civil War.



Far left: At Boot Hill Museum in Dodge City, historical interpreters transport visitors back to the American West of the 1870s and 1880s. Left: The Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farm Historic Site in Olathe houses horse-drawn vehicles from the 1800s and this prairie-schooner reproduction.



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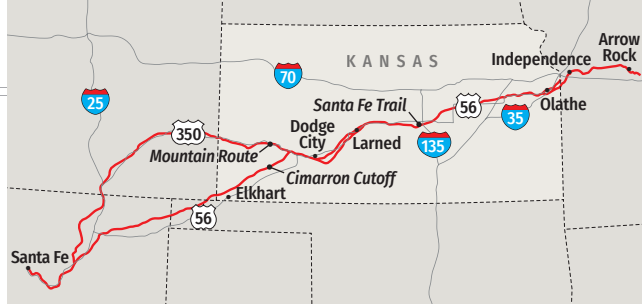
Other important stops along the trail include Council Grove, where the jagged stump of the once-mighty Council Oak is protected by a roof and iron fence. In 1825, under this tree, a treaty with the Osage tribe was signed, safeguarding travelers on the eastern end of the trail. A host of historic structures can be found here, among them an 1850s' Kaw Indian mission, early stores, restaurants and homes, as well as a monument to Becknell.

Pawnee Rock State Historic Site, an imposing 60-foot-high outcrop of sandstone and once an important landmark to travelers, is about 150 miles west, at roughly the halfway point on the trail. A viewing platform at the top can be driven or climbed to, where

Top and above: Fort Larned was built to protect travelers on the Santa Fe Trail and is now a national historic site that brings the old army post back to life. Each Memorial Day weekend (May 25 through 27 this year), Fort Larned hosts the largest living-history event in western Kansas.

placards explain its peculiar formation in this otherwise table-flat country. Originally twice its present size, the rock was quarried for construction by homesteaders and for the road bed of the Santa Fe Railroad. The Arkansas River flows behind a row of trees to the south.

Larned is ahead. The Santa Fe Trail Center here displays a mounted bison,



GO WEST

The Santa Fe Trail, which connected Independence, Missouri, with Santa Fe, New Mexico, was America's first commercial highway. Established in 1821, the 900 miles of the Great Plains was traveled heavily by traders, pioneers and America's military, and played an important role in the country's westward expansion. But in 1880 when a Santa Fe Railway Company train pulled into the railroad depot in Santa Fe, the trail was effectively ended. Today the trail lives on, thanks to groups and individuals who take an interest in preserving the American West and the trail's physical traces and landmarks.

WHERE TO STAY

DODGE CITY

Dodge City KOA is located in the heritage district near Long Branch Lagoon waterpark, Boot Hill Museum and the Wright Park Zoo, with pull-through and back-in sites, laundry facilities and a convenience store.

www.fortdodgervresort.com

A Good Sam Park, **Gunsmoke RV Park** can accommodate almost any size RV with sites up to 85 feet long. On site are a general store, pool, playground and game room. Wi-Fi is free.

www.gunsmokervpark.com

ELKHART

Elkhart City RV Park is located within the city limits so you can walk into town without crossing a highway. Full hookups are \$10 per day. No bathrooms.

www.ci.elkhart.ks.us/200/rv-park

Pet-friendly **Prairie RV Park** is across from rails-to-trails Whistle Stop Park, with paved trails lined with trees and benches. The RV park offers 20 full-hookup sites and free Wi-Fi.

my.elkhart.com/rvpark

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Santa Fe National Historic Trail, www.nps.gov/safe

Santa Fe Trail Association, www.santafetrail.org

tools used by Mexican traders, a freight wagon in a desert diorama, a half-dozen recreated rooms typical of frontier homes, a wall of 19th-century firearms and early photos of the town. Outside is a squat sod house typical of pioneer homes in a landscape of few trees.

Kansas Highway 156

leads from Larned to Fort Larned, which was established in 1859 to protect travelers on the trail and is now a historic site. Nine of the buildings on the 700 acres are original, their stones etched with 19th-century graffiti. Another has been reconstructed, and all of the buildings, including two

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barracks, are furnished as they would have been when the fort was garrisoned.

Buffalo Soldiers (African Americans) were among the 300 infantry and cavalrymen stationed here. Soldiers at the time were paid \$16 per month and slept two to a bunk, head to toe. It's a lonely site but attracts more than 50,000 visitors a year.

DODGE CITY AND FORT DODGE

Highway 56 doesn't follow the Arkansas River as closely as the historic trail did, but the newer road rejoins the river at Dodge City. The town is rife with Western-style attractions: Boot Hill Museum; Gunfighters Wax Museum; Kansas Heritage Center, featuring exhibits about the Great Plains and Old West; Dodge City Roundup Rodeo, "the greatest show on dirt"; 40-acre Longhorn Park, with its own small herd of the famous cattle; and Wright Park Zoo, among others, plus you can take an hour-long narrated Historic Trolley Tour. Original Front Street has been colorfully recreated, with a touristy row of false-front shops and other buildings.

Fort Dodge is a few miles east of town on U.S. Route 400, established in 1865 to protect wagon trains between Fort Larned and Fort Lyon in Colorado. Today, it's the Kansas Soldiers' Home and a busy place, but many of the original buildings can be toured.

From Dodge City, follow the Cimarron Cutoff southwest on Highway 56. Ahead 80 miles, then north 15 miles on Kansas Highway 25, is another important trail site, Wagon Bed Spring. In 1831, mountain man Jedediah Smith, 33, was killed by Comanches as he knelt at the spring. Smith was searching for water for his party along the infamous 65-mile waterless stretch of the cutoff known as Jornada, or "dry route," when he was murdered.

Then, as today, this was parched country. But until the 1840s, when Indian hostilities worsened, the difficulty of crossing Raton Pass kept most of the Santa Fe traffic on the cutoff.

CIMARRON AND DANCING GRASSES

Cimarron National Grassland outside Elkhart, in the far-southwest corner

of the state, was our final destination in Kansas, and the highlight of our trip. Across the grassland's seemingly endless miles, rough prairie grasses rise and fall in the persistent wind like waves on a golden sea. Bisected by the capricious Cimarron River, which sometimes flows full, even floods, and sometimes sinks into the sand to flow underground leaving the riverbed dry, it's a lonely landscape, dotted here and

there with pungent sagebrush, prickly pear cactus and dark-green yuccas. By all appearances, it's changed little since early travelers rolled through.

But, in fact, it's gone through a metamorphosis. It was indeed a lush grassland during the Santa Fe Trail days, but soon after that era ended, the government opened it to homesteaders, and within a decade some 5,000 farmers and ranchers had taken

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up residence. Half a century later, due to overplanting, periodic drought and unreliable water sources, the grassland had become a dust bowl.

The federal government began buying up the land in 1936, with the plan to restore it as a Land Utilization Project. At the time, not a single grass blade could be seen on 100,000 of the project's 108,000 acres. But native grass species were successfully reintroduced,

and in 1960 the land was turned over to the Forest Service and given the name Cimarron National Grassland.

Since then, native mammals and birds have been brought back such as mule deer, elk and antelope, coyotes, bobcats, prairie dogs and also turkeys. Today, the Cimarron is home to 286 species of birds and 49 species of mammals and reptiles.



WAGON TRAILS
Following the ruts of wagon wheels, author Pam Selbert sets out on the trail with her dogs, one slung over her shoulders.

Twenty-three miles of the old trail parallel the Cimarron River across the grassland, and you still see the ruts, bored many inches deep into the rock-hard earth by the groaning wheels of hundreds of wagons and plodding hoofs. To protect the historic trail, a 19-mile "companion trail" is kept mowed alongside it. We walked half a dozen or so of the miles, accompanied by our always-eager-for-a-hike dogs.

On this occasion, the riverbed was dry. Now, as in trail days, it is an unreliable water source. But there is a dependable artesian spring in an oasis of willows and reeds not far off the trail.

A gravel road winds up onto Point of Rocks, a promontory shaped like a ship's prow that juts 300 feet high and was an important landmark to early travelers. From this third-highest site in Kansas, you have a fine vantage in all directions. The earth around you is like a huge gold coin laid flat under a bell of bright-blue sky.

Even today you hear no sounds of humans, no voices, no engines, only the relentless roaring of the wind that whips the grasses into an unending dance. Looking down over the river bottom, thick with willows, the only trees anywhere to be seen, we could see across to what remains of the old trail — gaping tan ruts that angle off to the west and seem to gradually come together before evaporating in far-off purple mist.

We had the melancholy feeling of having been here before in a long-ago time, of having just watched a caravan of ox-drawn freight wagons disappear over the horizon, bound for Santa Fe. We could hear the shouts, the crack of whips, growing fainter until there was only the wind. **TV**

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PACIFIC RIM PARADISE

Although it takes some effort to get there from the mainland, a visit to the west side of Vancouver Island restores the mind, body and soul

— by **Larry MacDonald**

As I write this, the view from the back window of our fifth-wheel is spectacular. The setting sun is casting an orange glow over the seascape; gentle ocean waves are spilling over rocky islets and cascading onto a pristine sandy beach. Where are we? We're in Paradise by the Pacific. More specifically, we're settled into an RV park a few miles south of the community of Tofino on the west coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

CALL OF THE WILD

Off the west coast of Vancouver Island on Clayoquot Sound, the Tofino area is blessed with lush old-growth forests, beautiful beaches and spectacular views.

GETTING THERE

If you look at a map of Vancouver Island, you'll see there's only one road leading to Tofino (pronounced *tuff-EE-no*). B.C. Highway 4, known as the Pacific Rim Highway, bisects the island, beginning at Parksville and heading west 30 miles to Port Alberni. From there, it continues 60 miles to a T-intersection on the edge of the Pacific Ocean. Turn left, and within 10 minutes you're in Ucluelet (*you-CLUE-let*). Turn right, and within 30 minutes you're at the end of the road in Tofino.

Between these two charming seaside villages is Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, which provides access to miles of rocky coves, sandy beaches and many designated trails through dense coastal rain forests.

To get there from the United States, board a Washington State Ferry in Anacortes or the Blackball Ferry in Port Angeles to Victoria, the capital of British Columbia. From there, drive north on Highway 1, the Island Highway, for 70 miles to Nanaimo. If you take a BC Ferry operating out of two terminals

in Vancouver, you will arrive in Nanaimo. Now drive 23 miles north on Highway 19 to Highway 4 near Parksville, head west, and you're on your way.

Highway 4 is narrow and curvy in spots, so drivers need to keep their eyes on the road. However, passengers can gawk to their heart's delight at snowcapped mountains, crystal-clear streams and lakes, lush meadows and dense forests. A popular tourist attraction between Parksville and Port Alberni is Cathedral Grove, a stand of old-growth forest in MacMillan Provincial Park.

