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MotorHome

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April 2017

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Great Smoky Mountains National Park rewards springtime visitors with outdoor adventure and unparalleled views of lush green forest (see page 22).



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Winnebago's well-appointed Paseo 48P handles the road with aplomb and is spacious enough to accommodate as many as four hungry diners.





Photo: Mercedes Morgan Photography

By Kristopher Bunker

Change is Constant

OK, let's get this out of the way: I am not Bob Livingston. Bob is an absolute legend in the industry, an RV Hall of Famer with a resume that most insiders would love to call their own. After more than 45 years in the industry, Bob and his wife, Lynne, are driving off into the sunset (though he will remain a contributor to *MotorHome* magazine). I am honored to call him a colleague, let alone a friend. I will say that I am humbled to follow in his footsteps, if only in terms of penning this column. Talk about big shoes to fill.

But I also have some insight to offer, insight I've worked hard my entire life to gain. I have been affiliated with Good Sam Media for 17 years in one capacity or another, and was even the editor of our sister publication, *Trailer Life*, for a number of years. I have been fortunate enough to contribute many stories to *MotorHome* magazine throughout my career, and found while doing so that the comfort, convenience and overall value of life in a motorhome truly are the pinnacles of RVing. I was then given the opportunity to get back in the publishing fray full time a little less than a year ago, and have been absolutely giddy since. I have always had the utmost respect for the publishing process, from article inception to layout and beyond, and am honored to represent the next chapter of *MotorHome's* long and storied history by offering my two cents

in this column each month. Having been an RVer for the better part of two decades, I have found the communal aspect to be the same, whether in a fully outfitted Class A, a nimble Class B or even while towing a pop-up trailer. Once we all made the decision to join the ranks of RVers, we were immediately rewarded with lasting friendships from kindred spirits, all eager to explore the countryside in search of the best that the open road has to offer. That's a cause that is easy to get behind.

One thing I do share with Bob, and with everybody affiliated with *MotorHome* magazine and Good Sam Media, is a passion for you, the reader.

Our mission (and tagline) remains the same: to present the best in travel, tech and lifestyle for the motorhome enthusiast, and to do so while being completely transparent about the products, services and destinations we cover. My personal goal with this column moving forward is to offer a different point of view, from a slightly different perspective than in years past. As the father of three children, ages 13, 8 and 5, I feel I can bring a strong voice to the continually increasing younger-family motorhome community, hopefully with some humor and definitely without hubris. In doing so, and while keeping our core readers at the forefront of my mind, I can assure you that the future of *MotorHome* magazine remains bright.

No, I may not be Bob Livingston, but he and I are more alike than it may seem at first glance. Our love for all things motorhome, and especially for our readers, is what drives us to promote the very thing we love to do: Celebrate the freedom, experience and voices of the motorhome lifestyle. **M**

“Once we all made the decision to join the ranks of RVers, we were immediately rewarded with lasting friendships from kindred spirits.”

Contributors | April



Ann Eichenmuller is a retired educator and freelance writer living in Virginia's Northern Neck. She and her husband, Eric, divide their time between sailing and traveling in their Minnie Winnie.



Bobbie Hasselbring is an award-winning travel and food writer and editor of www.realfoodtraveler.com, which celebrates regional food and travel. Bobbie owns a 2015 Pleasure-Way Excel Class B.



Rhonda Ostertag is an author of guidebooks and articles and frequent contributor to *MotorHome*. She travels and collaborates with her husband, photographer George Ostertag. The couple lives in Oregon.



James Richardson is a photo-journalist who has lived in west Tennessee most of his life. His interest in historical and scenic destinations has taken him to some of the most beautiful places in America.



Alan Rider has been wandering America's backroads for more than four decades, and is passionate about collecting memories of the remarkable people and unforgettable places he encounters along the way.



Mary Zalmanek and her husband, Jim, enjoy traveling in their 2003 Safari Trek when they are not at home in Monument, Colorado. Mary is the author of *The Art of the Spark* (www.artofthespark.com).

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Which auxiliary products for exiting the motorhome do you carry along in the event of a fire? And, which types of fire-prevention systems do you use?

Those are the questions we asked in the January issue, and here are some of the replies we received.



Safety First

Nice to see people thinking about safety issues; I feel compelled to comment further. In reference to Dick and Sandy's comments on fire extinguishers ("Think Safety"), I want to add that you need to be sure that they are at least rated at 3A 40BC. Most that come as original equipment are only 10BC, hardly enough to do much fire extinguishing — but enough so they apparently meet the safety code. But first, use them to help you get out safely; extinguishing the fire is secondary.

Mike Foley's "Fire Escape?" comment is well-taken, as is your question of the month. Not only is it extremely difficult to get out, but very unlikely you'll be able to do so. Some years ago I witnessed an RV industry fire-safety professional host a seminar on this topic. Several people simply

could not get out, or got hurt a bit from falling. And this was not even an emergency situation.

Three concerns here:

1. The exit windows, if hinged at the top, are quite heavy. You not only have to push them out and up, but you then have to hold them there — independently of your efforts — while you get yourself out. Somehow, this arrangement apparently meets the safety codes. I fabricated a 30-inch bar, but it takes a bit of doing to get it positioned so it will stay put while you attempt to get yourself and/or others, out. A side hinge would probably work better, provided it has a good hinge, latches and seals.

2. Most likely a better way to deal with the ladder issue would be to simply install permanent ladder brackets/steps on the outside of the coach, although the manufacturer

would probably find this cosmetically unacceptable. An even better way would be to have the side door — not the chassis passenger door — located closer to the rear of the coach. And better yet, have one door on each side. I recognize that the floorplan designers would not likely go for this.

3. As to safety in general, I recall hearing some years ago that if there is a fire inside an RV, you only have less than one minute to get yourself out safely. How about usage of more fire-resistant materials in RV construction?

The problem, as in any design effort, is that everything is a priority issue. Safety versus marketability and cosmetics versus livability, and of course, the cost-benefit ratio.

Jim Address | Las Cruces, New Mexico

Doors Aplenty

At one of our first motorhome rallies,

Featured Letter

Pro Tip

I am a retired firefighter with more than 40 years of experience. In response to Mike Foley's "Fire Escape?" letter, if your motorhome's exit window is 7½ feet from the ground, you might consider hanging from the windowsill. Your feet then will only be 2-plus feet from the ground. However, this may not be an option for you two. If not, consider moving the picnic table end within several inches of the coach. If there are no picnic tables available, put a stepladder in place of the picnic table. Also, use a pillow or heavy blanket to cushion the sharp edges of the windowsill.

Bill Henestofel | Gahanna, Ohio





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P.O. BOX

we were puzzled by the necessity of a seminar on exiting the motorhome in case of a fire, until we realized that Class A motorhomes have only one door. We own a Roadtrek van, with no less than five doors: the driver and passenger doors in the cab, a passenger door on the side and two cargo doors in the rear. If anyone is thinking of downsizing, especially if they have any physical limitations, this might be something to consider.

Sue Hankins and Pat Yacklon
Torrance, California

Safety Options

When we first got our motorhome I bought a portable emergency ladder (www.x-itproducts.com) and currently store it by the emergency exit window. I also carry additional small liquid/foam-type fire extinguishers (www.fireade.com) that I place in cut-down plastic tumblers as holders. I have four conveniently located throughout the motorhome, and still have the single, original powder extinguisher as well. I also added a dual-sensing (photoelectric and ionization) smoke alarm in the bedroom.

Keith Talbert | Via email

Hammer Time!

Thinking about January's question of the month, would it be possible to keep a small stepladder secured near the emergency escape window? Every RV is different; it would take careful consideration, but maybe the ladder could be lashed beneath the overhead stowage bins over the couch.

Also, in Oregon last January, we saw a large motorhome lying on its right side in a roadside snowbank, with no obvious damage to the rig. However, the entry door was completely blocked. I'm guessing that possibly the right front wheel had slipped off the edge of the pavement, which was concealed under the snow.

It got me to thinking about how we would exit our motorhome in such an emergency. I now carry a small crowbar and a one-handed two-pound sledgehammer tucked under the couch cushion just behind the driver's

seat. I'm thinking that in the event of a rollover, I could possibly break out the front windshield, hopefully allowing for an escape fairly close to ground level. I also always keep a headband flashlight with the fire extinguisher at doorside.

Rick Tobias | Albuquerque, New Mexico

Hip to be Square

In response to January's question of the month, I have one possible solution. My wife and I are also in our 70s, and I wanted to be sure we had a way to safely use the exit window in the event of an emergency.

I purchased an aluminum ladder that has square "hooks" on top that can hang on the RV window opening. It was made for access to the top bunk on a bunk bed. It is only 72 inches long, but the step off the ladder to ground is equal to an average step on our RV. It stores under the bed.

Be sure to choose one with square hooks, which could also be attached

to a small ladder cut to the required length to reach the ground. A step stool inside helps with access to the opening.

Stan Boler | A Hoosier in Pennsylvania

Bon Voyage?

Just finished reading the January issue, and enjoyed it. As a longtime resident of the Mobile, Alabama, area, I was glad to see a Mobile attraction ("Welcome Aboard!") in the Escapes section. However, I'm sorry to have to point out that the Gulfquest National Maritime Museum has been shut down due to funding issues.

Richard Becker | Via email

Editor's Note: This is an unfortunate situation that can occasionally arise due to the lead time in the publishing business. We should add that Mobile city officials have been discussing alternative uses for the museum in order to once again open its doors to the public.

CB, or Not CB?

I just received the February issue, and what perfect timing! The test on the 2017 Entegra Aspire 42DEQ (Grand Aspirations) was great reading. We ordered that exact model, and expect to receive it soon. It was nice to see the comments in your article. The reason I'm writing to you, is to ask if any readers have a CB radio in their motorhome. I'm debating whether or not to have one installed in our new Aspire. Any opinion would be greatly appreciated!

Glenn LaBar | Hereford, Arizona M

Question of the Month

Is there a CB radio installed in your motorhome? If so, which brand/type do you have? How important was this feature when you purchased the motorhome?

Send your comments to:

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The Automobile Gallery

Visitors can trace the history of the automobile's cultural significance at this unique destination in Green Bay, Wisconsin

By James Richardson

The Automobile Gallery in Green Bay, Wisconsin, features more than 18,000 square feet of gallery and event space in the heart of downtown Green Bay. The gallery opened in January 2016 and houses approximately 50 distinctive automobiles representing nearly every decade of the past 100 years. The mission of the gallery is to promote the restoration, preservation and appreciation of the automobile's contribution to society.

The Automobile Gallery is the vision of entrepreneur and automobile collector William "Red" Lewis. Wanting to give back to the community of Green Bay, Red's vision was to showcase the "automobile as art." He did not want a museum, but a "gallery, so people could touch and sit in the vehicles, not just look at them," he said.

The event space features catering and dining facilities and state-of-the-art multimedia capabilities. But the real stars here are the automobiles, which include a 1917 Milburn Electric, 1929 Ford Sport Coupe, 1963 Chevrolet Corvette and a 1981 DeLorean.

For more information, call 920-437-9024, or visit www.theautomobilegallery.org.

Vehicles on display include such classics as a 1957 DeSoto (left) and a 1930 Ford Coupe, shown here along with the Automobile Gallery's founder, William "Red" Lewis.



By Bobbie Hasselbring

Welcome to Pearadise

There are times of the year when berries, cherries, peaches and other fresh fruits are readily available. April isn't necessarily one of those months, but that doesn't mean you can't still enjoy fabulous fruit desserts. That's where dried fruits come in, and dried pears are one of the tastiest.

During the fall months when pears are at their best, we often travel to Hood River, Oregon, to purchase fresh pears direct from the growers. If you have access to a pear-growing region, you'll encounter many different varieties — like Seckel, Forelle and Concorde — that you don't often see. In grocery stores, you'll see four main varieties: Bartlett, a green-gold pear that's good canned, pureed or baked; Anjou (Green or Red), a squat little pear with a smooth, juicy texture that's perfect for eating fresh; Bosc, a firm-fleshed pear that's great for poaching and baking; and Comice, an earthy, mellow pear that's right for desserts and the perfect sweet pear for drying.

Pears are super-healthy. They're a good source of dietary fiber and are packed with vitamin C, which is essential for proper immune function and for preventing infections. Vitamin C also prevents cell damage and helps in tissue repair.

While fresh pears are delicious, they don't last long. By the time pears feel or look "ripe," they're often brown and mushy inside. Drying them in a food dehydrator or oven is a great way to preserve them, and dried pear slices make a perfect snack when you're on the road.

To dry: Wash and peel pears and slice ¼- to ½-inch thick. Dip in a bath of lemon water. Arrange on dehydrator tray (or cookie sheet) and dry at 160 degrees for about 5 hours. The pears will still be slightly flexible, but not juicy, when ready. You can also buy dried pears at many food stores.

Have a favorite fruit dessert you'd like to share?

Email bobbie@realfoodtraveler.com with "Pears" in the subject line.



Top: At least 10 different varieties of pears grow in North America. Bottom: You can dry pears yourself (or buy them) for a terrific road snack.