Here, an easy stroll through ancient hemlocks, Douglas firs and western red cedars will give you an idea of how most of Vancouver Island looked not much more than a hundred years ago. The parking lot cannot accommodate large RVs, and parking on the shoulder of the highway is not permitted, but no worries; you'll see lots of similar trees on the coast.

Port Alberni is the only community along this route that has major shopping outlets, such as Walmart and Canadian Tire,

Right: The author's dog, Bella, takes a break on a clifftop deck along the Tonquin Trail, an easy 1.6-mile round-trip hike through old-growth forest to the beach. Below right: From a shady campsite at Tofino's Bella Pacifica Campground, a vintage Boler overlooks Mackenzie Beach.

so you may want to stock up with groceries and RV supplies, depending on how long you plan to stay on the coast. I would recommend at least a week to sample some of the natural, cultural and culinary riches this region has to offer. Outdoor adventurers and nature lovers may want to stay forever.

Funky yet surprisingly sophisticated, Tofino and Ucluelet are small, friendly towns chock-full of youthful energy, with upscale resorts, spas and restaurants that rival the world's finest. We stayed the entire month of May in Tofino and a few extra days in "Uke."

Early on, we stopped by the Tofino Visitor Centre to inquire about things to do during our stay. When I asked, "What are the top three things we absolutely have to do?" the

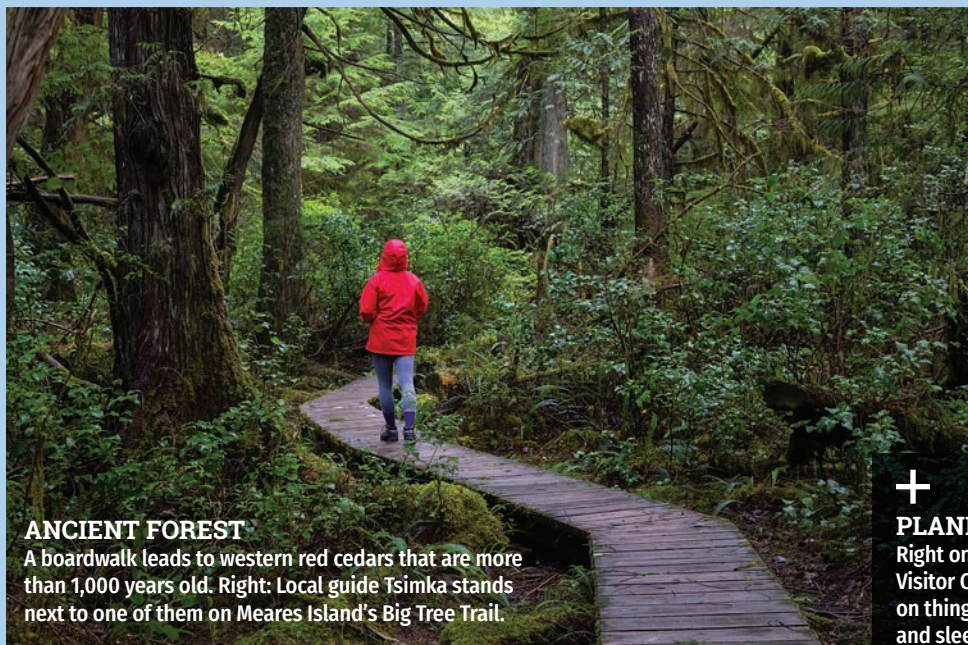


friendly gal pulled out a map and circled three attractions: Chesterman Beach, the Tofino Botanical Gardens and the Big Tree Trail on Meares Island. And those were just her suggestions in the Tofino area; there are many other activities all along the coast, including in Ucluelet.

We lucked out with warm sunny days during most of our stay — locals were saying it was unusual

FUNKY YET SURPRISINGLY SOPHISTICATED, TOFINO AND UCLUELET ARE SMALL, FRIENDLY TOWNS CHOCK-FULL OF YOUTHFUL ENERGY.





ANCIENT FOREST

A boardwalk leads to western red cedars that are more than 1,000 years old. Right: Local guide Tsimka stands next to one of them on Meares Island's Big Tree Trail.



PLANNING YOUR TRIP

Right on the Pacific Rim Highway, the Tofino Visitor Centre is packed with information on things to see and do and places to eat and sleep in Tofino, Ucluelet and Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. Helpful staff members are on hand to dispense travel literature and maps, answer questions and share their favorite local experiences. Parking is ample for RVs.

for May. Reportedly, the warmest weather on the coast is from June to September, with average daily highs in the mid-60s Fahrenheit. Bring some extra layers and rain gear, as coastal weather can vary widely from day to day. The winter months are considered best for storm watching, ideally from a beachfront cabin in front of a cozy fire. Winter is not suitable for RVing unless your rig is equipped for cold conditions.

WHALE WATCHING

In 2015 *National Geographic* rated Tofino one of the Best Spring Trips, primarily because offshore waters are spring feeding grounds for thousands of whales, mostly grays and humpbacks, and occasional orcas. Various whale-watching outfitters provide seagoing opportunities to observe and photograph these gigantic mammals, but you may not even need to go to sea. A local commercial fisherman reported that you could watch whales spout in 30 feet of water right off Chesterman Beach.

Not seeing any spouts off Chesterman, we booked a two-and-a-half-hour boat tour with the Whale Centre in Tofino. Howie, our experienced and knowledgeable native guide, introduced us to a dozen gray whales, some of which he recognized, such as one named Ghost Face. He also got us up close to sea lions sunning on a rocky islet, a cluster of seals thrusting above the water as if posing for the cameras, several

tufted puffins, and a bald eagle perched on a cedar branch that responded to Howie's screeching imitations by tilting his head in our direction. Check out the Whale Centre's free whale museum and be sure and ask for Howie if you plan on taking this tour.

PADDLING AND SURFING

If you enjoy water sports with a little adventure thrown in, look no further. The informative map of Tofino and Ucluelet from the visitor center lists numerous operators that provide guided kayak and canoe tours to protected harbors where you can paddle with sea lions and seals while seabirds soar overhead. You might even see the occasional bear, as we did, foraging along a rocky shoreline.

Our encounter was actually on a beach in Ucluelet where my wife, Sandy, and I were walking our dog, Bella, along the water's edge. About 50 yards away at the high-tide line, a large black bear was overturning rocks in search of tasty morsels. We had planned an escape route — *swim to Japan!* — if he decided we were a more desirable menu item. With some relief, we went our separate ways and survived to dog walk another day.

National Geographic also rated Tofino "one of the top surf towns in the world." With waves



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to suit all ability levels, surf shops that rent equipment and pro instructors, you'll be riding the curl before you know it. During our stay, top surfers from around the world competed while hundreds of cheering spectators lined the beach.

If you're not quite ready to "hang 10," you might want to try stand-up paddleboarding, which allows almost anyone to get out on the water and explore sheltered coves and bays. More proficient paddleboarders ride the ocean waves like surfboarders, except they stand up and paddle back out to catch another wave. Fun, and a great core exercise as well.

HIKING

Within Pacific Rim National Park Reserve are eight designated trails, some with boardwalks that meander through old-growth forests and bogs. Others hug the coastline or lead to sandy beaches. The park charges a fee for use of these trails to help with maintenance. Several trails and beach accesses within the park are designated wheelchair-accessible.

Outside the park are additional free trails, such as the Wild Pacific Trail near Ucluelet. This easy, well-maintained trail has two sections: a circular 1.6-mile loop past the century-old Amphitrite Point Lighthouse and a 3.4-mile one-way stretch that undulates along the rugged coastline. Both offer awesome panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean. Closer to

Tofino is Tonquin Trail (1.6 miles round-trip), which provides scenic vistas from a cliff-top deck. A bench is provided for sitting and contemplating what's important in life: the answer is written in the waves.

If you want to combine a short hike with a boat ride and a hot soak, many operators offer half-day tours to remote Hot Springs Cove, about 26 nautical miles north of Tofino. During our excursion with Ocean Outfitters, we again encountered whales, seals, sea lions and various seabirds. From the dock, a half-hour hike to the hot springs through an ancient rain forest is like a step back in time; some of the trees were already 200 years old when Columbus arrived in America. And no doubt, First Nations people used the naturally heated pools and waterfalls for an occasional happy soak.

FISHING

If you have a hankering to get out on the water and catch a big one, more than a dozen sportfishing charters are available to satisfy your urge. Experienced guides who know how to catch fish — primarily salmon, halibut and lingcod — will take you off shore on safe, comfortable and fully equipped boats. If trout is more to your liking, several operators also provide remote fly-fishing excursions to lakes and streams. Fresh fish, crabs, prawns, clams and oysters can be purchased at several outlets in both towns, for



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www.longbeachgolfcourse.com

MacKenzie Beach Resort, www.mackenziebeach.com

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Island West Resort, www.islandwestresort.com

Mussel Beach Wilderness RV Campground

www.musselbeachcampground.com

Surf Junction Campground, www.surfjunction.com

Ucluelet Campground, uclueletcampground.com

Wya Point Resort, www.wyapoint.com

FERRIES

BC Ferries, www.bcferries.com

Black Ball Ferry Line, www.cohoferry.com

Washington State Ferries, www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Municipality of Ucluelet, www.ucluelet.ca

Tourism Tofino, www.tourismtofino.com

those who just want to eat seafood rather than fish for it.

CULTURAL EVENTS

Thousands of years before Europeans arrived, First Nations people occupied these lands. Currently, four tribes remain in the area: one in Ucluelet, one on Long Beach within the national park boundaries, and the other two near Tofino on outlying islands.

T'ashii Paddle School, a First Nations company, offers guided dugout canoe trips from Tofino

Tofino and Ucluelet are surfing meccas, and that culture now extends to the sport of stand-up paddleboarding. Paddleboarders can ride the ocean waves or explore quieter waters in inlets and coves along the coast.



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to nearby Meares Island, including an exploration of the Big Tree Trail. Appropriately named, this boardwalk trail through old-growth forest has some of the biggest and oldest trees on the coast.

Tsimka, our guide, taught us how to paddle a seven-person dugout canoe (carved by her father), as well as some cultural traditions, such as paddlers singing a greeting song when approaching the land of another tribe. If a welcome

song was heard in response, it was safe to go ashore. She sang the greeting song beautifully in her native language while stomping her foot to simulate a drum. Although we heard nothing back, we went ashore anyway.

During our walk, Tsimka pointed out various trees and plants that were used by her ancestors for different purposes, and described how native people have struggled in recent years

to protect homelands from clear-cutting by logging companies. After returning to the dock four hours later, we understood why the gal at the visitor center ranked the Big Tree Trail among the top three things to do in Tofino. Combined with the dugout canoe paddle, we ranked it number one.

Partly historical, partly natural, the Tofino Botanical Gardens provides a network of paths leading into a moss-draped rain forest, where garden plots display tropical plants such as palm trees and giant Himalayan lilies, as well as local plants: skunk cabbage, salmonberry and medicinal herbs used by First Nations.