PEARADISE PECAN SQUARES



This recipe, from Mt. View Orchards in Hood River, is sweet, crunchy and buttery. Essentially, it's a rich shortbread topped with pears, pecans and caramel. What's better than that?

These squares keep for several days — if they don't get gobbled up — and they travel well. This recipe will definitely become a family favorite.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Crust

- ¾ cup brown sugar
- 1 cup butter
- 3 cups white flour
- ½ teaspoon salt

Filling

- ½ cup butter
- ½ cup honey
- ½ cup pure maple syrup
- ½ cup corn syrup
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup chopped, dried pears
- 1 teaspoon salt

► Mix crust ingredients together and press into a 9-by-13-inch pan. Bake 10 minutes. Remove from oven and prepare filling.

Combine butter, honey, maple syrup, corn syrup and salt in large saucepan. Boil until the mixture reaches soft-ball stage (240 F). Remove from heat and stir in nuts, pears and vanilla.

Spread the mixture evenly over the crust and bake for 10 minutes. Cool and cut into squares.

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Classics Collide

Two iconic brands have teamed up to offer a unique motorhome experience. Airstream and Tommy Bahama, the popular lifestyle brand, have introduced the Tommy Bahama Special Edition Interstate Touring Coach. Available in white, black or silver, with a choice of two floorplans — the Grand Tour EXT and the Lounge EXT — the special edition Touring Coach is built on the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 3500 chassis and sports a 3.0-liter V-6 turbodiesel engine capable of producing 188 hp and 325 lb-ft of torque.

The island-inspired theme of the interior incorporates Tommy Bahama print designs, custom fabric in the seating area and integrated bar-storage rack. Standard features include a wet bath, ultraleather seating, two flat-screen TVs, a Blu-ray player and LED lighting. Options include a power rear screen door, a side screen door, four-wheel drive and an additional rear seat. MSRP: \$165,050.

Airstream Inc. | 877-596-6111, www.airstream.com

Light the Way

For those looking to upgrade their vehicle's headlights, Super Bright LEDs offers LED Fanless Headlight Conversion Kits. The LED headlights use third-generation cooling technology with compact heat sinks and require no fans or braided heat sinks. The LED array in each bulb is designed to mimic the filament in halogen bulbs. Each single-intensity bulb emits 1,300 lumens of cool white illumination and is designed to increase visibility. Because they have internal drivers, the kits allow for easier installation without mounting additional parts, according to the company. Common types are available, including H4, H7, H8, H11, 9005, 9006, 9007, 9012 and more. The LED headlights are manufactured to last 25 times longer than incandescent or halogen bulbs. The headlight conversion kits include two LED headlight bulbs with adapter plugs. MSRP: \$79.95.

Super Bright LEDs | 866-590-3533, www.superbrightleds.com



Cover Up

Airxcel has announced the new UniMaxx Universal Vent Lid Replacement Kit from MaxxAir. The UniMaxx is designed to be a replacement for old or damaged vent lids, and can be easily installed, according to the company. Airxcel says the new UniMaxx has been designed to fit all vent-lid brands, eliminating the need to match the old cover's hinges to a replacement cover's hinges by using a unique preassembled universal hinge and the rust-resistant hardware included in the kit (which also features detailed, easy-to-follow instructions). The lid is manufactured using durable impact- and UV-resistant plastic for added longevity.

MaxxAir's UniMaxx kit is available in white (MSRP: \$25.58) and smoke (MSRP: \$32.92).

MaxxAir, a division of Airxcel | 316-832-3400, www.airxcel.com/maxxair

What a View!

Rust-Oleum is rolling out a new glass water-repellent treatment formulated to improve driving visibility during poor weather conditions.

Wipe New RainBrella glass treatment features easy wipe-on, wipe-off application, and the resulting hydrophobic coating repels water, mud, dirt and more, according to the company. Each RainBrella kit contains two presaturated wipes, one microfiber buffing cloth, nitrile gloves and instructions. A single application will last more than 100 car washes, according to the company. RainBrella can also be used on side mirrors for increased safety, and on the motorhome windows for a clear view of the campground or RV park's surroundings. RainBrella is available at auto parts stores and home improvement centers nationwide. MSRP: \$6.99.

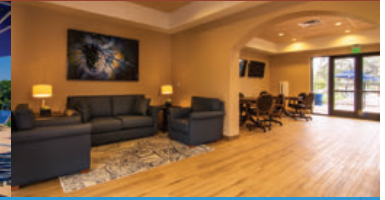
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ESCAPES CROSSROADS

Pajarito Plateau, New Mexico

Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks

Just a short one-hour drive from Albuquerque or Santa Fe, New Mexico, a unique national monument called "Tent Rocks" features the eponymous hoodoos shaped like the popular camping shelters.

Be sure to arrive in the morning, as this is a very popular place (motorhome parking is not a problem if there are available parking spots).

Take time to enjoy the 3-mile loop trail through the tent rocks. The trail winds through an arroyo of beautiful old trees, while the canyon walls rise above on either side. The hike then leads to a narrowing of the trail, where it twists and turns through a narrow slot canyon. Walk further and you are in the middle of cone-shaped tent-rock formations.

The formations were caused by volcanic eruptions that occurred 6 to 7 million years ago and left pumice, ash and tuff deposits more than 1,000 feet thick. Explosions from the Jemez volcanic field spewed pyroclasts (rock fragments), while hot gases blasted down slopes in an incandescent avalanche called a pyroclastic flow.

In spite of the Tent Rocks name, there is no camping allowed, in an RV or in a tent. **For more information**, call 505-331-6259, or visit http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/NLCS/KKTR_NM.html — *Morey Edelman*



Photo: Morey Edelman

Chattanooga, Tennessee

Bluff View Art District

Chattanooga, or Chatt as the residents fondly call their city, is a bit of a surprise. It's young, filled with restaurants and boasts a unique area called the Bluff View Art District.

This walkable, enchanting locale combines public art with artisan chocolate, breads, coffee and more. But the biggest surprise is that the whole area is privately owned — bought and developed by Dr. Charles and Mary Portera, who wanted to help revitalize an area that had been neglected for years. The Porteras own the buildings in the district and encourage a wide array of inviting businesses.

The renovated historic neighborhood is a delight to explore, but what sets this venture apart from other beguiling places is the Porteras' robust program of art in public places. Called the River Gallery Sculpture Garden, this outdoor garden covers 2 acres atop the Tennessee River bluff. The pieces are out there in public, rain or shine,

and represent the works of some of America's most famous artists. More than a dozen world-class sculptures line the landscaped path. There is also another grassy area overlooking the river that hosts special exhibits created by artists who attend the opening reception to chat with visitors.

Though there is little parking in the district, public parking is available for large vehicles and RVs about a half-mile away at Power Alley and Riverfront Parkway by the Olgiate Bridge, near the aquarium. **For more information**, call 800-725-8338, www.bluffviewartdistrict.com. — *Neala McCarten* **M**



Photo: Neala McCarten



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Wickenburg, considered the "Team Roping Capital of the World," hosted the National Team Roping's 2016 National Finals II.

Southwestern Surprise

Finding gold, cowboys, history and pickleball in Wickenburg, Arizona

by Mary Zalmanek

One of our favorite things about traveling in a motorhome is that when unforeseen circumstances arise, we have the flexibility to adapt, which often leads to serendipitous surprises. We'd planned to spend a week in the Phoenix area in March. When I started calling RV resorts a couple of weeks earlier, I found they were all booked due to Major League Baseball's spring training. No big deal. We'd heard wonderful things about the community of Wickenburg, Arizona (population 7,004), a town about 60 miles northwest of Phoenix. It seemed like the perfect opportunity to check it out.

On our first night at Country Club Park, I asked a woman in the laundry room what drew people to Wickenburg. With enthusiasm she told me about the area's history, the abundance of gems and minerals for rockhounds, its reputation as the "Team Roping Capital of the World" and the popularity of pickleball. Even though I've never considered myself a history buff, Wickenburg offers so many different ways to tell its story that we spent the next several days learning about its colorful past.

Wickenburg was founded in 1863 by Henry Wickenburg after he found gold in the area. To find out more, we drove 12 miles to the Vulture Mine for a tour. Walking tours are offered mid-October to early May on Saturdays from 10:00 am to noon. The gates opened at 9:30, and several cars were already lined up when we arrived at 9:25. Our tour guide, Joyce Ramage, described life during the mine's heyday, when Vulture City grew to a population of 5,000. From 1863 to 1942,



Getting There

From Phoenix, take Interstate 10 West. Merge onto AZ State Route 303 Loop North/Aqua Fria North and continue for approximately 10 miles. Take U.S. Route 60/Grand Avenue Exit. Turn left onto U.S. 60 West/West Grand Avenue. After approximately 25 miles, West Grand becomes U.S. 60 West. Follow the signs to Wickenburg.



it was the most productive gold mine in Arizona's history. Joyce explained the functions of the abandoned buildings and equipment, and debunked some of the myths surrounding the mine. A sign on an ironwood tree outside Henry Wickenburg's cabin claims 18 men were hanged for stealing gold ore. Not so, said Joyce. Only five men died on this tree: four for robbing the vault, one for killing a woman. In 2011, the new owners, Vulture Peak Gold Inc., resumed mining operations. Not only did they hire Joyce to give tours on Saturdays, they are planning on opening an RV park across the road from the mine.

After the tour I found out why Joyce is so knowledgeable about mining. She and her husband, Gary Huetson, own the smallest full-production mine in Arizona, a copper mine 3 miles north of Vulture. She is also active in the Wickenburg Gem and Mineral Society. This group organizes field trips to collect rocks, minerals and fossils; holds monthly meetings (except in the summer months); offers classes; publishes a newsletter; and hosts the annual Wickenburg Gem and Mineral Show the weekend after Thanksgiving. It's easy to see why the area is so popular with rockhounds.

We heard about two more Wickenburg tours, and we did them both. The first was a self-guided walking tour of downtown Wickenburg.

Ghost Tour leaders Madam Mariah and her son, Raze'n Caine, pose by the Jail Tree Felon, one of six painted, life-sized bronze statues created by world-renowned artist J. Seward Johnson. The lower level of the Desert Caballeros Western Museum has life-scale scenes that depict the history of Wickenburg, showing the lives of early settlers and ranchers.

Using a brochure provided by the Wickenburg Chamber of Commerce, we walked by old buildings (many of them listed on the National Historic Register), a railroad engine and caboose, and several bronze sculptures. Our favorites were the six painted, life-sized bronze statues created by world-renowned artist J. Seward Johnson. With the push of a button, Arizona State Historian Marshall Trimble gives a historic narrative about these characters that represent various aspects of the city's history. Bronze sculptures include a schoolteacher with her luggage at the train station; the owner of the Vernetta Hotel; a miner leading his donkey; and a felon chained to the Jail Tree, which is a 200-year-old mesquite tree that served as the town jail from 1863 to

1890. I did a quick high step when I saw a snake lazing on the sidewalk. I laughed at myself once I realized he was one of Johnson's 16 realistic desert creatures in painted bronze — gila monsters, tarantulas, road-runners and rattlesnakes — that populate the sidewalks.

The following afternoon we came back for the Ghost Tour. That's when Madam Mariah and her son, Raze'n Caine — both dressed in period costumes — told us the rest of the story. I think some of their stories were true even though they admitted from the start they drank water from the Hassayampa River. (A local legend says, "Those who drink of the Hassayampa waters will never tell the truth again."). They loaded our group up in two six-passenger "Ghost Coasters" (think stretch golf carts).

From Lykes Lookout in the Hassayampa River Preserve, visitors get a panoramic view of the surrounding area.



GETAWAY

WICKENBURG, ARIZONA

One of our first stops was the statue of Elizabeth Smith, the African-American woman who owned the Vernetta Hotel. We knew from our previous tour that she was a successful businesswoman who also owned a restaurant, barbershop, rental homes and a cattle ranch, before eventually losing everything in the Great Depression. Madam Mariah told us the real scoop: The mayor murdered Elizabeth and stole her businesses. As our tour continued, we heard about Dr. Pierson, a mass murderer who killed at least 30 people at the Vulture Mine and in Wickenburg, and the Walnut Grove Dam Disaster in 1890 that sent a wall of water 100 feet high down the Hassayampa, killing more than 120 people. Those tragedies give ample reasons to attract ghosts, whose presences are felt when windows open on their own at night and orbs — balls of transparent lights — appear in photos of haunted places. Was it disappointment or relief that my photos were all free of orbs?

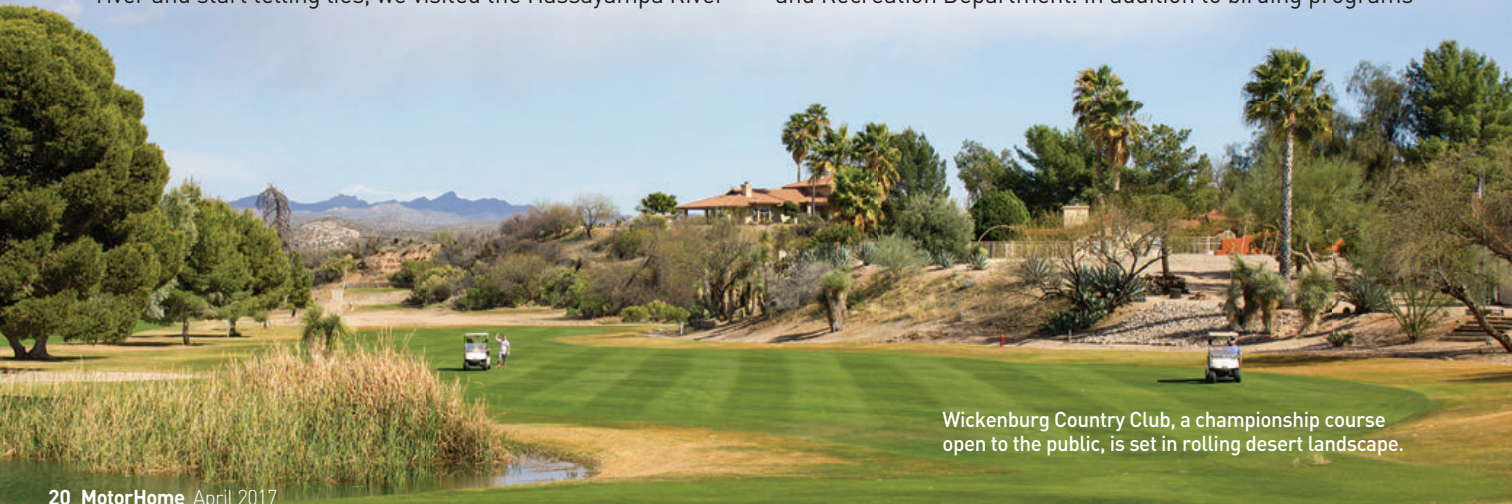
The Desert Caballeros Western Museum provided yet another view of Western history, art and culture. The museum itself suffered a tragedy. On December 21, 1972, less than four years after opening, the entire building and hundreds of items were lost to fire. On the third anniversary of the fire, a new 14,000-square-foot museum opened on the same site. Since then, the museum has undergone several expansions and a major renovation. The museum has acquired more than 400 works of art, including prized traditional pieces by Frederic Remington, Charles Russell, Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Moran, and contemporary art by Bill Owen, Curt Walters and Deborah Copenhaver Fellows. We learned about these and other artists on our self-guided audio tour. The lower level of the museum has life-scale scenes that depict the history of Wickenburg, showing the lives of early settlers and ranchers. The Cultural Crossroads Learning Center has a collection of American Indian artifacts and Arizona minerals. The entire town seemed to be looking forward to the annual Cowgirl Up! exhibit, which showcases “Art from the Other Half of the West” from mid-March to early May. Unfortunately, we left a few days before it opened, giving us good reason to return another year.

After promising each other we wouldn't drink from the river and start telling lies, we visited the Hassayampa River



The Wickenburg Pickleball Club has about 80 members, including Gale Fiscus, their oldest player at 84 (wearing black and green jacket). A larger-than-life-sized statue titled Thanks for the Rain welcomes visitors to the Desert Caballeros Western Museum.

Preserve. From its origin near Prescott to where it enters the Gila River, the river flows for more than 100 miles through the desert, mostly underground. “Hassayampa” is a Yavapai word meaning “river that flows upside down.” In fact, if you look down from the bridge over the river in Wickenburg, you'll see evidence of the town's sense of humor with its “No Fishing from the Bridge” sign, but not a drop of water. In the preserve, the river flows above ground year-round. The lush riparian habitat is home to more than 280 species of resident and migrant birds. We spent several hours exploring the 3-mile network of hiking trails wandering through the 770-acre preserve, which is owned by The Nature Conservancy and the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department. In addition to birding programs



Wickenburg Country Club, a championship course open to the public, is set in rolling desert landscape.

and guided bird walks, several other interesting programs are offered including “Cooking with Desert Plants” and “Medicinal Plants of the Desert.” Desert Mosaic classes are offered for children and adults to learn how to design and construct a mosaic from nature’s treasures.

After hearing about the popularity of pickleball in Wickenburg, we were surprised to find the six courts at Sunset Park empty on a Thursday afternoon. That was good news for us since we didn’t have to wait for a court. We went back in the morning a few days later and found every court filled with members of the Wickenburg Pickleball Club. We talked to coordinators Bill Bouwhuis and Anya Alberts. Six mornings a week from 8:00 to 11:00, anywhere from 24 to 45 people show up to play. The club has about 80 members, most of whom are winter visitors. Everyone is welcome, and Bill offers free lessons to first-timers. The pickleball club asked the town council to convert some tennis courts to pickleball. The city spent \$30,000 on the project, and the pickleball club raised another \$10,000. We met some club members, including Gale Fiscus, their oldest player at 84, and a couple of “roper wives.” One said she agreed to spend winters in Wickenburg where her husband could rope as long as she could play pickleball. Both sports are thriving in Wickenburg.

The time had come to satisfy my

curiosity about roping. I had naively assumed any rodeo event would be a younger man’s sport. Not so. At the National Team Roping’s 2016 National Finals II, we watched the Over 50 and Over 65 events. Sitting in the stands, we met Colleen Watson, who explained the basics. Colleen has been roping for 21 years and announcing at competitions for 12 years. This weeklong competition is open to men and women over the age of 30. Ropers in Wickenburg get ample opportunity to participate since there are an average of more than 25 roping events each week in four arenas. Each team consists of two mounted riders, a header who ropes the front of the steer, and a heeler who ropes the hind legs. A maximum of 150 teams competed in each of two final events at the end of the week, each event worth \$100,000 to the winning team. The teams pay to enter the competition, but the audience watches for free. Wickenburg has earned its well-deserved reputation as the “Team Roping Capital of the World.”

On our last day, we finally got around to one of our favorite activities, golf. We played at Wickenburg Country Club, a championship course open to the public. Set in the rolling desert landscape, the greens and fairways were in excellent condition.

Our week “out Wickenburg way,” as the locals say, went by in a flash. We explored the town and its history, hiked, played pickleball and golfed in



Joyce Ramage, Vulture Mine tour guide, explained the functions of the abandoned buildings and equipment, and debunked some of the myths surrounding the mine.

beautiful surroundings and learned about roping. Roping’s probably not something we’d take up — we’d need to own a horse and know how to ride it — but we liked the friendliness of a town with lots of people wearing cowboy hats and boots. **M**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Country Club Park

928-684-2110

www.azrvresorts.net/country-club-park-mobile-rv-sites/

Horspitality RV Park and Boarding Stables

928-684-2519

www.horspitality.com/pages/default.aspx

Vulture Mine Tours

www.vultureminetours.com

Wickenburg Chamber of Commerce

800-942-5242

www.wickenburgchamber.com

Wickenburg Legends and Ghost Tours

360-609-2280

www.wickenburgghosts.weebly.com

Desert Caballeros Western Museum

928-684-2272

www.westernmuseum.org

Hassayampa River Preserve

928-684-2772

<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/arizona/placesweprotect/hassayampa-river-preserve.xml>

Wickenburg Pickleball Club

Bill Bouwhuis and Anya Alberts, coordinators, 928-231-0235, Email: WPBC@cox.net

Wickenburg Roping Information and Schedules

www.outwickenburgway.com/team-ropers-love-wickenburg/

Participants gather at Vulture’s Roost for the Vulture Mine Tour, a walking tour of the abandoned mine offered on Saturdays from mid-October to early May.



SPRINGTIME IN THE SMOKIES

From photo-worthy vistas to outdoor recreation and everything in between, this most-visited national park offers something for everyone

Any season is a good one to visit the Smokies, but spring is our favorite. Autumn is indeed beautiful, but the roads and trails are pretty crowded. But in the spring, the trees are budding and the wildflowers are popping through the ground at Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the most-visited national park in the U.S.

There are plenty of springtime activities, as in any season. The weather may be a little more iffy, like a shower or two throughout the day, and snow at the higher elevations is still a possibility. But spring is still our favorite Smokies season.

On our most recent trip, we started on the North Carolina side, arriving in Cherokee via the Blue Ridge Parkway. We discovered and visited a couple spots. Among them, the Oconaluftee Indian Village (a living history attraction), the Museum of the Cherokee Indian and an outdoor drama called "Unto These Hills" are all popular points of interest. "Unto These Hills" is not a year-round drama, running from late May until early fall. Check schedule and buy tickets online at www.visitchokeenc.com.

The road that goes across the national park and connects North Carolina and Tennessee is U.S. Highway



Left: Dramatic mountain streams such as this one on Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail in Tennessee are common in the Smokies. Right: Oconaluftee's Mountain Farm Museum is a collection of historic log buildings gathered from throughout the region and grouped at a single site.



Stunning views abound at Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Spring showers are common, but the resultant budding trees and wildflowers make the raindrops well worth the seasonal trip.

441, or Newfound Gap Road. There are several side trips off U.S. 441 into less traveled parts of the Smokies. For instance, still on the North Carolina side, one road leads to the Cataloochee, a valley community that had 1,200 people living there in 1910, most of whom made their living by farming. The entrance road to Cataloochee Valley is a narrow, winding gravel road that has some steep drop-offs without guard rails. RVs can make the trip, but cautiously. Like all other campgrounds in the national park, the one at Cataloochee is primitive and has 27 sites, all of which must be reserved in advance. The campground is open from mid-March through October and can accommodate RVs up to 31 feet in length.



Getting There

To reach Oconaluftee Indian Village from Charlotte, take Interstate 85 South toward Gastonia. Merge onto U.S. 74 West and continue for almost 100 miles. Merge onto I-40 West/U.S. 74 W toward Canton/Knoxville. Merge onto U.S. 19 South via Exit 103. Turn right onto Tsali Boulevard/U.S. 441 North.

To get there from Cherokee, take the Blue Ridge Parkway to U.S. 19 to U.S. 276, and then to Cove Creek Road. A better route is from Interstate 40 at exit No. 20 and Cove Creek Road. Check the national park map that is available at all visitor centers.

Just after leaving Cherokee and entering the national park, we stopped at the Oconaluftee Visitor Center to pick up information on attractions and road conditions. In early spring, U.S. 441 may be closed due to ice or snow at higher elevations. At this visitor center there is a restored homeplace and cabin, which we investigated. The homeplace consists of the John E. Davis cabin (circa 1900), a meat house, a chicken house and several other outbuildings.

After the visitor center, we headed across the mountains via U.S. 441. On our way up we stopped at the Mingus Mill, where corn is still ground into a saleable flour. Built in 1886, the historic grist mill is usually manned by a docent who explains the history and methods of the mill.

Before we arrived at Newfound Gap (elevation 5,049 feet), we saw another road that leads to Clingmans Dome, the highest point in the Smokies at 6,643 feet. If it is not fogged in, climbing to the top provides an incredible 360-degree vantage point on the mountains.

Heading toward Gatlinburg from

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SPRINGTIME IN THE SMOKIES



The two-story Hollywood Wax Museum in Pigeon Forge bills itself as the only wax museum in the country devoted entirely to celebrity figures, from Charlie Chaplin to John Wayne to Brad Pitt.

Newfound Gap, there are a couple spots worthy of a stop. The Chimneys Picnic Area is a popular area for hiking and spending time in the Smokies. Then, the trailhead to the Chimney Tops, one of the most recognizable geologic features in the Smokies, is near the picnic area. Near Gatlinburg is another visitor center, Sugarlands. An easy trail to one of the national park's many waterfalls, Cataract Falls, is located at the visitor center.

On this springtime trip, we not only enjoyed seeing the trees bud and blossom, but the wildflowers spring up (pardon the pun) at almost every turn. Trilliums of many varieties,

violets, wild columbine, Fire Pink, Showy Orchis, Dutchman's Britches, Squirrel Corn and Jack-in-the-Pulpit are just a few of the wildflowers that make their appearance in the spring. As far as wildlife, sightings of black bear are common, especially this time of year. Wild turkeys are very abundant and usually feed along the roadways and in open fields. We saw many turkeys and a black bear right along the road as we were coming down from Newfound Gap.

There are 10 developed campgrounds within the national park. Each campground has restrooms with cold running water and flush toilets

Below, left: Exhibits at the informative Museum of the Cherokee Indian trace the history of the Cherokee dating back 13,000 years. Below, center: Ripley's Aquarium of the Smokies in Pigeon Forge allows visitors to experience a variety of displays, including coral reef, ocean realm and shark lagoon. Below, right: The Oconaluftee Visitor Center is a good place to gather information on the area's attractions, as well as to read up on the latest road conditions.





The narrow Roaring Fork Motor Trail in Tennessee is a 5½-mile-long one-way loop road offering visitors views of wildflowers, old-growth forests and well-preserved log cabins.

but no showers nor electrical or water hookups. Campsites at Cades Cove, Cataloochee, Cosby, Elkmont and Smokemont may be reserved online at www.recreation.gov or by phone at 877-444-6777. All other campgrounds are first-come, first-served. Smokemont is the more easily accessible on the North Carolina side and is near Cherokee. Besides the national park campgrounds, there are plenty of private ones located in any of the gateway towns like Gatlinburg, Townsend, Pigeon Forge in Tennessee and Cherokee.

Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge are the more commercialized of the gateway towns. Gatlinburg is less RV-friendly because it is usually crowded

with other vehicles and pedestrians. But there are side roads that bypass most of the crowds. Consult a map or GPS. Nevertheless, we usually stop in Gatlinburg (and Pigeon Forge, for that matter) to check out the attractions, shops and restaurants.

There are plenty of things to do with the family in Gatlinburg. Ripley's Aquarium of the Smokies is one of our favorites. The Space Needle in the center of town provides a 360-degree view of the surrounding mountains from its 400-foot tower. A 2.1-mile aerial tram takes visitors up to Ober Gatlinburg, a mountaintop family adventure where there are amusement rides, wildlife, an indoor skating rink and, during winter, snow



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SPRINGTIME IN THE SMOKIES



Clockwise, from top: Built in 1886, Mingus Mill is a historic grist mill that utilizes a water-powered turbine to power machinery. RV sites are plentiful at parks in gateway towns such as Gatlinburg, Townsend and Pigeon Forge. Gatlinburg's trolley system was established in 1980 and now features 20 trolleys servicing approximately 50 miles in and around the city.



skiing. Variety shows of many sorts are popular attractions in Pigeon Forge along with many shops.

Restaurants are aplenty in any of the gateway towns, especially Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge. All sorts and any cuisine are available, but the predominant types are pancake houses. But they are a must and there is a reason for so many.

One of our favorite things to do while in the Gatlinburg area is to visit the Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail. From traffic light No. 8 in Gatlinburg, turn onto the Historic Nature Trail Road. This road takes visitors back into the national park and to the 5½-mile-long, one-way, narrow, winding loop road along rushing mountain streams with glimpses of old-growth forest, and a number of well-preserved log cabins, grist mills and other historic buildings. There are parking areas at the trailheads for two waterfalls, Grotto Falls and Rainbow Falls.

The road along the Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail, being narrow and winding, is not for large RVs. Short RVs, like Class B's, would make the



route with little or no problem. It is better to take the dinghy on the road along the Roaring Fork. We took our Jeep Wrangler, which easily handled that and all the roads in the Smokies.

Our adventure in the Smokies ended when we left Gatlinburg. We took U.S. 441 through Pigeon Forge to Sevierville, and picked up state Route 66, which led to I-40. We know we'll return sometime soon. We just have to figure out which season it will be. **M**

For More Information

Great Smoky Mountains National Park
865-436-1200, www.nps.gov/grsm

Cherokee, North Carolina, Chamber of Commerce
828-788-0034, www.cherokeesmokies.com

Gatlinburg Convention and Visitors Bureau
800-588-1817, www.gatlinburg.com

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TINY TEXAS

Not everything is bigger in the Lone Star State

Texas has a reputation for all things big: longhorns, 10-gallon hats, big hair, big oil, big steaks, big expanses and a big howdy. Its embrace of the measure is iconic. But what most impressed me on a stubbornly rainy April trip through southeast Texas was the tiny — the birds, the blooms and the small parks and attractions that put the sprinkles on top.

Still, there was no escaping the big Texas miles. My husband and I plotted a generous loop from the Hill Country to the Gulf Coast to the Rio Grande, with wiggle room for distractions and whims of adventure. A purchase of the annual state-park pass helped the cause.

Hill Country

Spring put Texas bluebonnets on the agenda. Seduced long ago by an image of President Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) and his Lady Bird striding through a riot of blooms, I was primed to be wowed. Despite not finding the border-to-border bloom of my imagination or

even that of Texas tourism, I wasn't disappointed.

From the windshield, we saw rangeland painted in lavender verbena and bold seedings of bluebonnet and Indian paintbrush. With regular traffic flow and the narrow road shoulders, parks and public lands provided the safe stops to admire. Best in show for natural displays came at Kerr Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and at Inks Lake State Park.

For the WMA, our dinghy vehicle eased parking and turnarounds. Also, we had to time visits to avoid the closures for turkey hunts. But the added effort rewarded with rolling quilts of bluebonnets, pierced by cacti, nolina and twisted yucca.

On foot, we traced an old Jeep track over a rise and into the WMA. The floral bonanza ran through oak woodlands and spilled across grassy sweeps. We alternated from upright surveys to hands-and-knees study,

lingering until the canteen ran dry.

Inks Lake holds camping and offers fine park paths to roam and admire the bloom. Habitats of open rock, meadow and woodland vary the presentation. Besides the bluebonnet and the rosy Indian paintbrush, we encountered a flower-petal rainbow: multicolored Indian blanket, yellow coreopsis, white prickly poppy and burgundy winecup. Cacti suggested we pay better attention, but offered claret cups and yellow blooms in consolation.

Throughout Hill Country, state-park and natural-area camping served our needs: Garner, Lost Maples and South Llano River. Before hunting bluebonnets, flights of scarlet tanagers, cardinals and vermilion flycatchers bounced my gaze from shrub to canopy. Park blinds and feeders facilitated spying. Hummingbirds, golden-cheeked warblers and local species (new to us) added to our list. Volunteers maintaining feeders and regular visitors shared viewing tips and bird identifications.

Regional darlings, Stonehenge

ll and the companion Easter Island heads, celebrate second life at Hill Country Arts Foundation (HCAF; 830-367-5121, www.hcaf.com) in Ingram. The stucco-and-plaster reproduction of the 5,000-year-old English religious/astronomical wonder again rises from an open field. The island heads with elongated features resume watch.

Like others, we first met Al Shepperd's unusual replications years ago while driving FM (farm-to-market road) 1340, and we suffered rubberneck for the unexpectedness. When henge and heads faced destruction, HCAF offered rescue and relocation, now welcoming the public to its campus for viewing during daylight hours, donation optional. The parking lot for the visual and performing arts center accommodates motorhomes. Visitors are free to wander, photograph and respectfully admire the fanciful pairing.

Wonderful small history parks add to the Texas archive. At the Fort Croghan/Burnet County Heritage Society, we rummaged unhurried



Getting There

Kerr Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is located about 80 miles northwest of San Antonio, in Kerr County. Take Interstate 10 to Kerrville and turn west (south) on state Highway 16, then connect with Highway 27 on the south side of Kerrville. Turn right on Highway 27 heading toward Ingram. In Ingram, take Highway 39 west another 7 miles to Hunt. Go through Hunt on Rural Route 1340 northwest for 12 miles to the Kerr WMA entrance.

through the indoor museum, but a downpour kept us from the actual fort. Weather cooperated at the Fort McKavett State Historic Site, allowing us to walk among its white adobe structures, ruins and foundations.

At 150 years old, McKavett stands as the best remaining fort from the Texas-Indian wars. It occupies open

Clockwise, from left: Kerr Wildlife Management Area is a great place to bird-watch among lush Texas bluebonnets. A pair of Inca dove perch on a felled log at South Llano River State Park. Brownsville's Gladys Porter Zoo has been smartly appointed with habitats that benefit the residents, like these charming giraffes or this curious bontebok. A green jay serenades visitors at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge.





Above, left: The Sauer-Beckmann Farm, part of LBJ State Park and Historic Site, highlights Hill Country farm life at the turn of the 20th century. Above, center: This yellow daisy field among mesquite trees was a beautiful site in Goliad County. Above, right: Goose Island State Park in Rockport offers campgrounds in addition to access to the St. Charles and Aransas bays.

“During the Texas Revolution, ‘Remember Goliad!’ was a cry as fervor-fanning and dear as that for the Alamo.”



ground on a mild rise with area views. Strolls took us past the hospital building, dead house, Lieutenants Row, barrack ruins, bakery, shops and school. Buffalo soldiers for a time resided at the fort. We had the fort to ourselves ... sharing only with the ghosts of the past.

While most things LBJ are monumental in size, I gravitated toward the quiet attractions of his boyhood home in Johnson City and the Sauer-Beckmann living history farm, part of his namesake state park. The latter looked at farm life in the Hill Country at the turn of the 20th century. Great attention was given to method, tools and supplies of the era. Among pantry canned goods were items preserved in lard. In the kitchen, women kneaded bread, snapped beans and cooked on a wood stove.

LBJ was greatly influenced by family tales of early settlement, hardship and American Indian encounters.

Gulf Coast

Golden fields addressed our sightseeing route to the coast. Goliad State Park and Historic Site on U.S. Highway 183/77A took us into the 18th-century Spanish Colonial fort-and-mission period of Texas.

Rebuilt by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Mission Espíritu Santo enchanted with its elegant simplicity and purpose. An attentive ranger explained the symbolism. We learned about the settlement roles of the Spanish military and the Catholic church, area ranching and the life of American Indian converts.

To the mission’s south sits the fort, Presidio La Bahía, with its heavy

Left: This cannon can be found at Mission Espíritu Santo, which relocated to Goliad in 1749. Below: Birding is a popular activity along the boardwalk at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge.



studded gates, towers, and cannon and gun openings. The nine flags at its entry recall the political changes under which it stood.

Nearby sites dedicated to Col. James W. Fannin and Gen. Ignacio Zaragoza continued our Texas history lesson. Wildflowers sprinkled the revered grounds. During the Texas Revolution, "Remember Goliad!" was a cry as fervor-fanning and dear as that for the Alamo. Fannin and his men were held at the fort before Gen. Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna's ordered execution of them. Fannin Battleground and Memorial Monument fleshed out the story.

Zaragoza was the Texas-Mexican hero who defeated the French at the Battle of Puebla in 1862. Cinco de Mayo honors that victory. His reconstructed birthplace sits near the presidio.

At Corpus Christi, South Texas Botanical Gardens and Nature Center provided us a pleasing escape on a humid afternoon. The compact garden delighted with songbirds and butterflies as well as blooms and attractive plants. Orchids and bromeliads seemed appropriate for the day.

At the coast, Goose Island State Park, Padre Island National Seashore, Aransas National Wildlife Refuge and Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge drew us in. The big-name locations welcomed with grand and textured landscapes, but the birds



stole the show.

We encountered birds more suited south of the border, some heading north, and some native. We watched and listened to the Bonaparte and laughing gulls, saw herons catch fish, and listened as turnstones gave endorsement to their names. We spied scissor-tailed flycatchers and indigo buntings. Chachalacas, with the pterodactyl-worthy, air-splitting calls, surprised us with their partridge size. Crested caracaras, spotted sandpipers, green jays, reddish egrets, roadrunners and more kept us on the search.

We traveled on pier, boardwalk, nature trail, and we mowed track and roadway, visiting gulf and bay shores, pond, salt marsh, desert, woodland and prairie. Palmetto State Park, Goose Island, and Padre Island sheltered us at night.

With management closure of Bayside Drive, a tram tour operates at Laguna Atascosa.

Rio Grande

As we wend toward the great river border, north of Brownsville along FM 1847, Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park bade us aside. On the Palo Alto prairie, on May 8, 1846, the United States and Mexican troops first tangled in a war that would ultimately establish the Rio Grande as the U.S. southern border and lead to Mexico's surrender of one-third of its territory: much of California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico.

History panels and a walking tour of the site laid out the battle. Battlefields of the Rio Grande were proving grounds for military leaders who would go on to Civil War fame.

Within 31 acres, the Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville stands toe to toe with some of the best zoos in the nation. It may be my all-time favorite. The National Zoo may be special with its North American wildlife, and for animal welfare, the San Diego and

The Easter Island heads and Stonehenge II are a surprising sight at Hill Country Arts Foundation in Ingram.

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TINY TEXAS

Columbus zoos are top-notch. But for sheer enjoyment, ease of viewing and attractive enclosures that benefit animals, the Gladys Porter Zoo nails it.

The collection holds both popular and seldom-seen animals. Shade trees and water elements add to the zoo's appeal, as does one of the nicest giraffe exhibits I've seen. The census lists lowland gorilla, flamingo, lemur, oryx, kudu, bontebok, bearded pig, long-legged crane and hornbill. Drop-in black-bellied whistling ducks and great egrets voluntarily stick around.

Tropical birds were the mission of our Rio Grande travel. After searching via tram, path and canopy walk at Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, we took the quest to Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park. It is home to the World Birding Center Headquarters, one of nine specially recognized birding sites in the Rio Grande Valley. A tram shuttles between the site visitor center and park interior.

We had wanted to see the Rio Grande but it was too hot to hike. As it was, we alone rode the tram, our reward seeing javelina and coyote. With only a walk-in tent camp at the park, private RV parks met overnight needs.

Edinburg Scenic Wetlands, another of the World Birding Centers, wrapped up the journey. It offered a good-size lake, nature paths and center exhibits. Push-buttons gave voice to select bird species. Several of them, we had already encountered. Others we must meet another time. But returning to Texas is a small sacrifice. **M**

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Master Class

Winnebago's new Paseo 48P shows that you really can have it all in a small motorhome **By Chris Hemer**

The more you think about our changing world, with its crowded cities, highways and vacation hot spots, the more the European model for a motorhome begins to make sense. They're designed for narrow roads, all-weather conditions and small families who are used to living in homes that would be considered cramped by North American standards. Adapting to this new model hasn't been easy for an industry that made its billions catering to an aging baby boomer market; the RV industry has shown us that it can build anything, but getting it right has proven to be more of a challenge.