Unexpected sculptures, driftwood shelters, a children's garden, and a frog pond into which a local kindergarten class releases tadpoles each spring make this an enjoyable experience, one in which conservation and meditation are encouraged. A fine way to end the day is relaxing on the garden's outdoor patio at Darwin's Café, overlooking a landscape of flowering plants while enjoying organic tea, coffee and pastries.

The Kwisis Visitor Center within the national park features interactive exhibits and during the summer offers interpretive walks that explore the natural and cultural history of the Pacific Rim. Various galleries in both communities sell aboriginal art, including paintings, carved masks, woven baskets and jewelry. Considered a must-see is the Eagle Aerie Gallery in Tofino, a traditional longhouse displaying original paintings and reproductions by native artist Roy Henry Vickers.

TASTE OF TOFINO

Every month a different festival celebrates some aspect of life on the coast, from art and music to shorebirds and whales. We enjoyed the Feast Tofino festival (April 26 through May 5 this year) where renowned local and visiting chefs combine their culinary talents to prepare unique "boat-to-table" full-course dinners. We were not disappointed by the array of seafood featured at Jamie's Restaurant and Wolf in the Fog. The food at both establishments was so good, we wanted to lick our plates.

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WHAT'S MORE

Both communities have fitness centers, tennis courts and miles of paved bike paths. Tofino also has pickleball courts, a regulation nine-hole golf course near the commercial Long Beach Airport, and a brewery that offers tours and samples of original craft beers such as Kelp Stout and Tuff Session Ale. Ucluelet has a "catch-and-release" aquarium where visitors are encouraged to learn about and handle various sea creatures, which are returned to the ocean at the end of the tourist season.

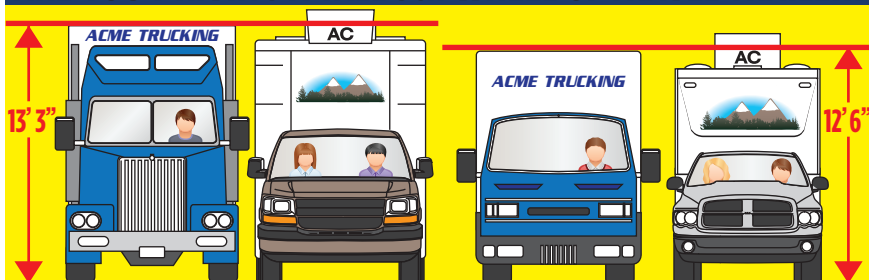
Miles of sandy beaches provide various options: kite flying, bike riding, beachcombing, clam digging, exploring tidal pools or just relaxing on a blanket with a good read and beverage. If you enjoy bird watching, this area is world-class because of the numerous species that live here or migrate through in the spring and fall.

A half-day outing that we often enjoyed started in late afternoon at Tacofino Cantina, a small food truck located at the back of a gravel parking lot. We didn't mind standing in line for what is arguably the best fish taco on the planet. Entertainment is provided by crafty crows, snatching tidbits from the plates of tourists who leave them unattended.

For dessert, we walked across the lot to Chocolate Tofino for handcrafted gelato and chocolates to die for. The outing usually ended back at our RV site where I would build a campfire, stare into the embers and think about all I really want: peace, love, understanding and a scoop of salted-caramel gelato.

At the end of our joyful month on the Pacific Rim, we reluctantly retraced our route across Vancouver Island back to more mundane activities. With images of shimmering waves, sandy shores and towering conifers ingrained in our memories, we decided to set our watches on Tofino time: "Half the pace, twice the pleasure." **TV**

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Honda's newest upgraded models, the EU2200i and EU2200i Companion, offer exceptional versatility. Producing up to 2200 watts maximum (compared to the older EU2000i models' 2000

watts maximum), the EU2200i and Companion version can power most TVs, a computer, a coffee maker, most microwave ovens, an electric frying pan, a small heater and some refrigerator/freezers (some power management may be necessary for optimal performance, such as with a large microwave oven).

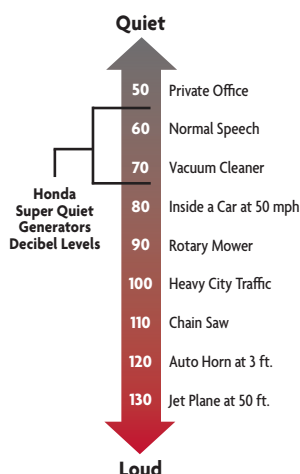
Link an EU2200i and an EU2200i Companion with a parallel kit, and you have enough power to run one RV air conditioner plus other accessories. The versatility of the EU2200i models often makes them a better choice for most campers and RVers than a larger, heavier generator. Use one for most portable power needs at home,

in camp or tailgating, or link two for up to 4400 watts of AC power to run an RV air conditioner. The Companion generator comes with a 30-amp RV-ready outlet for plug-and-play ease. At only 46.5 lbs., the EU2200i and Companion are easy to transport, and the Eco-Throttle automatically adjusts output to power demand, maximizing fuel use while minimizing emissions.

For more power in one compact package, the EU3000i and EU3000i Handi are smart choices, providing up to 3000 watts maximum of clean inverter power for home, work site or RV. EU3000i models can power everything the EU2200i models can, plus a 13,500 BTU air conditioner. Both

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Two 120 Volt
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offer 30-amp RV-ready receptacles, and either come with wheels (EU3000i Handi) or can be fitted with an optional wheel kit (EU3000i) for easier mobility. The EU3000i also offers the convenience of electric start, and the Handi has a unique folding handle that makes it easy to tow wherever you need it.

Need more power for home backup, work site and a couple of RV air conditioners? The EU7000i cranks out up to 7000 watts maximum while making the most of the 5.1 gallon fuel capacity, thanks to efficient electronic fuel injection technology. At only 52 dB at 1/4 load and 58 dB at full rated load, it's super quiet for a portable powerhouse of this size. The EU7000i generator also offers 120/240-volt output to run home appliances and convenient electric starting. Its frame enclosure features a fold-up handle and large, never-flat wheels for mobility.

If you're looking for affordable power for camping,

cabin, work site or home backup, look no further than Honda's EG2800i portable open-frame inverter generator. Producing up to 2800 watts maximum to power lighting, small tools and appliances, it comes with a 30-amp receptacle for your RV or a home transfer switch*, and runs up to 5.1 hours at rated load on only 2.1 gallons of gasoline. The sturdy tubular steel frame protects key components and provides convenient handhold locations for moving the 66.6 lb. generator. Like the EU Series, the EG2800i produces smooth inverter power safe for computers and entertainment electronics.

All EU Series Honda generators and the EG2800i are protected by Honda's three-year warranty and are CARB compliant for 50-state use. All are designed for easy DIY maintenance or can be serviced by any Honda-authorized service center, including any Camping World location.

* Connecting a generator to home power requires a transfer device to avoid possible injury to power company personnel. Consult a qualified electrician for installation. For optimum performance and safety, read the owner's manual before operating your generator. ©2019 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

QUIET

Thanks to inherently quiet four-stroke engines and superior technology, Honda generators boast incredibly low decibel levels.

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EU1000i	■	■	■	■					
EU2200i	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
EG2800i	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
EU3000i	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■ (13,500 BTU)
EU7000i	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■ (15,000 BTU)

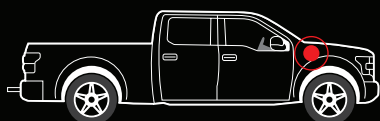


Scan this QR code to learn more about Honda generators!

For optimum performance and safety, we recommend you read the owner's manual before operating your Honda Power Equipment. ©2019 American Honda Motor Co., Inc. Connection of a generator to house power requires a transfer device to avoid possible injury to power company personnel. Consult a qualified electrician. Spark arrestor approved by U.S. Forest Service for use in National Parks.

DIESEL HEART TRANSPLANT

REPLACING THE PROBLEMATIC DURAMAX LML CP4.2 INJECTION PUMP WITH ITS MORE RELIABLE PREDECESSOR, THE CP3, CAN SAVE THOUSANDS IN REPAIR COSTS DOWN THE ROAD WHILE REMAINING EMISSIONS-LEGAL



UPGRADE

FUEL-INJECTION PUMP

Product S&S Diesel CP3 Conversion Kit

Difficulty 

Time to Install 16 hours

Cost \$3,500

www.ssdiesel.com

The diesel equivalent of a heart attack waiting to happen. That's becoming the common perception of the Bosch CP4.2 high-pressure fuel-injection pump found in 2011 to 2016 Chevrolet and GMC Duramax diesels, the same year Ford 6.7-liter Power Strokes and 2014 to 2016 Ram 1500 EcoDiesels.

The "CP4" injection pump, as it's called by many, is the heart of these diesels, and in the past few years it has garnered a reputation for catastrophic

failure, resulting in repair costs north of \$8,000. Failure of the injection pump while the engine is covered under the manufacturer's engine warranty isn't that big a deal to the owner, other than the inconvenience of having the truck laid up for a week at a dealership getting the fuel system replaced. But when the CP4 fails outside of warranty coverage, it's a different story altogether, as the truck owner is faced with a sizable repair bill.

⚠ This 2011 GMC Sierra Denali HD suffered a non-fuel-issue engine failure, requiring a new engine. ASE Master Technician Kevin Phillips at Tony's Garage in Florence, Oregon, handled the work, which included converting the factory CP4.2 fuel-injection pump to an S&S Diesel Motorsport CP3.

CHRONIC HEART FAILURE

Luke Langellier, co-owner of Michigan's S&S Diesel Motorsport and a former Cummins R&D engineer, claims the "fatal flaw" of the Bosch CP4.2 pump is in its design. "The CP4.2 uses a two-lobe cam and two actuators to pressurize the fuel. Each actuator, or bucket, has a metal roller (tappet) that rides on the lobe," he says.

"Contact is metal-to-metal on those rollers, with a thin film of diesel for lubrication. If there's insufficient lubrication, they start to skid instead of roll. That high friction creates high heat, which causes a bunch of metal debris on those two surfaces that are touching and causes the CP4.2 to quickly self-destruct," Langellier explains. "The fatal flaw of the CP4 is not only in the bottom-end design but how it routes that debris into the actual pumping elements and then to the fuel rails, the high-pressure lines and on into the injectors, wiping everything out."

PREVENTIVE CARE

The good news is that the problematic CP4.2 injection pump can be replaced before it fails. The fix is to do a CP3 transplant. The CP3 was a stalwart performer in 6.6-liter



Above left: The Bosch CP4.2 fuel-injection pump, used in 2011 to 2016 6.6-liter Duramax diesels and 6.7-liter Power Strokes, doesn't seem to tolerate ultralow-sulfur diesel (ULSD) as well as expected, which can result in catastrophic failure because the fuel isn't supplying enough lubricant (sulfur) to the pumping mechanism. Right: The Bosch CP4.2 pump's fatal flaw, according to S&S Diesel and other companies that offer CP3 conversion kits, is the design of the actuator that pressurizes the fuel. If any metal particles get between the roller and the carrier it sits in, the roller will skid, creating excessive friction (heat) between it and the lobe it rides on. That results in almost instant pump failure.

Duramax diesels from 2001 to 2010, and it's been the heart of Cummins 5.9-liter and 6.7-liter engines since 2003.

Replacing the CP4 with Bosch's CP3 is not actually a step backward, as the numerical designation might imply. Rather, it's a proven technology that flows more fuel, and it has a stronger and more reliable design than the newer and more cheaply built CP4.2. Should one decide to "tune" the engine, a CP3 can support more horsepower than the CP4 because of the higher fuel volume it's able to feed the injectors. The CP4.2 is said to support fuel for only



OUT WITH THE OLD 1-4 1) The Duramax is like an onion because it has many layers of parts that need to be peeled away to get to the CP4.2 fuel-injection pump. Replacing the pump takes about 16 hours. 2) Among the layers is the EGR system. During this project was a good time to inspect the EGR valve assembly, the EGR tube (shown) and the EGR cooler for excessive carbon buildup because these components have to be removed to get to the problematic injection pump. 3) The Bosch CP4.2 pump is located at the front of the Duramax's engine valley and behind the water pump. Removal of the fuel-injection pump requires removal of the coolant Y-bridge that holds the thermostats. This is a good time to replace the two thermostats, which cost about \$130 for the pair. 4) It usually requires the use of two small pry bars to force the CP4.2 rearward out of the aluminum drive housing because the O-ring around the drive-gear side of the pump seals is very tight.

about 525 horsepower, while a CP3 can support up to 800 horsepower.

A number of aftermarket diesel-performance parts suppliers have kits to do a CP4.2-to-CP3 conversion. The kits cost around \$2,000 and require about two days of shop labor to make the swap.

The only 50-state, CARB-certified CP4.2-to-CP3 conversion kit that we know of at the time of this writing is from S&S Diesel Motorsport. The other conversion kits currently on the market require removing emissions-related components and uploading custom tuning into the ECM, which are against federal emissions laws.

PRESCRIBED TREATMENT

Langellier, along with former Bosch engineers at S&S, developed modifications to the CP3 that allow it to be a bolt-in, smog-legal replacement in

the LML Duramax. The S&S CP3 has been modified inside and out to work seamlessly with all of the LML's emissions components, including properly feeding the "ninth injector" that is critical to the engine being able to do the "regens" to keep the diesel particulate filter clean.

The S&S CP3 has also been modified internally so it matches the critical fuel-flow curves of the factory Duramax LML injection pump to meet the requirements of the piezoelectric Bosch injectors so OEM fuel economy and power remain unaffected.

Such modifications are the key to why the S&S CP3 Conversion Kit (\$2,500 MSRP) is a drop-in CP4.2 replacement, and why RVers towing with the 6.6-liter LML GM HD Duramax should find it an appealing replacement, especially those living in California and other states that have strict registration and licensing

IN WITH THE NEW 5-7 5) The CP3 high-pressure fuel-injection pump (left) is slightly larger bodied than the factory CP4.2 found on the 2011 to 2016 Duramax LML. The CP3 is considered more reliable and robust than the CP4.2, which is why S&S Diesel Motorsport offers it as a 50-state-legal, CARB-compliant bolt-in replacement. 6) S&S Diesel's engineers made multiple internal and external modifications to the factory CP3 pump so it would match the fuel-flow requirements of the LML Duramax's piezoelectric injectors and work seamlessly with the factory EGR system, including the "ninth injector." 7) S&S Diesel's CP3 Conversion Kit includes a new Bosch pump, along with a new high-pressure feed line (foreground) and low-pressure main fuel feed line, because the CP3 pump is longer from front to back than the CP4.2. The CP3 also has just one high-pressure feed to the fuel rail, where the CP4.2 has two.

POWER STROKE BYPASS

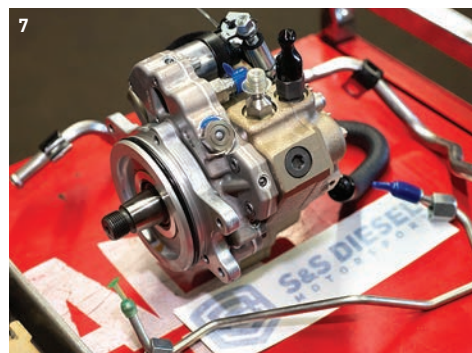
❖ The 2011 to 2016 Ford 6.7-liter Power Stroke utilizes the same CP4.2 found in that era of the Duramax. But because of the way it's implemented in the Power Stroke, it can't be swapped out easily. So S&S Diesel Motorsport has designed a bypass kit to prevent the debris from a grenaded CP4.2 from wiping out the Power Stroke's injectors and flowing through the entire high-pressure side of the fuel system, as it does in a Duramax.

"Basically our 'CP4 fail-safe kit' is an aluminum block that goes on the pump that redirects the factory fuel flow," explains Luke Langellier, S&S co-owner and development engineer. "When the CP4 fails, our Power Stroke filter block prevents that debris from going through the high-pressure system, saving the cost of replacing injectors, lines and fuel rails. But it doesn't prevent the CP4 from failing."

S&S Diesel's Ford CP4.2 Bypass Kit retails for \$360.



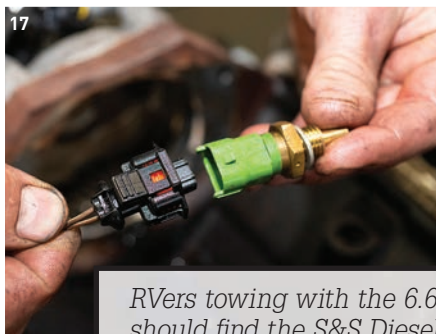
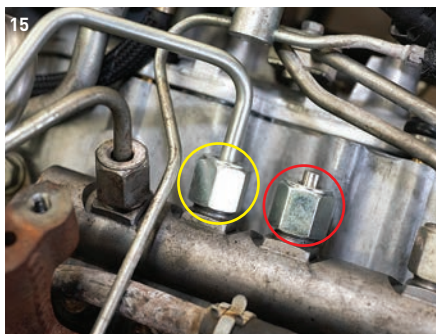
Ⓢ S&S Diesel's "fail-safe" CP4.2 Bypass Kit keeps debris from flooding a Power Stroke's fuel-injection system, avoiding costly repairs if the CP4.2 fails.





HOW TO KEEP A HEALTHY HEART

❖ One tip we learned during the research for this article is never run a diesel engine with a CP4.2 injection pump low or out of fuel. That's the death of a CP4.2. Any air introduced into the fuel system is a sure way to deprive the two actuator roller tappets inside the pump of proper lubrication. Air in the fuel system is such a concern that Bosch has stringent technical procedures to ensure there's no air in the fuel supply, even when putting these pumps on a test bench. For that same reason, it's prudent to install an aftermarket lift pump, such as those offered by FASS and AirDog (pictured), whether using a CP4.2 or CP3. Lift pumps keep the fuel air-free and take some of the workload off the high-pressure injection pump.

TRANSPLANT OPERATION 8-17



8-9) Making the conversion required removing the drive gear and nut from the CP4.2 pump and reinstalling them onto the CP3. Torque on the drive-gear nut is 52 ft-lb. S&S Diesel includes detailed instructions with the kit. **10)** Before installing the CP3 injection pump, remove the fuel regulator from the old CP4.2 and inspect the metal-screened filter on the end. If there is any sign of metal debris on the screen, the fuel tank has to be removed, flushed and the entire fuel system replaced, including high- and low-pressure fuel lines, fuel rails and injectors. **11)** The S&S-modified Bosch CP3 pump is truly a drop-in replacement for the problematic CP4.2. Making the swap is good insurance against having to pay north of \$8,000 in fuel-system repairs when a CP4.2 fails. **12)** The CP3 bolts into the same location as the factory injection pump, using the OEM bolts. The pump-to-block mounting bolts are torqued to 18 ft-lb. **13)** While other CP4.2-to-CP3 conversion kits require the removal of all the emissions components, the S&S CP3 pump has been modified to keep the LML Duramax emissions system intact, including a pressure feed line from the CP3 to the hydrocarbon Doser, aka the "ninth injector." It's torqued to 89 in-lb. **14)** The OEM low-pressure fuel-feed supply line in the valley is replaced with a shorter one that comes with the S&S Diesel kit. This main fuel-supply line is prone to leak if not installed properly. Lubricate the threads and torque the compression fitting to 26 ft-lb. **15)** Another critical area for correct installation of the new CP3 is the high-pressure fuel line to the fuel rail on the passenger's side of the block. S&S provides a new line, which is installed on the forward feed port , while the S&S-supplied block-off nut goes on the adjacent feed port . It's critical that both nuts are torqued to spec (22 ft-lb), as are the other injector lines. Under- or overtightening will result in fuel leaks. **16)** The S&S CP3 reuses the low-pressure fuel-return U-hose. It's important that the rubber hose doesn't touch any of the steel lines, which would eventually wear a hole in the rubber. **17)** The CP4.2 pump has a fuel-temperature sensor screwed into the bottom rear of the housing. That sensor is removed and plugged back into the OEM harness. The CP3 doesn't use this sensor. The plugged-in sensor is secured with a cable-tie next to the pump on the driver's side, where it's held out of the way.

RVers towing with the 6.6-liter LML GM HD Duramax should find the S&S Diesel CP3 Conversion Kit an appealing replacement, especially those living in California and other states that have strict registration and licensing laws backed with emissions tests.

laws backed with emissions tests.

"What we have done with our stock version of the LML CP3 is doing the development work in the back end to make it as easy to install as possible," Langellier says. "It provides LML owners a very reliable solution to the CP4.2 that is a drop-in, emissions-intact replacement, without having to do any other modifications or tuning."

OPEN-HEART SURGERY

S&S Diesel's CP3 kit was installed in a 2011 GMC Sierra HD 2500 at Tony's Garage in Florence, Oregon. The 2011 Crew Cab had suffered an engine failure (due to a non-fuel-related issue), requiring replacement. Anticipating a CP4.2 issue in the future, the S&S CP3 kit was installed on the new GM engine as parts were being reinstalled.

Replacing the CP4.2 can be done at any time, but the best time, short of failure, is when the factory EGR cooler, turbo, injectors or other components require replacement. The Duramax is like an onion, with many layers of parts, plumbing and wiring harnesses. The fuel-injection pump is at a layer deep inside, at the very front of the engine valley, beneath the EGR cooler and behind the thermostat-housing Y-bridge. Getting to the pump requires nearly a half-day of shop time.

If you are already paying for shop labor to replace a failed or plugged EGR cooler or turbo, swapping out the problematic injection pump at the same time is almost labor-free.

The LML Duramax with its new heart — an S&S Diesel CARB-compliant Bosch CP3 — is ready to start pumping. The investment in time and money protects against a possible failure of the OEM CP4.2 fuel-injection pump.