Winnebago Industries is no stranger to the small-motorhome market, with successful Class B models like the entry-level Travato and luxurious Era. But in our view, the company's new Paseo 48P is the one that best demonstrates the company's willingness to listen to its customers and skillfully respond to their requests. The Paseo is not only elegant and modern looking, it makes tremendous use of space inside and incorporates clever features and thoughtful touches that make it worthy of its \$114,998 base price tag.

All motorhomes require some form of compromise, but Class B models in particular tend to remind one at almost every turn that they are living in a van, and usually not in a manner most of us would appreciate. They often seem cramped, with many of the features feeling more like afterthought than forethought. With the Paseo, Winnebago started with a clean slate, designing the living space around the specific curves of the Ford Transit van's interior.

Starting at the rear, the Paseo uses Winnebago's Flex Bed system which, like many similar motorhomes, is essentially a table that can convert to a bed. That sounds simple enough, but somehow, many other competitive products on the market either tend to overthink it, or don't think much about it at all. The Flex Bed system in the Paseo gets it right. In dining mode, the table is large enough to seat four comfortably, and though it is supported by a single post, it feels very stable. The bench seats, while still upright, have enough padding to make them comfortable, and unlike other small Winnebago models we've tested that used smooth vinyl cushions that made us slip and slouch, these cushions are textured and stay put. We also

ABOVE: The Paseo, with its full-body Magnetic paint scheme, tasteful brightwork and aluminum running boards, drew attention wherever we went. A full-length awning and built-in exterior speakers were unexpected features.



BELOW: The rear dinette has room for four adults, and the TV swings away from its wall mount for optimal viewing. Two-position LED tube lighting as well as ambient light above the cabinets lend a modern, yet homey feel. Converting to a bed takes just a few minutes, and the snap-on window covers are even insulated. The Nova Kool refrigerator features a fridge top/freezer bottom configuration and handy travel latches.



appreciated that there are four belted seating positions, so you can take five friends (or two more couples) with you on a daytrip to the beach, for example, which the Paseo would be perfect for, as long as overall weight is monitored.

Converting to a bed is likely similar to any other motorhome you've ever been in; pull the table from its post, stow the post (which fits nicely behind the bed in one of the rear cargo door pockets), lower the tabletop into place on the ledges beneath the seat cushions, then position the two seats/seatbacks to form a bed. At first, we thought it odd that the table was not as long as the cushions, thereby leaving one end of the bed unsupported — until we found an extension in the wardrobe closet. Put that in place next to the table before placing the cushions, and you're in business. We did wonder, however, why Winnebago didn't just make the table another foot longer, which would eliminate the need for an extension.

Once the bed is set up and you are

lying in an east/west position, there is adequate room for those up to about 6 feet 2 inches tall, but anyone taller than that will have to sleep with their knees slightly bent. The bed is comfortable, however, even considering the four segments that comprise the makeshift mattress. There is also a 19-inch Jensen 12-volt DC flat-screen television on a sturdy mount that can swivel away from the wall for optimal viewing when sitting on the curbside of the dinette, or while lying in bed with your feet at the streetside.

Above the TV in a storage cubby is

a Jensen stereo/DVD player that does its thing through two decent speakers mounted in the curbside overhead cabinet. The stereo system also allows you to route music to two outdoor speakers, a feature that is somewhat rare in Class B motorhomes. The overhead cabinets on either side of the dinette/bed area are narrow as you might expect, but have a good amount of storage space and look/feel very well-made.

Calling the Paseo a "van conversion" would be an understatement that borders on criminal.



Thoughtful details are everywhere, from the day/night shades on every window (pull down for day, pull up for night) to the screens built into the rear cargo and side sliding doorways that allow bug-free al fresco dining wherever you please. And the lighting is some of the best we've experienced in any motorhome, let alone a Class B. Instead of the usual single LED overhead lights placed throughout, the Paseo uses LED tube lighting that can be used in high or low settings — plus there is ambient/mood lighting as well. Perfect light temperature lends a cozy feeling to the interior, instead of that of a hospital or laboratory.

Many Class B manufacturers market their products to people who want to "live off the grid" and go where larger RVs can't go, but too often, the product doesn't completely fulfill that promise. Here again, it's obvious that Winnebago's engineers put considerable thought into the mindset of potential buyers. For example, the 6-cubic-foot, compressor-driven Nova Kool refrigerator is from the marine industry, so it operates only on 12-volt DC or 120-volt AC, but not LP-gas. The benefit here is twofold: For one, it won't burn up your LP-gas on an extended stay; but perhaps more importantly, it cools down in a fraction of the time (it got cold enough in our testing to put food into within an hour). And with a combination of the optional 100-watt solar system (\$805) and two deep-cycle AGM batteries, there's no need to worry about the fridge running out of cold, either. However, a single 100-watt panel is a bare minimum for this type

of power setup, and adding another 100-watt panel for 200 watts total would make for a more robust and functional system. Mounted above the refrigerator is a High Pointe convection microwave designed to handle both reheating and baking.

Another issue Class B builders have to contend with is providing an effective HVAC system. The air conditioning, having to cope only with cooling a small box, was never a factor, but heat was another story. The combination of inadequate insulation in some early models and a nonducted furnace placed wherever it would fit resulted in maddening temperature fluctuations and a lot of noise as the furnace continually cycled on and off throughout the night. By contrast, the Paseo is fitted with insulation at the Winnebago factory, and the heating system is the excellent Truma Combi. You'll note the absence of the word "furnace" because the Combi not only heats the interior, but also the water — and it does so in virtual silence. The Combi makes no more noise when it cycles on/off than a desktop computer fan, and it keeps the interior at a nice, even temperature. As noted, the Combi also heats the motorhome's water supply, and it operates on LP-gas, 120-volt AC or a combination of both, which ordinary furnaces can't do. The only limitation is the amount of hot water (2.6 gallons), but the recovery is fairly fast. If you have not experienced this heating system, don't consider purchasing another small motorhome until you do. It's that good.

As you might expect, the kitchen is

WHAT'S HOT

Great looks, fantastic driving dynamics, efficient and capable HVAC system, thoughtful features.

WHAT'S NOT

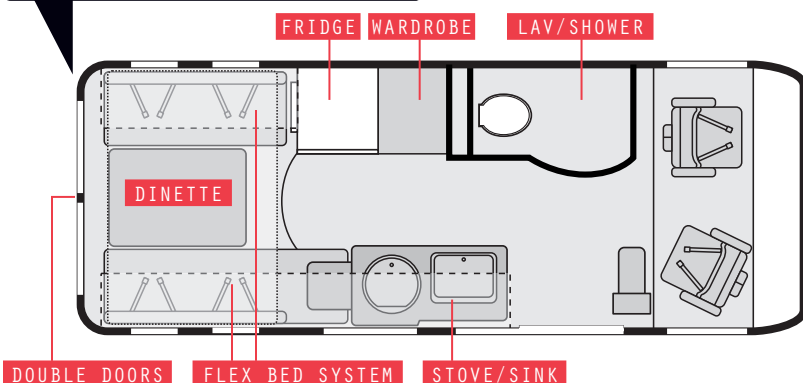
No exterior storage space other than for the sewer hose, limited holding-tank capacity.



small, but well-executed — elegant, even — with its genuine Corian countertop. Both the stainless-steel sink and two-burner Dometic stove have tinted-glass covers, the former employing a folding chrome faucet. With the stove cover closed, there is adequate room to place a cutting board and prep meals, with the sink just to your right. If you need a little more room, there is a countertop extension to the right of the sink. Diminutive as it may be, the stove uses a modern electric ignition — just turn on the gas supply, touch a small rocker switch and the stove is lit. There is no traditional vent hood above the stove, but there is a powered MaxxFan vent (\$147) in the ceiling that more than makes up for that. Additional LED tube lighting is located underneath the overhead cabinets, which shed plenty of light on the work surface. A cabinet behind the stove with a sliding glass door can hold spices, while small hooks let you display your favorite cooking utensils. "Cute" is the only way to describe it, but it is practical as well.

Underneath the sink is a large, open cabinet big enough to accommodate a kitchen trash can and some cleaning essentials, and underneath the stove, four good-sized drawers. Directly behind you as you stand at

WINNEBAGO PASEO 48P



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Specifications

Chassis

Model	Ford Transit
Engine	3.5-liter EcoBoost V-6
SAE hp	310 @ 5,500 rpm
Torque	400 lb ft @ 2,500 rpm
Transmission	6-speed automatic
Axle Ratio	3.73:1
Front Tires	195/75R16
Rear Tires	195/75R16
Wheelbase	148"
Brakes	4-wheel disc with ABS
Suspension F/R	Independent MacPherson strut/ leaf springs
Fuel Capacity	25 gal
Fuel Economy	14.2 mpg
Warranty	3 years/36,000 miles bumper-to-bumper, 5 years/ 60,000 miles powertrain

Coach

Exterior Length	22'1"
Exterior Width	7'4"
Exterior Height	9'10"
Interior Width	6'1"
Interior Height	6'6"
Construction	Ford Transit van with additional insulation, enclosed holding tanks
Freshwater Capacity	26 gal
Black-Water Capacity	18 gal
Gray-Water Capacity	21 gal
Water-Heater Capacity	2.6 gal
LP-Gas Capacity	6 gal
Air Conditioner	13,500 Btu
Furnace	Truma Combi Eco Plus
Refrigerator	6 cubic foot
Converter/Charger	45 amp
Battery	(1) chassis/ (2) deep-cycle Group 31 AGM
AC generator	2.8 kW gas
MSRP	\$114,988
MSRP	as tested \$118,810
Warranty	12 mo/15,000 mi

Wet Weight

(Water and water heater, fuel and LP-gas tanks full, no supplies or passengers)

Front Axle	3,260 lbs
Rear Axle	5,420 lbs
Total	8,680 lbs

Chassis Ratings

GAWR F/R	4,130/7,275 lbs
GVWR/GCWR	10,360/12,600 lbs
ROCCC	1,680 lbs

GAWR	Gross Axle Weight Rating
GVWR	Gross Vehicle Weight Rating
GCWR	Gross Combination Weight Rating
ROCCC	Realistic Occupant and Cargo Carrying Capacity



The compact kitchen features a Corian countertop, two-burner stove and stainless-steel sink with covers. Cabinets and drawers below offer plenty of storage.

the kitchen counter is the wardrobe, which has enough room for some hanging clothes, a shelf above that is perfect for storing shoes, and shelves with bungee nets against the back wall for small essentials. The wardrobe door has a long mirror on its inside surface for primping purposes, and there are two shallow but long drawers underneath. Like the other cabinets in this motorhome, they feel sturdy and are well-made.

Above the stove is the command center, with Winnebago's OnePlace control panel (generator on/off, water pump switch, tank/battery-levels monitor), a switch for the holding-tank heater, Truma Combi display, solar-charge controller and power-management panel. Just inside the sliding door are switches for most of the lighting (lighting at the rear is controlled by separate switches) as well as the full-length power awning and its strip light. Among these is also the bathroom light, which we found incongruous; a press on/off light inside the bathroom would be a far better solution. It would also be great if the switches were labeled.

The wet bathroom is all the way up front, directly behind the driver's seat, and though small, thoughtful details here make a huge difference. First, the sliding metal-look door is radiused, so once inside, you have room to stand and

even turn around. Clever use of space includes a European-inspired fold-down sink behind the porcelain toilet, and a waterproof storage compartment near your feet that is a good place to keep an extra roll of TP. The removable showerhead and attendant hose are all metal, as is the mixer valve, and there are both a roomy medicine cabinet with mirror and compact overhead fan as well. And though the segmented door is designed to eliminate the need for a clingy plastic shower curtain, Winnebago thoughtfully supplies a cloth curtain that snaps over the medicine cabinet and drapes over the toilet to keep these areas dry(er).

Of course, one of the biggest benefits of owning a Class B is its ease of driving and parking, and the same is true of the Paseo. Based on the superlative Ford Transit van with the powerful and smooth 3.5-liter EcoBoost gasoline engine, the Paseo is one of the nicest driving motorhomes we've been in. With 310 hp and 400 lb-ft of torque on tap, it has absolutely no trouble keeping up with traffic on any freeway, or any grade. If you've ever felt like a lesser citizen because you got passed on a steep climb by a 500-horse diesel pusher, those days will be over. And as noted in this magazine on numerous occasions now, the Transit is the superior van chassis today. It's faster,



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smoother, rides better, handles better, steers better and brakes better than the competition. The seats are more comfortable, the controls more logically placed and the visibility is outstanding. And when you need a break from driving, you can stop and park almost anywhere you'd park the family sedan — just make sure you remember that this sedan is more than 9 feet high.

Camping is easy, too. There are no leveling jacks to deploy. Find yourself some level ground, put the powered awning out and relax. The solar system and batteries will supply most of your power needs, so it's rarely even necessary to run the generator, except when it's time to run the microwave or air conditioning. Getting ready for bed is the only thing that requires a little patience; although there are the aforementioned day/night shades at every window, you must cover the windshield and side glass with the well-made custom covers first, then cover the rear cargo-door windows with snap-on cloth. Once you get used

The front bathroom makes the most of the available space with a fold-down sink, waterproof storage/TP holder and a mirrored medicine cabinet.

to the process, however, it goes pretty quickly, and the best part is that the interior stays completely dark at night. The only area that could possibly admit any light is the overhead MaxxFan vent, but that would be easy enough to cover if you wanted. In fact, the interior was so dark we found it necessary to leave the light on in the bathroom, otherwise we wouldn't be able to find it.

The only challenge with this motorhome (as with all Class B's) is the lack of exterior storage. There is some under-floor storage beneath the rear table that is accessible through a panel in the floor or through the rear cargo doors, but it is limited. There is a roof rack, however, and a sturdy ladder, so a roof pod will likely take care of most of your exterior storage needs. You'll just have to get creative to bring along what is important to you, but this is a small



compromise in our opinion.

The Paseo illustrates what can be done when your goal is constant improvement. Winnebago has transitioned well into the Class B market, and with this latest floorplan, we feel confident it will continue to do so. We're eager to see what Winnebago comes up with next. **M**

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READY TO ROLL 2017

OUR ANNUAL GUIDE TO MOTORHOME ACCESSORIES IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR OWNERS LOOKING TO UPGRADE OR REPLACE TIRED COMPONENTS

You already know that owning a motorhome is the key to the ultimate road trip. With onboard conveniences like your own bed, food in the fridge and hot and cold running water, traveling in a motorhome remains the best way to get out and enjoy the countryside.

But the motorhome itself is only the beginning, as a trip to any RV resort or campground will attest. At one time or another, we've all found ourselves coveting some of our neighbor's gadgets; the helpful things he or she has brought along to improve setup, entertainment, everyday life or even

the dinghy-towing experience. Or, perhaps you've found yourself unable to utilize one of the onboard systems because you forgot to buy a new sewer fitting or Wi-Fi booster, or maybe your residential fridge drains your batteries far too quickly when without hookups. There's no need to remain green with envy (or to feel left out of the loop), as we've gathered some of the most popular must-have accessories and their manufacturers here in one resource, making for easy one-stop perusing and shopping. Keeping up with the Joneses (or staying ahead of the curve) has never been easier.

Care and Maintenance

Cleaners and Waxes

We all know that a clean motorhome is a happy motorhome, as few things are as eye-catching (or pride-inducing) as piloting a glistening coach that sports that showroom shine. But, keeping the motorhome's exterior

free from black streaks, dead bugs and other debris goes well beyond aesthetics. Neglecting the exterior of a motorhome can lead to cracked seals, exposed seams and, in some cases, de-

lamination of the side walls and roof. And that's not even mentioning the damage accumulated road debris can do to vents and appliances, outside and in. Take some time before your trip (or between stops at your site, if permitted by the facility) to invest a little elbow grease with some of the following products. Your motorhome, and your pocketbook, will thank you in the long run.

Dometic Group, 800-544-4881,

www.dometic.com/usa

Gel-Gloss, 800-243-3272, www.gel-gloss.com

Gold Eagle, 800-367-3245, www.goldeagle.com

Griot's Garage, 800-345-5789, www.griotsgarage.com

Meguiar's, 800-347-5700, www.meguiars.com

Poli Glow, 800-922-5013, www.poliglow-int.com

Protect All Inc., 800-521-3032,

www.protectall.com

Rejex, 469-583-9218, www.rejex.com

Shurhold Industries, 772-287-1313,

www.shurhold.com

Star brite, 800-327-8583, www.starbrite.com

Theftord Corp., 800-543-1219, www.theftord.com

Voom! (Roadmaster Inc.), 800-669-9690,

www.roadmasterinc.com

Sealants

Sealing exterior components against the elements is an often-overlooked maintenance item, which is an oversight that can be costly. Many



Photos courtesy of the manufacturers



RV warranties require periodic sealant maintenance and replacement, which is a far cry from waiting for a window or slideout to leak before squeezing some generic caulking into the gaps. It's best to inspect the sealants on the roof every 90 days for dryness, cracks or separations, and they must be serviced as needed. Sealants are available in a variety of forms, including tape, foam, caulking, silicone and more. It's important to know which type of sealants you need, as using the wrong product on your roof and side walls can lead to disastrous results. When applying sealants, follow the curing instructions to the letter, and always be sure to work in a well-ventilated area.

- Alpha Systems LLC, 800-462-4698, www.alphasystemsinc.com/productcare
- EternaBond, 800-248-4010, www.eterabond.com
- Dicor Corp., 800-837-2059, www.dicor.com
- GE Silicone, 866-275-4372, www.caulkyourhome.com
- Geocel, 800-348-7615, www.geocelusa.com
- Loctite, 800-624-7767, www.loctiteproducts.com
- Sika Industry, 248-577-0020, usa.sika.com



Covers and Tire Covers

Unless you have access to a climate-controlled storage facility, investing in a motorhome cover is a good idea. Damaging UV rays, rain, snowfall and bird droppings all take their toll on any motorhome's exterior. Covers are available in a variety of configurations, including universal fit, covers intended for a particular class of motorhome and covers customized specifically for a particular make and model. Look for a cover made of breathable, rip-stop material to help prevent pooling and mold. Covers made using Tyvek material on the roof may cost a little more up front, but they offer better overall protection.

- ADCO, 800-541-2326, www.adcoprod.com
- CalMark Cover Co., 800-838-7236,

- www.calmarkcovers.com
- Carver Industries, 888-482-6837, www.carvercovers.com
- Classic Accessories, 800-854-2315, www.classicaccessories.com
- Covercraft Direct LLC, 800-274-7006, www.covercraft.com
- Coverking, 800-268-3754, www.coverking.com
- CoverQuest.com, 888-726-9300, www.coverquest.com
- Elements (Camping World), 888-626-7576, www.campingworld.com
- Empire Covers, 888-872-6855, www.empirecovers.com

Dinghy Towing



Tow Bars

Providing the connection between motorhome and dinghy vehicle, tow bars are generally the first purchase made after selecting a vehicle to tow four wheels down. A-frame tow bars are offered in solid or folding varieties and are designed to fit specific baseplates (sold separately) mounted to the dinghy-vehicle frame. The folding design will generally fit a wider range than the solid design.

Self-aligning tow bars are available in dinghy- or motorhome-mounted configurations. Self-aligning tow bars are designed to fit a wide range of vehicles by attaching to model-specific baseplates. Motorhome-mounted bars are often the better choice, as there is less chance of damage when not in use, and hitching is generally a one-person job with a bit of practice.

- Blue Ox, 800-228-9289, www.blueox.com
- Demco, 800-543-3626, www.demco-products.com
- Roadmaster Inc., 800-669-9690, www.roadmasterinc.com



Auxiliary Braking Systems

A dinghy-braking system will increase safety and help improve the stopping power of your motorhome-and-dinghy combination. Whether it's direct or proportional, or permanently or temporarily mounted, an auxiliary braking system is a must-have if you plan to tow a dinghy vehicle. Not only does it make stopping less of a white-knuckle experience, but it will also ease the burden on the motorhome's braking components, helping improve long-term durability and reducing maintenance costs — and to comply with motor vehicle laws.

- Blue Ox, 800-228-9289, www.blueox.com
- Brakebuddy (Hopkins Towing Solutions), 800-835-0129, www.hopkinstowingsolutions.com
- Roadmaster Inc., 800-669-9690, www.roadmasterinc.com
- RViBrake (Danko Manufacturing), 800-815-2159, www.rvibrake.com
- SMI Manufacturing Inc., 800-893-3763, www.smibrake.com
- VIP Enterprises, 734-516-2056, www.viprv.com

Tow Dollies

Using a tow dolly is a less-intrusive alternative (no baseplate or wiring) to towing a dinghy vehicle. It also allows you to tow a vehicle that isn't approved for four-down towing applications, like many front-wheel-drive cars with an automatic transmission. Tow dollies are easy to use and can even be equipped with brakes; some even break down for easy storage.

- Demco, 800-543-3626, www.demco-products.com
- Roadmaster Inc., 800-669-9690, www.roadmasterinc.com

Electronics/Electrical



Backup Cameras

We can't always rely on our co-pilot to guide us into a campsite or out of the driveway. In those cases, a backup camera is a great tool, offering a wide view of the area behind the motorhome. Side cameras can also be useful to help overcome blind spots while on the road. Backup cameras are also valuable for keeping an eye on the dinghy vehicle.

ASA Electronics, 877-305-0445, www.asaelectronics.com
 Furrrion, 888-354-5792, www.furrrion.com
 Hopkins Towing Solutions, 800-835-0129, www.hopkinstowingsolutions.com
 iBall, 877-298-2055, www.iballhitchcam.com
 Swift Hitch (Toren), 617-600-8282, www.swift hitch.com



GPS Systems

Goodbye road atlas, hello smart technology! Not only does a modern GPS unit contain up-to-the-minute road maps and detours, but RV-specific models allow users to program in their vehicles' profiles, offering the best route without leading them under short overpasses or on twisty mountain passes. Today's GPS units can also update traffic and weather conditions,

and can display the location of the nearest campgrounds, fuel stops, restaurants, convenience stores and other places of interest — all using audio, so your eyes need not leave the road.

ASA Electronics, 877-305-0445, www.asaelectronics.com
 Garmin, 800-800-1020, www.garmin.com
 Good Sam (Camping World), 888-626-7576, www.campingworld.com
 Magellan GPS, 800-707-9971, www.magellangps.com
 Rand McNally, 877-446-4863, www.randmcnally.com
 TomTom, www.tomtom.com



Solar Power Systems

A valuable tool for those who like to live life unplugged, a solar system enables users to harness the sun's energy to generate usable power that can keep house batteries properly charged to perform much longer. An investment up front will easily pay for itself in terms of convenience and enhanced livability.

AM Solar, 541-726-1091, www.amsolarrv.com
 Battery Tender (Deltran USA LLC), 877-456-7901, www.batterytender.com
 EEZ RV Products, 510-910-5397, www.eezrvproducts.com
 Go Power, 866-247-6527, www.gpelectric.com
 Nature Power (available at Camping World), 888-626-7576, www.campingworld.com
 Samlex Solar, 800-561-5885, www.samlexsolar.com
 Sunforce Products Inc., 888-478-6435, www.sunforceproducts.com
 Zamp Solar, 541-728-0924, www.zampsolar.com

Surge Protectors

Surge protectors plug in to the RV park pedestal and are designed to protect the motorhome from damaging, unsteady/unreliable 30- or 50-amp 120-volt AC power. Think of all those sensitive



electronics in your coach; just a few seconds of faulty power or a power surge may be all it takes to fry the circuits, resulting in expensive replacements. Some surge protectors are also equipped with a miswired pedestal indicator, which informs the user that the coast is clear before plugging in.

Camco, 800-334-2004, www.camco.net
 Progressive Industries, 919-267-6948, www.progressiveindustries.net
 Technology Research LLC, 800-780-4324, www.trci.net



Inverters

Residential refrigerators continue to grow in popularity, as the additional space and conveniences like cold water and ice cubes at your stick home are hard to give up while on the road. But, where does the additional power needed to run these cooling closets come from? An inverter can provide the necessary power to run residential refrigerators, plus TVs and other small appliances, when 120-volt AC hookups are not available, or when it's just not proper to run your motorhome's AC generator. Using the battery bank as its power source, inverters come in sizes to produce as little as 150 watts to as much as 3,000 watts of 120-volt AC electricity, and many have multistage charging circuits.

Magnum Energy, 425-353-8833, www.magnum-dimensions.com
 Samlex Solar, 800-561-5885, www.samlexsolar.com
 Tripp Lite, 773-869-1111, www.tripplite.com
 Xantrex, 800-670-0707, www.xantrex.com

Generators

When camping off the beaten path, life without a generator can be like, well, camping. One of the reasons we decided to join the motorhome community was onboard convenience; an AC generator is a great accessory for powering most of the appliances

Home of the Happy Camper®

40 YEARS AND GROWING!

Gerzeny's R.V. World has been serving Florida RV buyers since 1977 at its flagship location in Nokomis (between Sarasota and Venice), and in Lakeland. Look for new R.V. World locations opening in Bradenton (February 2017) and Fort Myers (Spring 2017).

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CLASS B *Van Campers*



CLASS B+ *Specialty RVs*



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SMALL RVS (CLASS B & B+)



5TH WHEELS & TRAILERS



Note: Not all brands are available at all locations. Please call!