The photos show only the highlights of the CP4.2 replacement steps during the engine swap. These steps should be helpful for any diesel tech contemplating the S&S CP3 pump conversion or knowledgeable DIYers who aren't afraid to tackle such diesel repair work.

The cost of doing just the LML CP4.2-to-CP3 conversion is about \$3,500 for parts and labor. That might take the breath away from many Duramax owners, but compared to the \$8,000-plus it costs should the CP4.2 fail, it's a bargain. The investment in such a conversion should also bring lasting peace of mind and assurance that the LML Duramax will not suffer a catastrophic fuel-injection-pump failure like others have experienced. **TV**

Special thanks to Tony's Garage in Florence, Oregon. www.florenceautorepairs.com

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SPARE-TIRE HIDEAWAY

A STRAIGHTFORWARD DIY INSTALL, BAL'S UNDERMOUNT TIRE CARRIER STOWS A SPARE OUT OF SIGHT

— by Chris Dougherty



TIRE STORAGE

Cost \$109.99
 Difficulty
 Setup 2 hours
 (varies with application)

Carrying the family bicycles on racks designed to be mounted on the rear of a travel or fifth-wheel trailer can be difficult when dealing with a posterior that's adorned with a spare tire. Owners who use the space for storage trays, like the

Mount-n-Lock system on the test trailer, will need to look for an alternative for carrying a spare tire and wheel.

Enter the BAL Hide-A-Spare undermount tire carrier, an easily installed storage system that secures the spare under the trailer. The Hide-A-Spare mount comes in two models: the 28217, which works with trailers with a 70-inch frame width and recesses the tire for trailers without underbelly enclosures, and the 28218, an under-slung mount for trailers with an enclosed underbelly.

While the recessed unit will affect ground clearance minimally, the under-slung model sits down from the frame

a full 10 inches, so you'll need to verify sufficient ground clearance in the rear or front of the trailer before installing.

Once installed, the Hide-A-Spare uses a telescoping mounting system that allows the tire to be pulled down and away from the trailer when needed. It must be mounted so that the tire is pulled toward the curbside, away from traffic, in case the spare is needed while on the road.

Installation is pretty straightforward, but it does require dropping the underbelly, accessing both sides of the frame and drilling numerous holes through steel. Due to variables in trailer-frame design and configuration, no mounting hardware is included. We used grade-5 bolts and nylon-insert locknuts; however, tapping and bolting directly to the frame is acceptable. The closer the spare tire is mounted to the rear axle, the less chance of ground-clearance issues.

On the test trailer, a Lippert Ground Control TT automatic leveling system is installed closer to the axles, but there's considerable ground clearance, so there was no issue attaching the Hide-A-Spare toward the rear. Plan the



GOING UNDER

1) After deciding on a general location based on ground clearance and obstructions, the underbelly was dropped, which may require prying out original fasteners and replacing them with self-drilling screws and washers. The brackets were then set in place 2 feet from the rear of the frame, in this case. 2-3) Brackets were clamped in place and holes predrilled. Bolts and locknuts were used on all the holes. A minimum of two 5/16-inch bolts must be used along with the remaining self-drilling screws, per BAL's instructions. 4) Some wiring was moved out of the way for this installation and resecured once the brackets were bolted in place. The tire mount was assembled following the directions, and the underbelly was reinstalled.

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H A N D S O N



5) The tire mount pipes are extended, lubricated, and the spare tire is securely bolted to the mount with the included bolts. The bolts must be secure but not overtightened. Antiseize lubricant is also recommended.

6) The tire mount is retracted and lifted into place on the bracket, and the locking knob is screwed down and pinned in place. It's a good idea to use antiseize lubricant here. Lifting the tire and wheel into place can be a bit difficult, so ask for help if needed.

installation ahead of time, and make sure you have the right hardware before beginning the project.

We have driven more than 2,000 miles since the install with no issues, except for seeing some corrosion on the hardware. Adding antiseize lubricant to the tire bolts and the locking knob is recommended to prevent future problems. Otherwise, the Hide-A-Spare is a handy and relatively inexpensive (\$109.99 MSRP) solution for keeping the spare tire out of the way when using other accessories on the south end of your northbound trailer. **TL**

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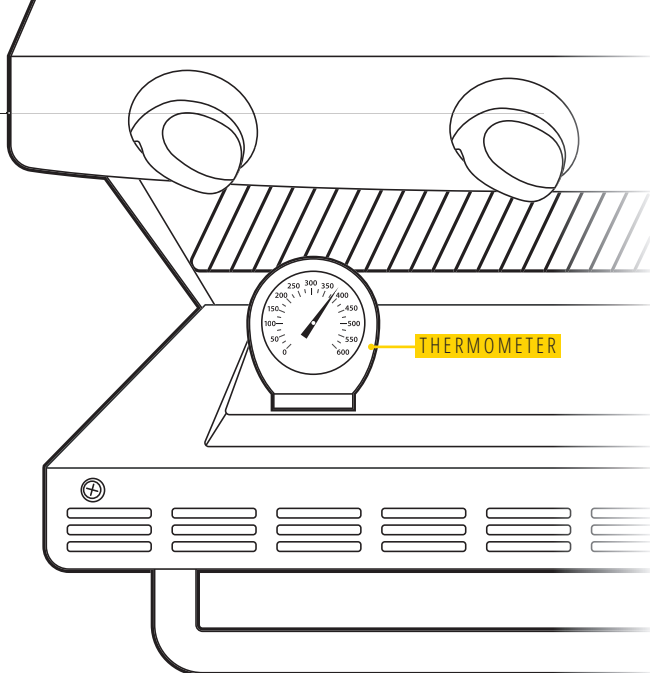




COOKED TO PERFECTION

Obtaining consistent oven temperature in our RV is more difficult than in our house. After some experimenting, we found what works for us. We installed an oven thermometer on the inside of the oven door via a single screw so that it fits with about a 1½-inch clearance from the top and side with the readout facing upward. It is not in the way of the baking rack when the door is closed, and it is easy to read the temperature when slightly opening the oven door.

Glenn Carlson, Portland, Oregon



Wash and Go

• Our friends told us they would get a blast of cold water while taking showers when using the on/off valve on the showerhead to conserve water. The first two trailers we owned didn't do this, but when we purchased our third one, we understood what they were going through.

The dealer told us this is something you just have to put up with. My husband, who was a maintenance engineer for 40 years, wouldn't accept this and came up

with an easy fix. He installed an on/off faucet and shower valve (inset) from KES at the base of the shower hose, which took about 10 minutes. He had tried "big-box store" valves, but they leaked. No more cold showers, and as a bonus, the valve is easier to find and use when we're all soaped up.

Bernie and Skeeter Meyer, Neenah, Wisconsin



Cool Fridge

• Last year, after arriving in Arizona in September, we discovered that our RV's refrigerator was struggling to stay cool with outside temperatures averaging in the 90s. I made a shade to keep direct sunlight from baking the outside of the unit. I took some scrap ¾-inch plywood and made two simple wood brackets (inset) that I spray-painted black to protect them from the weather. These brackets are removable and fit at the top of the slideout.

I then used vinyl material to make the shade, and put wood strips at the top and bottom to add weight so it doesn't blow around. It was easy to make and install, and the best part is that it works as designed. I left a lot of clearance between the slideout and the material to allow for airflow, plus ventilation for the refrigerator's inlet and exhaust vents.

I also use a couple of ropes at the bottom that I stake down for extra protection in case the wind kicks up. When not in use, the shade rolls up easily to be stored, and I can set it up and take it down in minutes.

Bert Hedrick, Littleton, Colorado



➔ **Give your fridge a breath of fresh air!** RV absorption refrigerators need air, inside and out. If you're having difficulty with your RV's fridge staying cold, consider these tips:

1) Don't stuff the refrigerator too tightly. It must have air circulation. Try using a battery-powered fridge fan.

2) There must be good air circulation behind the refrigerator, too. Check the installation manual against the refrigerator's install for proper spacing, and get it corrected if needed. A solar or 12-volt DC rear fridge fan might help, or the shade mentioned in Bert Hedrick's tip (left).

—Chris Dougherty



To submit a DIY tip, email 10minutetech@trailerlife.com or write to *Trailer Life*, 10-Minute Tech, 2750 Park View Court, Suite 240, Oxnard, California 93036. Provide a selection of good-quality high-resolution photos. *Trailer Life* will pay \$35 for original 10-Minute Tech ideas. All payments require an SSN or FEIN.



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INVESTMENT 🔄 **Cost:** \$187 | **Time:** 2 hours

My Airstream wasn't equipped with an exterior speaker, so I installed the King RV Media speaker-and-light combo on the outside of my "silver bullet." It comes in white or black, neither of which matched the Airstream. I ordered the white one, disassembled it and painted the outer cover a dull aluminum to match the trailer.

After waiting a day for it to dry, I installed the freshly painted speaker-light in place of the patio light below the curbside awning. I carefully removed the chrome bezel and existing light, and connected the two 12-volt DC wires to the new fixture's supplied plug.

Mounting the fixture was pretty easy. I caulked the old screw holes, then installed the supplied gaskets on the speaker. With the trailer level, I leveled the speaker-light, drilled some small holes and screwed it down, but not too tight, making sure I didn't over-compress the gasket. I chose not to use the steel hangers included in the kit.



LIGHTS, MUSIC, ACTION! Dave Dietz upgraded his Airstream with an exterior-speaker-and-LED-light combo. After painting the white fixture (above) a dull aluminum color, he installed it in place of the trailer's patio light (top).

They are for a temporary mounting and allow the speaker to be removed for use elsewhere with the optional adapter.

So, how does it work? The speaker streams music and has a deep bass sound from the 100-watt, four-driver speaker system. The light is dimmable, and the LEDs produce any color you could want, including an amber bug light. I really like that the new fixture points down and not out like the old light did. Considering how much snow we had this past winter, it's a good thing it's weatherproof.