NOKOMIS
2110 N. Tamiami Trail
Nokomis, FL 34275
(941) 966-2182
Toll Free 1-800-262-2182

LAKELAND
940 Lakeland Park Ctr. Dr.
Lakeland, FL 33809
(863) 853-9177
Toll-free 1-877-663-7506

Opening Feb. 2017
BRADENTON
6120 S.R. 64 East
Bradenton FL 34208

Opening Spring '17
FORT MYERS
5600 Enterprise Parkway
Fort Myers FL 33905

rvworldinc.com

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10 Globe Multicolor Patio Lights with 50' White Coiled Cord #82027 | Reg. \$124.99

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Coleman® Comfort Smart Chair #58432 | Reg. \$63.99



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CLUB SALE
\$16⁵⁷

Maxxair® Vent Cover, Translucent White #1733
Reg. \$33.29



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Lavender #69990 Fresh #23913
Club SALE \$6.97 Reg. \$11.99



CLUB MEMBERS
Save 50%

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CLUB SALE
\$7¹⁷

Super Wheel Chock #33228/#56861
Reg. \$14.49

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NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED. For full Official Rules, by which this sweepstakes is governed, go to www.CampingWorld.com/Adventure. Must be 18 or older and a legal resident of the U.S. or Canada. Promotion begins 12/09/2016 at 12:00 a.m. CST and ends 5/07/2017 10:59 p.m. CST. Sponsored by CWGS Group, LLC, Lincolnshire, IL.

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Hidden Brackets



Accessory Kit #23792



Tow Bar #14682

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Club SALE \$399.97 Reg. \$549

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Starting at Club SALE \$2547.94 Reg. \$3048



Also sold separately:

Roadmaster® InvisiBrake #56814

Club SALE \$899 Reg. \$999

*Lowest Installed Price Guarantee: Must be an active Good Sam Club member. Applies to competitor's in-stock items. Prepayment required. Includes the price of installed product plus the price of installation. All price comparisons must include any applicable shipping charges. If after review of a competitor's estimate, our price for product and installation fails to beat a competitor's price for product and installation, the product and installation are free. The competitor's estimate must be in writing, for identical product and installation, and no more than 30 days old. We reserve the right to inspect the vehicle to verify competitor's estimate. Work must be completed within 60 days.

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Over 100 lbs. Lighter Than Similar Models!

Roadmaster® Universal Tow Dolly with Electric Brakes #42252

Universal tie-down straps fit 12"-16" tires. Max. weight capacity

4250 lbs. | Reg. \$1799 | Let Us Assemble It—Club SALE \$203

Wire to Tow Vehicle—Club SALE \$49 |



CLUB MEMBERS
Save

\$150

and electronics (within the power rating) when a 120-volt AC source is not available. For additional versatility, a portable generator will offer auxiliary power at the campsite. Before purchasing, remember to calculate the likely power draw, and don't forget that the motorhome's air conditioner requires surge amperage upon startup.



Champion Power Equipment, 877-338-0999, www.championpowerequipment.com
 Cummins Onan, 800-888-6626, www.power.cummins.com
 Generac Power Systems, 888-436-3722, www.generac.com
 Honda Power Equipment, 770-497-6400, <http://powerequipment.honda.com/>
 Powerhouse, 877-544-4449, www.powerhouse-products.com
 Yamaha, www.yamahamotorsports.com



LED Lighting

LED lighting isn't only for holiday displays and televisions. In fact, most newer motorhomes include LED lighting in one form or another, as LED lights offer a more concentrated light source and last longer than their incandescent lightbulb counterparts, not to mention the fact that they use a fraction of the power. Retrofit kits are readily available for interior lighting, so RVers can finally stop burning their hands on the scorching incandescent bulbs on bedside reading lights.

Alpenglow Marine Lights LLC, 406-889-3586, www.alpenglowlights.com
 Command Electronics Inc., 269-679-4011, www.commandelectronics.com

Diamond Group, 800-456-4498, www.dg-usa.com
 EEZ RV Products, 510-910-5397, www.eezrvproducts.com
 Jirah, 909-297-1926, www.jirahled.com
 M4Products, 818-717-8840, www.m4products.com
 SalVinCo LLC, 941-378-9727, www.salvinco.com
 Star Lights Inc., 800-883-5444, www.starlightsinc.com
 SuperBrightLEDs.com, 866-590-3533, www.superbrightleds.com



Tire-Pressure-Monitoring Systems

Tire monitoring is a task that is often overlooked by daily travelers trying to rack up the miles as quickly as possible. That can be a costly oversight, but a tire-pressure-monitoring system (TPMS) has your back. A TPMS uses sensors to monitor the pressure of all the tires on the motorhome (and dinghy vehicle, in most cases) and then transmits that information to a monitor in the cab. If a tire loses pressure or merely approaches a preset low-pressure threshold, the driver is alerted with flashing lights and/or an audible alarm. This allows you to pull over and address the situation before a costly — and dangerous — blowout occurs. Some new systems have also integrated smart-phone monitoring and alarms.

Advantage PressurePro LLC, 816-887-3505, www.advantagepressurepro.com
 Doran Manufacturing, 866-816-7233, www.doranmfg.com
 EEZ RV Products, 510-910-5397, www.eezrvproducts.com
 Hopkins Towing Solutions, 800-835-0129, www.hopkinstowingsolutions.com
 TireMinder (Minder Research), 772-463-6522, www.minderresearch.com
 Tire Patrol (RViBrake/Danko Manufacturing), 800-815-2159, www.tirepatrol.com
 TireTraker, 866-200-9773, www.tiretraker.com
 Truck System Technologies, 770-889-9102, www.tsttruck.com
 Valor TPMS, 800-568-9188, www.valortpms.com

Entertainment



Audio/Video

When watercolor sunsets and the melodic croaking of frogs from a nearby pond aren't enough, or when Old Maid is a drag and board games are boring, it's good to know we have instant entertainment onboard. Motorhome entertainment systems can be as simple as an AM/FM/CD stereo and a small television, or as complex as a smart big-screen LED TV with eardrum-splitting surround sound and crisp 3-D picture from the Blu-ray player. Residential brands are becoming more and more prevalent, especially in bigger-bucks coaches, but we've included companies here with products designed specifically for the mobile/RV market — meaning extra measures are taken to ensure the components can withstand extreme weather conditions and on-the-road vibrations associated with a mobile lifestyle.

ASA Electronics, 877-305-0445, www.asaelectronics.com
 Furrion, 888-354-5792, www.furrion.com
 FUSION, 623-580-9000, www.fusionentertainment.com
 iRV Technologies (Patrick Industries Inc.), 888-373-3939, www.patrickind.com
 KING, 952-922-6889, www.kingconnect.com
 PQN Audio, 805-794-6475, www.pqnterprises.com

Satellite-Programming Providers

Cable hookups at the RV park can be inconsistent, and over-the-air broadcast channels few and far between, so if television-watching is on your agenda, you'll



probably need a satellite provider. The equipment can be rented (under contract) or purchased, and there are plans designed specifically for RVers that can be turned on or off depending on your travel schedule.

DirectTV, 855-567-1663, www.directv.com

DISH, 888-434-0112, www.dish.com

Shaw Direct, 888-554-7827, www.shawdirect.ca



Antennas

Often (incorrectly) referred to as a satellite dish, in order to receive satellite programming (or over-the-air local channels, for that matter), you'll need an antenna. These are available in permanent-mount and/or portable configurations, and continue to evolve in terms of ease of use and functionality. Some antennas are designed specifically for a particular provider, so take note. And, remember that if you wish to receive over-the-air programming, you'll need a separate antenna in addition to one for a satellite provider.

KING, 952-922-6889, www.kingconnect.com

KVH Industries Inc., 401-847-3327, www.kvh.com

Shakespeare Marine, 803-227-1590,

www.shakespeare-ce.com

Winegard Co., 800-288-8094, www.winegard.com



Internet/Wi-Fi/Cell Boosters

What good is all the smart technology in the world when you aren't able to receive a signal? These gadgets are

practically a necessity in today's technology-driven environment, especially when you consider that most highly desirable off-the-beaten-path destinations offer spotty service at best. Although these boosters don't create hotspots or cellular signals, they do amplify the existing signals to give users the best opportunity for the most bars.

C. Crane, 800-522-8863, www.ccrane.com

PDQ Connect, 858-598-5001, www.pdqconnect.com

Shakespeare Marine, 803-227-1590,

www.shakespeare-ce.com

Singlepoint, 866-959-9434,

www.yoursinglepoint.com

SmoothTalker, 877-726-3444,

www.smoothtalker.com

weBoost, 866-294-1660, www.weboost.com

Wi-Fi Ranger, 208-321-5544, www.wifiranger.com

Wilson Amplifiers, 800-568-2723,

www.wilsonamplifiers.com

Winegard Co., 800-288-8094, www.winegard.com

Freshwater Systems



Water Hoses, Appliances and Connectors

Water on demand is one of the main features that sets RVing apart from tent camping; selecting the proper hoses, adapters and fittings is an important component of delivering the wet stuff to your motorhome. Remember to carry at least two hoses: one for the city-water connection and one for rinsing the black holding tank. Your motorhome likely already has a demand water pump, but upgrading to a more efficient (or quieter) model enhances the motorhome livability experience.

Camco, 800-334-2004, www.camco.net

Camping World, 888-626-7576,

www.campingworld.com

SHURFLO, 800-854-3218, www.shurflo.com

Teknor Apex, 800-556-3864, www.apexhose.com

Valterra, 818-898-1671, www.valterra.com

Xylem (Flojet), www.xylemflowcontrol.com



Water Filters

Although water from the campground spigot is a wonderful convenience, its quality can be inconsistent and it can not only taste bad, but can damage the faucets, sinks and shower enclosures if left unfiltered. Installing an in-line filter helps to reduce harmful and foul-tasting contaminants. Many new motorhomes contain whole-house filters; when replacing those filters, we recommend a filter with a rating of 1 micron or less.

Camco (TastePURE), 800-334-2004, www.camco.net

Culligan, 877-386-0823, www.culligan.com

Flow Pur, 234-759-3077, www.flowpur.com

Hydro Life, 800-626-7130, www.hydrolife.com

Multipure Drinking Water Systems, 800-622-9206,

www.multipure.com

The RV Water Filter Store, 602-625-1875,

www.rvwaterfilterstore.com

Water King, 337-988-2360, www.waterking.com

Exterior Showers and Accessories

Even under the best circumstances, prolonged exposure to the elements and continued usage can eventually lead to damaged fittings, hoses, etc., on your motorhome's exterior shower. In order to avoid the resultant damage to the motorhome's side walls and structure, replace faulty components immediately.

Camco, 800-334-2004, www.camco.net

Dura Faucet, 888-242-5932, www.durafaucet.com

ITC, 616-396-1355, www.itc-marine.com

LaSalle Bristol, 800-718-7187,

www.lasallebristol.com

Phoenix Faucet, 800-222-6041,

www.phoenixfaucets.com

Thetford, 800-543-1219, www.thetford.com

Indoor Living

Shades

A motorhome sitting out in the open can get quite hot (or cold, depending on the season), which puts additional demands on the air conditioning (if you're plugged in or running the generator) or heating. Shades can be your first line of defense against the penetrating heat or frigid cold,

especially when you cover the large windshield. The shades can be so effective that you may be able to limit the use of the air conditioning. The additional measure of privacy shades offer is an added benefit.



Auto-Motion Shade Inc., 905-470-6198, www.automotionshade.com
Carefree of Colorado, 800-621-2617, www.carefreeofcolorado.com
Irvine Shade & Door Inc., 574-522-1446, www.irvineshadeanddoor.com
Magne Shade, 336-753-0905, www.magneshade.com
MCD Innovations, 972-548-1850, www.mcdinnovations.com
United Shade (Dicor), 877-262-0954, www.unitedshade.com



Climate Control

When the climate-control system that came with your motorhome isn't up to par, upgrading to a more efficient system can immediately improve the comfort level inside your RV. Replacing these systems is easier than you think, as most are designed to fit the same standard 14-inch roof openings. Heat pumps are available that offer heating and cooling from a single unit, and options are also available for ducted and nonducted applications.

Airxcel Inc., 316-832-3400, www.airxcel.com
Atwood Mobile, 800-546-8759, www.atwoodmobile.com
Dometic Group, 800-544-4881, www.dometic.com/usa



Powered Roof Vents

Keeping the air moving inside the motorhome is important not only for comfort, but to help defend against mold and mildew. A powered roof vent with a fan is a great low-current-draw option to keep the air flowing. Some models can be controlled with a wireless remote, and some offer a rain sensor that will automatically close the dome when the storm hits.

Fan-Tastic Vent, 800-521-0298, www.fantasticvent.com
Heng's Industries, 877-295-1205, www.hengsindustries.com
MaxxAir (Airxcel Inc.), 316-832-3400, www.airxcel.com



Appliances

Residential appliances in motorhomes have been trending as of late, with a familiar list of brand names that has previously been confined to the stationary-home market. But here, we're talking primarily about appliances designed for RV use, or at the very least, appliances that have been available for use in an RV for more than a few months. We all know that upgrading appliances is a surefire way to improve the overall look of your motorhome, not to mention the benefits of newer, more efficient technology that goes along with the upgrade. Be sure to keep power requirements and weight restrictions in mind when shopping for your dream kitchen.