— **Dave Dietz**, Hinckley, Ohio **TL**

RV RENOVATIONS

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www.fizzics.com



STAFF PICK ✨ This can easily make your campsite the hit of the RV park. Who wouldn't want to belly up to the bar after a day outdoors? For those who love craft draft beer, you can taste the difference the DraftPour makes.
— Erin Peters, Digital Media Manager



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A drop-in replacement for Atwood and Dometic RV water heaters with aluminum tanks, the 6-gallon Suburban Advantage has a porcelain-lined steel tank and an aluminum or magnesium anode rod to guard against corrosion. Flue-tube baffles and 10,000 Btu per hour on LP-gas give it a fast recovery time. An optional electric element takes advantage of shorepower or generator power to heat water and speed recovery. Available on/off switches control LP-gas ignition and the electronic element from inside the RV.

www.airxcel.com/suburban



YAMAHA EF2200iS INVERTER GENERATOR \$1,099

Yamaha claims it built the new EF2200iS portable inverter generator with RVing in mind. Weighing 55 pounds and equipped with a high-output engine, the EF2200iS has three handles for portability and supplies a maximum 2,200 watts of power. It can run continuously for more than 10 hours at 25 percent load, with a noise level rated at 57 to 65 decibels, according to the company. A load-sensing control allows greater fuel efficiency and noise reduction.

www.yamahamotor.com/generator



GIRAFFEG4 COLLISION AVOIDANCE SYSTEM \$249.95

The GiraffeG4 low-clearance warning system takes the guesswork out of gauging the height of overhead objects before they can damage your RV. Using sound waves emitted from an external sensor attached to the vehicle with a magnetic mount, the system measures the height of overpasses, tree branches and other hazards, and the in-cab monitor displays the measurements prior to and as the vehicle travels under them. If an obstacle is going to collide with the roof or anything mounted on it, the monitor instantly warns the driver.

www.giraffeg4.com

REDARC DUAL-INPUT BATTERY CHARGER \$369.96

A state-of-the-art in-vehicle 25-amp DC-to-DC battery charger, the Redarc BCDC1225D is designed to fully charge a trailer's battery bank while on the move. Separate 12-volt DC and solar inputs allow it to prioritize solar charging to take the load off the tow vehicle's alternator. The compact BCDC1225D is compatible with AGM, gel, standard lead-acid, calcium and LiFePO4 batteries, and standard or variable/smart alternators. It can be mounted in a variety of locations, from the tow vehicle's engine bay to the inside or outside of the trailer.

www.redarcelectronics.com/bcdc





KING ONE PRO SATELLITE ANTENNA \$549

Designed for mobile use, the King One Pro antenna works with three satellite-TV providers: DirecTV, Dish and Canada's Bell. According to King, the One Pro is the only antenna on the market that automatically configures for U.S. satellite service without the use of DIP switches. The portable or roof-mounted antenna offers upgraded electronics to increase scanning speed and features a clear cover so users can see what direction it's pointing. An integrated handle on the compact antenna makes it easy to carry.

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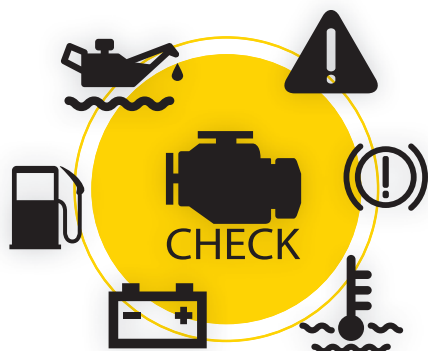
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GO FURTHER?

After his heavy-duty pickup broke down seven times, a frustrated Kentucky reader turned to RV Resolutions for help:

“I bought a 2016 Ford F-350 to tow my 34-foot Jayco with three slides. It pulls effortlessly and rides comfortably — when it runs! The dash cluster flashes a series of warning lights, and when I turn off the engine, it will not restart. This happens when we are towing and when we are not towing.

Since May 2017, the truck has broken down seven times and been to four different Ford service

dealers. Obviously, there is something wrong that isn't being found — four dealerships' mechanics have tried to fix it with no success. Ford did give us an extra 100,000 miles under our extended warranty, but this was a pacifying gesture that hasn't solved the issue.

We are getting gun-shy to travel with this truck. Our greatest fear is that it is going to break down in the middle of nowhere. We like to travel with the Jayco about six months of the year and would love to continue if we could have confidence in our towing vehicle. Any assistance you could give us would be greatly appreciated.

Richard Meyung, Warsaw, Kentucky

RV Resolutions conveyed Richard Meyung's circumstances to Ford Motor Company. Although we did not hear back directly from Ford, Meyung let us know that his complaint had been resolved to his satisfaction:

“Ford had a field-service engineer from Detroit fly to Kentucky to go over the vehicle. Although he could not duplicate the problem, he did authorize some fixes. He replaced three wiring harnesses, eight connector pins and some additional parts. We're hoping this will solve the issue for good. We just returned from a 4,000-mile trip and didn't encounter any mechanical issues. What a relief!

I truly appreciate your efforts to help us. We have had success with previous RV Resolutions inquiries, and, hopefully, we will not have to contact *Trailer Life* again.

R.M.

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Parts and Labor

The owner of a new travel trailer asked for help when he had trouble getting warranty reimbursement for repairs:

“I am writing regarding Forest River’s refusal to reimburse me for repairs to my 2018 R-Pod RP-179. After purchasing this trailer from Cheyenne Camping Center in Walcott, Iowa, and towing it home to Montana, we experienced several problems.

First, the slideout’s interior vertical molding caught on the lower storage compartment’s lid and tore off. Then the freshwater tank fell off, tearing out the filler and vent hoses and deforming the support Z-channel. The black-water discharge pipe’s support bracket broke, and the gray-water discharge pipe’s support clamp is too small and the screw is too short. Finally, the awning’s telescoping support legs do not lock.

The nearest dealer is a 100-mile-plus round-trip from our home. They do not stock parts, and we would have

to deliver the trailer, go home and then come back after repairs were made. After discussing the problems with Rich Lonsdale, manager of customer service at Cheyenne, I prepared a report for Forest River describing the issues, materials needed and itemized time for me to perform the labor.

Heather Horton, Forest River’s warranty representative, had Cheyenne submit a normal warranty claim, then rejected it based on Cheyenne’s \$145-per-hour labor rate. I suggested that it would be acceptable to me to reduce Cheyenne’s rate by 50 percent, since I was doing the work. Rich received a denial of the claim except for materials. I am asking to be reimbursed for the cost of about 10 hours of labor.

Robert Leach, Ennis, Montana

THE COMPANY RESPONDS

We received the following letter from Forest River’s warranty department:

Thank you for reaching out to Forest River to assist our customer, Robert Leach. Forest River will be paying Mr. Leach for correcting the concerns himself.

Susan Thornberg

Warranty, Parts and Service Manager
Forest River, Goshen, Indiana

A month later, RV Resolutions heard from Robert Leach again:

“I got a \$681 check from Forest River, which seems fair. Thanks for your help.
R.L.”

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RV Resolutions is *Trailer Life*’s forum for the settlement of conflicts between consumers and RV dealers and manufacturers, accessory suppliers and service providers. After exhausting all other resources without success, mail a typed letter to *Trailer Life* RV Resolutions, 2750 Park View Court, Suite 240, Oxnard, California 93036. Include copies of appropriate bills and correspondence along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Selected letters will be edited and published unless otherwise requested.

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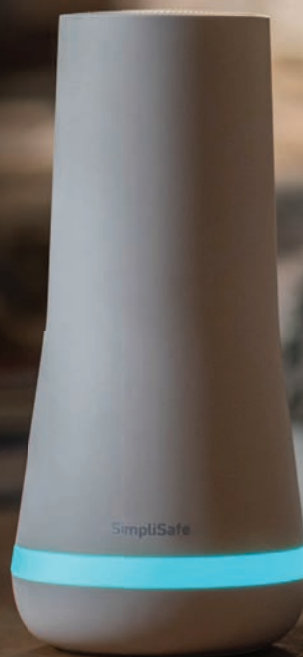
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GENERATOR SELECTION

Q We purchased our first trailer last year, a 2016 Keystone Cougar 326RDS. We've used it quite a bit and absolutely love it. The only problem we had was when it was 110 degrees outside and the 50-amp circuit at the site was not working. We plugged into the 30-amp, and things powered up. The single air-conditioning unit we have was working but had trouble keeping things cool until nightfall. We also had the refrigerator running on electric. After a few hours, we opened the fridge to find that things were not cold. So we switched the fridge to propane, and it worked better.

The next day, maintenance fixed the 50-amp circuit. The fridge was switched back to electric, and things worked fine. We are now looking into getting a portable generator but are not sure which to choose. We are thinking 50-amp so everything will work properly. But we want one that is quiet enough so as not to annoy other campers or even ourselves. Do you have any recommendations for good-quality portable generators?

Tim Etner, York, Pennsylvania

A Whatever you do, don't buy the cheapest generator you can find. An inexpensive generator sold as a "contractor's special" or some such will be OK on a jobsite for running a power saw, workspace lights and similar equipment, but it may not be a good idea for delicate electronics found in today's RVs. Ideally, an inverter-style generator is best for powering such fragile devices because it produces "clean" power, but those generators are more expensive, and one large enough to supply 50 amps of power is not going to be cheap, and probably not practical to haul around.

If you can get by with just 30 amps of power from a generator, some manufacturers have available kits to combine the output of two smaller generators. Honda sells a "piggyback" kit for its EU2000i inverter-type generator that results in 30 amps of available power. Other manufacturers offer similar products. (Check out Chris Dougherty's "Power Couple" article in the January 2019 issue about the Energizer eZV parallel kit to connect two eZV P-series portable inverter generators.)

As for noise, each manufacturer posts sound specifications, listed as decibels or dB, for each generator. That's what you need to look for regarding noise level; the lower the dB, the better. Do a search on *Trailer Life's* website for "Portable Generators

Are Power Players" for suggestions on how to choose a portable generator for RV use. Included with that article is a chart with some of the most popular generators for RVs and their decibel ratings, weights, run times and so on. It's a good idea to research in advance what the policy is for generators for the campgrounds you'll be visiting.

Chassis Service

Q Can you provide a guide for RV suspension, axle, wheel and brake maintenance in a future issue? A mechanical system overview and important maintenance intervals, checks and tips would be appreciated.

Paul Madey, Canonsburg, Pennsylvania

A That information is readily available now, Paul, in the owner's manuals for the components in question. You didn't say what year, make or model of RV you own so we can't make specific recommendations, but most new RVs are sold with a full complement of owner's manuals that cover the manufacturer's recommended maintenance procedures, service intervals and so on. If you don't have these manuals, they are readily available online by searching a manufacturer's website or doing a broader-based online search.

I recommend you go to the *Trailer Life* website, go the drop-down Tech menu, then choose the Tech Q&A

section. We answer this and closely related questions many times in the RV Clinic column, and perusing the past letters posted on our website can likely give you even more specific information.

Freshwater Not So Fresh

Q We have a disgusting problem with our 2013 Keystone Passport's 43-gallon freshwater holding tank. We usually don't travel with more than 10 gallons, and much of the time the water goes mostly unused since we frequent RV parks with hookups. The water is refreshed on every one of our many outings. Several times we have sterilized the tank by adding chlorine and letting it slosh around before dumping and refilling.

Before our last outing in the fall, I unscrewed the tank drain cap and almost nothing came out. I poked a rod up the drain pipe and out comes an off-white gooey substance, then the tank drained. I believe there is more of that goop lurking in the drain pipe or the bottom of the holding tank. What the heck could that substance be and how do I flush and truly clean the tank?

Steven Smith, Eureka, Missouri

A It's surprising that the usual bleach-and-rinse procedure didn't help, Steven, and it's hard to identify exactly that substance. That's what we might expect to see in a fresh tank that's been in storage a long time or has not been adequately maintained, but your service details rule out those possibilities. As a suggestion, Thetford has a new product called Fresh Water Tank Sanitizer that's a two-part, two-step system for cleaning a freshwater tank. Give it a try and see if that helps, and be sure to run the treated water through the entire RV water system to catch any goop remaining in the lines.

Tow-Vehicle Selection

Q I'm sure you get asked this all the time, but my family and I are new to RVing. We just bought our first travel trailer and are now shopping for a truck to pull it. The specs in the *Trailer Life* tow guides are different than what I see



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on the vehicle manufacturer websites, which are, of course, different than what I see on the vehicle window stickers, which are, of course, different than what I hear from the salesperson's mouth! How do I know which is correct? Thanks for any help you can provide!

Fred Smith, Chicago, Illinois

A You're right, Fred, we do cover this topic on a regular basis. For starters I recommend you go to our website, www.trailerlife.com, click on the drop-down Tech menu, then choose the Tech Q&A section. We answer this and closely related questions many times in the RV Clinic column, and perusing the past letters posted on our website can likely give you even more specific information.

You won't find a vehicle's tow rating on every vehicle's doorjamb data label or its window sticker, unless the manufacturer has changed its window sticker information range. GM and Ram have started putting trailering information

RV CLINIC FAQ

FOR THE ANSWERS TO TRAILER LIFE READERS' TOP 20 TECHNICAL QUESTIONS, VISIT WWW.TRAILERLIFE.COM/TECH/RV-CLINIC-FAQ

stickers on their trucks listing the gross combined weight rating (gcwr) and curb weight for that particular truck. I also doubt that any one salesperson can have every truck hardware combination and its tow rating committed to memory, and many of them may misinterpret what they read in the manufacturer's tow-rating guide. Salespeople may also be hoping for an easy sale, and they've been known to stretch things a bit.

A manufacturer's towing guide is the best source of specific tow-rating details. That guide takes into account wheelbase, body style, engine, transmission, axle ratio and all the variables that contribute to a tow rating. These details, plus the inevitable footnotes that can accompany the ratings charts, will help you focus on the tow rating for the vehicle you have in mind.

As an aside, the *Trailer Life* towing guides we publish each year are compiled based on information supplied by the vehicle manufacturers. Due to publishing lead times, the information we receive may change by the time the same data set reaches the dealerships. If in doubt, go by the manufacturers' towing guide, either in print from the dealership or online at the manufacturer's website.

Chassis Lift and Wastewater Flow

Q I have a 2018 Winnebago Micro Minnie 2106DS. As other owners of this series advised you, the sewer discharge is very low. In March's Letters column, Sean Henriques states, "A call to Winnebago revealed that it's possible to lift the rear by moving the placement of the spring-hanger bolts." What are the "spring-hanger bolts" and where are they adjusted to?

By the way, I contacted Winnebago about the off-road kit that would have lifted the trailer. The kit must be



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ordered with a unit from Winnebago; it cannot be added later. It should be standard! I found aftermarket lift kits, but I'm concerned as to how these kits might affect the dynamics of the trailer.

Yuki Ochi, El Cajon, California

A As near as I can tell from your letter, the trailer's black-tank dump valve outlet is low to the ground so you want to raise the trailer on its axles to provide more ground clearance for the pipe. The spring-hanger bolts are part of the suspension system that fastens the axles to the trailer. If you are not familiar with this part, I suggest taking the trailer to an RV, frame, chassis or suspension shop where it can make a safe modification. The mechanic can adjust the suspension or swap the axles under the springs to affect a lift, for example. Don't worry about the "official" Winnebago kit; there are things that can be done without the manufacturer's help, per the shop recommendation. Raising the trailer a few inches isn't going to adversely affect its handling or stability.

Tank-Dump Hose Procedures

Q I started camping in 1970, and I see all these new RVers connect dump hoses in the campgrounds. Some even have those plastic caterpillar contraptions under their hoses to make the right drain angle. Do you think they should leave the valve open or shut?

My view is shut. They should let the black and gray tanks get full, then open the black first, followed by the gray to rinse the hose. I think if left open they run the risk of creating a pyramid and possibly clogging their hose with solid waste and toilet paper. After dumping, they can connect a hose to the black tank and rinse.

Ron Mann, Winslow, Arkansas

A There are adherents on both sides of this situation, Ron, but we definitely recommend that owners keep the black-tank valve closed until they're ready to dump, for exactly the reason you state.

An RV toilet flushes with far less water volume than a residential toilet.

Each RV flush does not use enough water to adequately move the waste all the way from the toilet waste pipe through the tank and down the sewer hose. By keeping the black-tank valve shut until dumping and adding some extra flush water as insurance, the waste can be effectively flushed.

Electrical Handle Short Circuit

Q I wanted to make owners aware of a possible electrical hazard within the 2018 Cedar Creek Silverback 33IK fifth-wheel. Last March, I found this electrical hazard on the step handrail adjacent to the bathroom. The handrail screw pierced the electrical feed to the front air conditioner.

Upon leaving the bathroom, I grabbed the handrail, which was screwed into the wallboard only, pulled the handrail from the wallboard, and my finger touched the handrail mounting screw. I got the shock of my life and was knocked into the adjacent wall. The GFCI breaker tripped. It took approximately six months for repair approval from the factory. I was told by Cedar Creek customer service that front AC power wiring was not shown in the outside wall.

Mike Ruvo, Belvedere, South Carolina

A I doubt this problem exists in every trailer of that model, Mike, but since they're built on an assembly line with the same general accessory installation and electrical cable routing and installation, it probably wouldn't hurt for owners to check with a multimeter.

Place one probe of the multimeter in a wall outlet ground pin hole and touch the other probe to the suspect metal item. If it shows current flow, take the RV to your local dealer for professional repair. Running a mounting screw into a wire isn't unheard of, but it can happen in any number of accessory installations.

RV Brake-Shoe Replacement

Q I'm wondering if, instead of using the normal RV replacement brake shoes, it's possible to find automotive brake shoes that will fit and work well. Would they last longer?

Mark O'Connell, Rockledge, Florida

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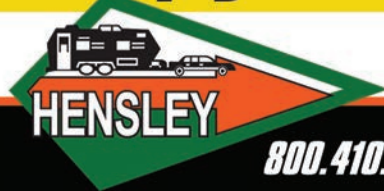
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A The RV brake shoes made for your trailer are very similar in casual appearance to automotive brake shoes, Mark, and I'm not aware of any "high-performance" alternatives. You'll need to use the brake shoes designed for the trailer.

COMMENT: WHEEL AND TIRE MATCHUP

➔ I guess you are never too old to learn something new. We have purchased six RVs so far. The tires that came with our fifth-wheel were manufactured in May 2015. Since they were some off-brand and because of tire age, I decided to upgrade from a G-rated tire to an H-rated tire. When I purchased the tires, they inflated them to only 80 psi, even though the tire sidewall says they could be inflated to 105 psi. I asked them why, and they said the rims on the trailer were rated for only 80 psi. I was not sure of what I was told, so I asked another dealer and was given the same answer — that the rims could split at a higher psi. So before you just go by what the tire can be inflated to, it would be best to make sure the rims on the RV can handle the extra pressure.

John Hext, Fredericksburg, Texas.

You make an excellent point, John. It's always important to make sure the tire and rim load ranges are compatible. It doesn't do much good to get higher rated tires if you can't safely use that capacity. Each wheel has a load rating that's either stamped in the steel rim or the hub area, cast into the aluminum or otherwise permanently part of the wheel. For cosmetic reasons, this rating is usually on the backside of the wheel, but it's not hard to find. Pay attention to it, and you can avoid an overloaded wheel problem later down the road.

New Truck, New Hitch Mounts

Q I've been a reader of *Trailer Life* for a number of years and haven't seen this question before. I've been towing a Rockwood fifth-wheel for four years with my very capable Ford F-150. It's soon time to change trucks, and as I started to research, I talked to my RV dealer and asked about hitches. He said I would have to buy a new hitch for the new truck. I wanted to check around to see if I was given correct information. Why can't I keep the Reese 16K and just have new rails



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Norm Underwood, Bloomfield, New York

A Your local truck or RV dealer may not have the necessary specifications. Every hitch is made to fit some type of base rail or puck mounting system so it can be used on different trucks. It's best to check with Reese directly (www.reeseprod.com).

Towing a fifth-wheel with a half-ton 1500-series truck is fine as long as the trailer does not exceed the truck's manufacturer-specified tow or rear axle rating. Be sure to keep an eye on those figures and know what your trailer weighs when loaded and ready for the road to avoid an overloaded situation.

New Truck, Hitch Brackets

Q I tow a Jayco fifth-wheel with my 2015 Ram 1500. In October 2018 I purchased a 2019 Ram 1500 only to find out that the hitch brackets would not fit the new truck. eTrailer and the rest of the hitch suppliers have not heard of a release date for the bracket kit that will fit this truck. Do you have any contacts that might provide a prospective date for the release of this kit?

Bill Chicky, Georgetown, Texas

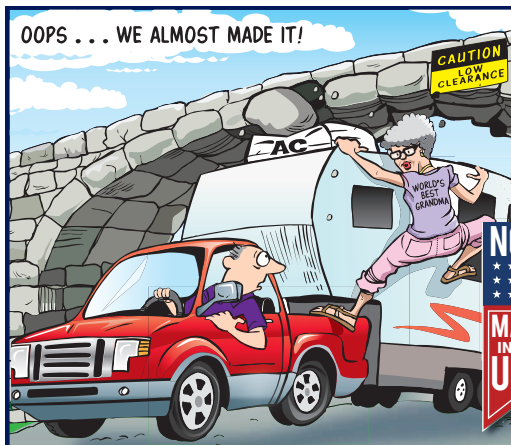
A There are times when the availability of aftermarket parts for a new vehicle tends to lag behind the release of the new truck, and we've seen this happen before. Typically, the truck manufacturers give the aftermarket-accessory guys an early look at new models before the public release date for the truck, so the aftermarket can have its product ready to sell as soon as possible in conjunction with the new-vehicle launch. That's the theory, but it doesn't always work. Hang in there, and you should find the adapters you need to match your hitch to the new truck.

Note: We checked Demco's website later and let Bill Chicky know that the part showed up. Bill contacted us again and said he did indeed find the part, a Demco mounting kit, part number 8552032.

Breakaway-Switch Failure

Q We have a 2011 Blue Ridge fifth-wheel by (continued on page 106)

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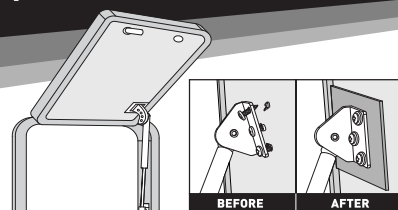
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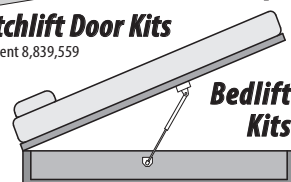
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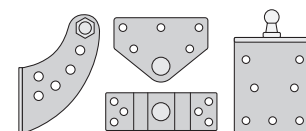


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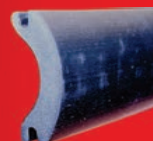
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RV CLINIC

(continued from page 101)

Forest River, bought new in 2011. We've put quite a few miles on it but not excessive. Recently, we noticed that the breakaway unit where the cable plugs into had been hot and melted somewhat. The brake system still worked properly, but we wondered why it had melted. We purchased a new unit to install, and it all works as it should and as it always has. We have never noticed any improper actions with the brakes. We always leave the cable plugged in when we aren't using the RV because the label says it must be plugged into a 12-volt DC system to work properly. Any thoughts on why the unit melted?

R. and V. Himes, Gun Barrel City, Texas

A Those emergency breakaway switches are generally pretty foolproof, as witnessed by many hundreds of thousands of them in use, but any product can have a failure. The switch has no current flowing through it until the plug is pulled. One wire is "hot" — 12 volts DC from the trailer battery — and the other connects to the trailer brake power line. With no current flowing through it, there's no reason for it to heat up.

Your trailer is fairly new, and you aren't very close to the ocean, so saltwater or old-age corrosion can probably be ruled out. The removable plug may be defective and allowing a very small switch contact area, which would bleed some current through and cause overheating. This would cause some, but not much, trailer braking, though it may not be enough for you to notice. The plug may not have been fully seated, which could also cause a small current leak. Make sure the plug is fully inserted in the new switch, and you should be OK.

More on Breakaway-Switch Failure

Q I appreciated Donald J. Ahola's "Breakaway-Switch Failure" warning in the March 2019 issue on the possibility of overheating wires on the breakaway switch. I also think you dismissed it too lightly. I can't say that

SYNCRO
CORPORATION

Hayes
Towing Electronics

Safety Recall of Hayes Sway Master®

Hayes Towing Electronics Sway Master Part Number 81775

Syncro and Hayes desire to provide their valued customers with safe, dependable, high-quality products and proudly stand behind their products. In keeping with these values, Syncro and Hayes have initiated a recall of their Sway Master® trailer stability control product to eliminate a potential safety issue at no cost to the customer. Syncro has found that the Sway Master® is incompatible with some make and model tow vehicles that use factory-installed integrated brake controllers. When the Sway Master® unit triggers and independently applies trailer brakes for stability control, some factory-installed, integrated brake controllers may detect a fault and turn off trailer detection by the tow vehicle. If the tow vehicle does not recognize a trailer, it will not apply trailer brakes. The absence of trailer brakes may contribute to loss of control and a resulting accident.

Syncro and Hayes want to eliminate this incompatibility issue in your Sway Master® free of charge. If you own or operate a Sway Master® model number 81775, please call Hayes Towing Electronics Customer Service at 1-800-882-1204 or email customerservice@hayesbc.com for instructions on how to return your unit for an upgrade that remedies the safety issue at no cost to you.

Syncro Corporation and Hayes Towing Electronics apologize for any inconvenience and ask that you help them protect you and your passengers' safety by returning your Sway Master® units for the free safety upgrade.



I've ever thought about using it as a parking brake, but to overheat wires to the point of melting and possibly causing a fire is a poor design. Stuff happens. That's what fuses are for.

I can't imagine the scenario where my rig disconnects and that pin gets properly pulled. If it does happen, I would think a whole lot of other things might be going on, like an accident, in which case no one's going to be thinking that they need to put that pin back before the camper catches fire. One might be altering the conditions of an accident investigation.

The fact that millions of trailers may have the same design doesn't make it a good one. Does the airbag recall come to mind? Or maybe the recall on my pickup, where it can shift into first gear on its own while traveling down the highway? That one goes back to 2011. That's a lot of trucks, and only a few have had the issue. It's still a design problem.

Mike Heisler, Lansing, New York

A The breakaway switch on most travel and fifth-wheel trailers is specifically designed for short-term use during an emergency situation in which a trailer becomes unhitched. The fact remains that Ahola used his breakaway switch in an entirely wrong manner. There is no design problem with the breakaway switch, and although its design may not be 100 percent perfect, it's what's in use on every trailer with electric brakes, and it's a good idea to understand how to use it in that application.

Under the severe circumstances that would cause a trailer to come unhitched and then activate the breakaway switch, I agree that you have other things to worry about than plugging the breakaway switch pin back in its housing, but properly used, that's what is required. **TL**

HAVE A TECH QUESTION ?

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

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3000	RUNNING WATTS	2800
100 LBS.	WEIGHT	131 LBS.
2.6 gal.	TANK SIZE	3.4 gal.
4	OUTLETS	4
YES	OVERLOAD PROTECTION	YES
212cc	ENGINE SIZE	196cc
YES	LOW OIL ALERT	YES
YES	PARALLEL CAPABLE	YES
YES	POWER SAVER	YES



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58890739

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC



3 GALLON, 100 PSI OIL-FREE AIR COMPRESSORS
A. HOT DOG
ITEM 69269/97080 shown
B. PANCAKE
ITEM 61615/60637 95275 shown

Customer Rating ★★★★★
• Air delivery: 0.6 CFM @ 90 PSI

COMPARE TO PORTER-CABLE MODEL: PCFP02003
ITEM 61615/60637 95275 shown
58891584
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\$39.99
\$56.99

SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating ★★★★★
7 FT. 4" x 9 FT. 6" ALL PURPOSE/WEATHER RESISTANT TARP



COMPARE TO BLUE HAWK MODEL: B0810-Y
ITEM 69115/69121/69129/69137/69249/877 shown
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COVER PRO



10 FT. x 17 FT. PORTABLE GARAGE
Customer Rating ★★★★★

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Customer Rating ★★★★★
NOW \$19.99

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58896809
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BADLAND

2500 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH WIRELESS REMOTE CONTROL
• Weighs 14.3 lbs.
• 11-1/8" L
• 4-1/2" H

COMPARE TO SUPERWINCH MODEL: 1125220
ITEM 68146/61297/63476/61840 shown
58897382
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SUPER COUPON

SOLAR ROPE LIGHT
• Great outdoor accent lighting
• Super bright light

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58897763
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HaulMaster

Customer Rating ★★★★★
3/8" x 14 FT. GRADE 43 TOWING CHAIN
• 5400 lb. capacity



COMPARE TO MIBRO MODEL: 426920
ITEM 60658/97711 shown
58897925
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PORTLAND

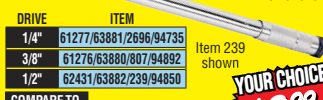
1750 PSI ELECTRIC PRESSURE WASHER
• 1.3 GPM
• Adjustable spray nozzle



COMPARE TO BRIGGS & STRATTON MODEL: 20600
ITEM 63255/63254 shown
58899680
LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 8/16/19*

PITTSBURGH

Customer Rating ★★★★★
CLICK-TYPE TORQUE WRENCHES
LIFETIME WARRANTY
• Reversible



COMPARE TO HUSKY MODEL: H20TWA
ITEM 61276/63880/807/94892 62431/63882/239/94850 shown
58900754
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CHICAGO ELECTRIC

12" DUAL-BEVEL SLIDING COMPOUND MITER SAW
• Laser guide



COMPARE TO PROFESSIONAL WOODWORKER MODEL: 8837
ITEM 69684/61970/61969 shown
58901661
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SUPER COUPON

16" x 30" TWO SHELF STEEL SERVICE CART
Customer Rating ★★★★★



COMPARE TO EDSEL MODEL: SC2016
ITEM 60390/5107 shown
58904363
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PITTSBURGH

32 PIECE SCREWDRIVER SET
LIFETIME WARRANTY



COMPARE TO PERFORMAX MODEL: 48201
ITEM 61259/90764 shown
58904704
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CHICAGO ELECTRIC

RECIPROCATING SAW WITH ROTATING HANDLE



COMPARE TO PORTER-CABLE MODEL: PC360
ITEM 65570/61884/62370 shown
58905260
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SUPER COUPON

PICKUP AND REACH TOOL
Customer Rating ★★★★★
• 36" reach
• Easy grip



COMPARE TO ARCMATE MODEL: 325
ITEM 94870/62176/61413 shown
58912226
LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 8/16/19*

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100 WATT SOLAR PANEL KIT

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2X MORE POWER

NOW \$149.99

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ITEM 64335/63585 shown

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ITEM 62434, 62426, 62433, 62432, 62429, 64178, 64179, 62428 shown

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4.0 amp hour battery

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MODEL: CT8650PDB, CT88185BK, CTC720
ITEM 63537/64195/63852 shown

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\$269.99

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HaulMaster **SUPER COUPON**

4 PIECE, 1" x 15 FT. RATCHETING TIE DOWNS

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400 lb. working load

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KEEPER MODEL: 5505
ITEM 63094/90984/60405, 63056/63057/63150/61524 shown

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WINDSOR DESIGN **SUPER COUPON**

60" HARDWOOD WORKBENCH WITH 4 DRAWERS

Customer Rating ★★★★★

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COMPARE TO \$399.95
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ITEM 63395/93454/69054/62603 shown

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ITEM 61858/69512/69445 shown

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ITEM 69457/63733/66560 shown

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Apache **SUPER COUPON**

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Customer Rating ★★★★★

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COMPARE TO \$39.99
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ITEM 63927, Case contents and locks not included.

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Customer Rating ★★★★★

300 lb. capacity
Weighs 72.5 lbs.

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MAX LOAD MODEL: 38028
ITEM 60395/62325/62493/61523 shown

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Customer Rating ★★★★★

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ITEM 68001/62915/60600 shown

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Customer Rating ★★★★★

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ITEM 64282

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Sinopah Mountain rises to the west of Two Medicine Lake, Montana's historic vacation destination with no crowds and a secluded campground.



Big-Sky Bliss

Off the beaten path in Glacier National Park, a picturesque lake lures travelers to a sublimely peaceful retreat

— by Emily Fagan

Montana's Glacier National Park is known for its soaring mountain peaks and round-bottomed valleys, majestic reminders of the powerful glaciers that carved the landscape eons ago. The awe-inspiring Going-to-the-Sun Road cuts through the heart of the park, past endless dramatic views.

In a quiet corner on the park's east side, away from the crowds, we were dazzled by the toothy skyline of

pinnacles and shimmering water at Two Medicine Lake. Colorful canoes twinkled in the sun, inviting us to take a spin on the water.

The weather was too cool and windy for a canoe trip or a boat tour. After a shore-side stroll in the crisp mountain air, we warmed up with tasty lattes at the historic camp store. Originally part of the Two Medicine Chalet that was built by the Great Northern Railway to bring visitors

to this special lakeside spot, the cozy log building harkens back to a bygone era.

Nowadays, RVers with smaller rigs can savor this same glorious oasis at delightful Two Medicine Campground.

➔ If You Go
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