Atwood Mobile, 800-546-8759,

www.atwoodmobile.com
Dometic, 800-544-4881, www.dometic.com/usa
Fisher & Paykel, 888-936-7872, www.fisherpaykel.com
Furrion, 888-354-5792, www.furrion.com
Norcold (Thetford), 800-543-1219, www.thetford.com
Splendide, 800-356-0766, www.splendide.com
Suburban (Airxcel Inc.), 316-832-3400, www.airxcel.com
Thetford, 800-543-1219, www.thetford.com
Truma, www.truma.com

Outdoor Living



Awnings and Accessories

For a pleasant campsite experience, a patio awning is almost a necessity. A good-quality awning enables RVers to bring the party outside without completely exposing the festivities to the harsh elements. In addition to complete replacements, there are a number of add-ons available. Some companies even offer a "powered" awning channel that enables you to plug in fans, lights, speakers and other campsite gizmos.

Awnings by Zip Dee, 800-338-2378, www.awningsbyzipdee.com
Camco, 800-334-2004, www.camco.net
Carefree of Colorado, 800-621-2617, www.carefreeofcolorado.com
Dometic Group (Power Channel), 800-544-4881, www.dometic.com/usa
EEZ RV Products, 510-910-5397, www.eezrvproducts.com
ShadePro, 800-328-5100, www.shadepro.net
Fiamma Inc., 407-672-0093, www.fiammausa.com
Girard Systems, 800-382-8442, www.girardrv.com
Lippert Components, 574-535-1125, www.lci1.com

Leveling Systems

With a modern leveling system, you can finally say goodbye to those stacks of wood scraps in your storage compart-



ments. Simply push a button upon arrival, and your motorhome can be completely level within seconds. These hydraulic levelers are fully automatic and are available for all motorhome classes.

Bigfoot (Quadra Mfg.), 800-752-9815,

www.thebigfootleveler.com

Bullseye Leveling, 574-727-5795,

www.bullseyeleveling.com

HWH Corp., 800-321-3494, www.hwhcorp.com

Power Gear (Lippert Components), 574-535-1125,

www.lci1.com

Powertrain

Motor Oils and Lubricants

Changing the engine oil on a regular basis is one of the most important tasks to keep your motorhome healthy and on the road.



Always follow the

vehicle manufac-

turer's recommended intervals to the

letter when it comes to oil changes, and always stick to the oil required by the engine manufacturer.

AMSOIL Inc., 800-956-5695, www.amsoil.com

Castrol, 800-462-0835, www.castrol.com

Delo, 800-822-5823, www.deloperformance.com

Havoline, 800-822-5823, www.havoline.com

Lucas Oil, 800-342-2512, www.lucasoil.com

Mobil 1, 800-662-4525, www.mobiloil.com

Pennzoil, 800-237-8645, www.pennzoil.com

Prestone Products Corporation, 888-269-0750,

www.prestone.com

Quaker State, 800-237-8645, www.quakerstate.com

Royal Purple, 888-382-6300,

www.royalpurpleconsumer.com

Shell Rotella, 800-237-8645, www.rotella.shell.com

STP, 888-464-7871, www.stp.com

Valvoline, 800-832-6825, www.valvoline.com

Tires

Inspecting the motorhome's tires should be a part of your daily routine when on the road; check for uneven



wear, sidewall cracks or bulges, and ensure the tread depth is adequate for safe travel. Tires should be rotated as instructed by the manufacturer, and replaced when they time out, even if the tread looks good. It's generally accepted that tires time out in seven years, but some manufacturers extend that period to 10 years, if they have been covered or stored indoors.

Goodyear, 800-667-8138, www.goodyear.com

Maxxis, 800-462-9947, www.maxxis.com

Michelin North America, 888-622-2306,

www.michelinvtires.com



Engine-Power Enhancements

Long popular in the pickup segment, engine-enhancement products such as tuners, chips and programmers can also work with the motorhome engine's electronics to provide more power and torque by adjusting heating points, air-to-fuel mixtures and even engine timing. Available for diesel- and gas-powered applications, these products include diagnostics, temperature and horsepower/torque readouts. A variety of air-flow enhancements are also available to help squeeze additional performance out of the engine.

5-Star Tuning, 843-536-1244, www.5startuning.com

Banks Power, 800-601-8072, www.bankspower.com

BD Diesel Performance, 800-887-5030,

www.dieselperformance.com

Bully Dog, 940-783-9914, www.bullydog.com

Diablo Sport, 866-404-6141, www.diablosport.com

Hypertech, 901-382-8888, www.hypertech.com

Snow Performance, 719-633-3811,

www.snowperformance.net

Superchips, 888-227-2447, www.superchips.com



Suspension Enhancements

Smoothing out the bumps not only makes the driving experience more

enjoyable, but it can also protect many of the motorhome's chassis and driving components from premature failure. Upgrading the motorhome's suspension can help soften the blows, while installing a steering stabilizer can improve handling impacted by passing semis, high winds or even a blowout.

Bilstein, 858-386-5900, www.bilsteinus.com

Blue Ox, 800-228-9289, www.blueox.com

Helwig Products, 800-435-5944,

www.hellwigproducts.com

Koni, 859-586-4100, www.koni-na.com

Roadmaster Inc., 800-669-9690,

www.roadmasterinc.com

Safe-T-Plus, 800-872-7233, www.safe-t-plus.com

SuperSprings, 800-898-0705,

www.supersprings.com



Fuel Additives

Available for diesel- and gas-powered applications, fuel additives are formulated for a variety of benefits, from prolonging the life of engine components to improving fuel economy and performance.

AMSOIL Inc., 800-956-5695, www.amsoil.com

Lucas Oil, 800-342-2512, www.lucasoil.com

Marvel Mystery, 800-887-8539,

www.marvelmysteryoil.com

Red Line, 800-624-7958, www.redlineoil.com

Royal Purple, 888-382-6300,

www.royalpurpleconsumer.com

Sta-Bil (Gold Eagle), 800-367-3245,

www.goldeagle.com

Star brite, 800-327-8583, www.starbrite.com

Sanitation

Sewer Hoses

Sewer hoses are an easy target for jokes, but make no mistake: All are not created equal. A cheap hose may work in a pinch, but this is one area where you certainly don't want to deal with the aftermath of a failure. Spending a little more on high-quality

fixtures, hoses and connectors is a good way to ensure smooth operation, and will help avoid embarrassing and messy spills at the campsite or dump station.



Blueline RV Sanitation (Prest-o-Fit), 888-770-5849, www.prestofit.com

Camco (RhinoFLEX), 800-334-2004, www.camco.net
Lippert Components, 574-535-1125, www.lci1.com
Thetford Corp., 800-543-1219, www.thetford.com
Valterra, 818-898-1671, www.valterra.com



Toilets

When you gotta go, it's good to know a durable and reliable throne awaits your arrival. Selecting the proper toilet, be it porcelain or plastic, or hand- or foot-flush, is a matter of necessity.

Dometic Group, 800-544-4881, www.dometic.com/usa
Thetford Corp., 800-543-1219, www.thetford.com



Holding-Tank Chemicals

Adding chemical treatments to your motorhome's holding tank helps control offensive odors, and also aids in breaking down solids for a smooth

flow. As an added bonus, many of the treatments are formulated to lubricate the seals, which helps to prolong the life of these vital components to avoid nasty spills.

Camco, 800-334-2004, www.camco.net
Dometic Group, 800-544-4881, www.dometic.com/usa
Eco-Save, 800-950-9666, www.eco-save.com
Odorlos (Valterra), 818-898-1671, www.valterra.com
Pure Power Blue/Green (Valterra), 818-898-1671, www.valterra.com
Star brite, 800-327-8583, www.starbrite.com
Thetford Corp., 800-543-1219, www.thetford.com
Travel Jon (Century Chemical Corp.), 800-348-3505, www.centurychemical.com
Walex, 800-338-3155, www.walex.com
Worldwide Monochem, 512-267-5190, www.satellite-environmental.com



Sewer Vents

These specialty vents create an updraft to expel foul odors from the holding tank before they can settle in the interior. The vents are designed to operate with or without a breeze, and generally don't contain any moving parts.

360 Products Inc., 503-559-8094, www.360productsnorthamerica.com
Camco, 800-334-2004, www.camco.net
Coil n' Wrap, 866-603-8388, www.coilnwrap.com
LaSalle Bristol, 800-718-7187, www.lasallebristol.com
Lippert Components (360 Siphon), 574-535-1125, www.lci1.com
Ventline, 574-848-4491, www.ventline.com



Macerators

Macerators make dumping holding tanks easy, grinding up the solids for

expulsion through hoses as small as 1 inch in diameter — and over longer distances than conventional hoses.

Clean Dump, 360-798-2437, www.cleandump.com
Flojet, 949-608-3900, www.xylemflowcontrol.com
Thetford Corp. (Sani-Con), 800-543-1219, www.thetford.com
Valterra, 818-898-1671, www.valterra.com



Portable Tanks

Your motorhome's holding tanks can fill up in a hurry while boondocking. Rather than completely breaking camp to dump the tanks, use these convenient, portable tanks that are designed to transport the contents to the dump station; some even have wheels. These tanks attach via standard sewer hoses and can accept the waste directly from the motorhome's gray- and black-water outlets.

Barker Manufacturing Co., 800-537-9940, www.barkermfg.com
Camco, 800-334-2004, www.camco.net
Thetford Corp. (SmartTote), 800-543-1219, www.thetford.com



Holding-Tank Monitors/Sensors

Though newer motorhomes are likely already equipped with holding-tank monitors, adding new probes to an existing system or replacing an older component with one that uses external sensors can yield immediate results for knowing how much space is left in the tanks.

Horst Miracle Probe, www.rvprobes.com
SeeLevel (Garnet Technologies Inc.), 877-668-7813, www.garnetinstruments.com



The Ultimate Buying Experience
Elegance | Sophistication | Safety

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Starting at
\$93,995



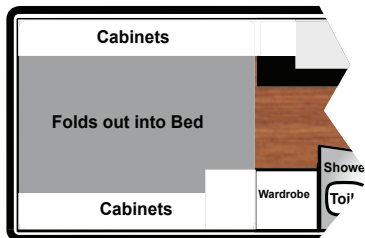
Azur ELX is here



Large entertainment area in rear folds into queen bed.

ELX floorplan offers an optional entertainment center in place of chair.

ELX floorplan features a large 6.6 cu ft refrigerator.



Azur 24ELX

Sold **Factory Direct** by The RV Factory | (844) 284-6678

2503 Marina Dr, Elkhart IN 46514 | Daily Tours | avionvans.com

Sales@thervfactory.com



Specifications and options subject to change without notice.

Manufactured by The RV Factory

Avion Vans, Circle 123 on Reader Service Card

BLISSFUL SHOWERS



Bathing in a motorhome may not be quite as enjoyable as at home, but these products can make getting clean much more satisfying

Motorhome showers are designed and built not only to accommodate basic hygiene needs, but also to fit into a compact space and conserve water. This could make some motorhome showers less than satisfying. There are a few things you can do to make your shower more enjoyable, and there is a good selection of upgraded components on the market.

Shower valves tend to be simple affairs. Some higher-end motorhomes will have a more residential-style cartridge-type single-handle valve, and some carry common brand names like Moen, Delta or Grohe. These types of residential valves will often have replaceable parts, and are about as high-quality as you can get. Similarly, these will have in-wall piping that provides water to the fixed showerhead fitting further up on the shower stall wall. The best upgrades for these types of systems are showerheads, and one option is to choose from any of the residential-style systems available at your local home center.

Most production motorhomes use plastic RV/marine-style fixtures. There are three basic types. The first is a shower-only wall-mount valve assembly. Most of these have two handles, although single-handle versions are available. Most of them have a standard 4-inch pipe separation, utilizing 1/2-inch connections. The valve will have a top- or

bottom-mounted vacuum breaker or D-Spud for the showerhead hose connection.

These valves occasionally have replaceable cartridges and seals, but not always. They are usually completely made of plastic, and in northern climates, replacing them due to cracking is frequent, but they tend to be inexpensive and easy to replace. Like most faucets, they have two pipe connections and two large nuts to secure the valve either to the wall or an external mounting box. If the valve is mounted to a box on the shower wall, there will be four screws for attachment, and probably some butyl sealant, which you will need to replace when reinstalling the unit. Make sure the pipe fittings are hand-tight and test them under pressure before reattaching the box to the wall.

A different type of faucet is used for those who have tubs in their motorhomes. This type features a tub faucet with a pull-up shower diverter. The attachment is the same as the

shower valve, and the showerhead hose connection is positioned on the top, which also features a vacuum breaker or D-Spud.

Lastly, for owners whose motorhomes feature a wet bath (such as those found in Class B models), a sink valve with a pull-up shower diverter will be provided.

Showerhead hoses are, for the most part, made of vinyl; however, aftermarket metallic replacements are available in usually three finishes (chrome, nickel and bronze), in the standard 60-inch length with 1/2-inch fittings. While the inner diameter (I.D.) is standard across the board, the metallic hoses are not only more attractive, but are kink-free, more flexible and tend to last longer than the original vinyl hoses.

There are several aftermarket showerheads available for RV use, and upgrading your current model will offer an immediate performance upgrade you can feel. Keeping water usage to a minimum is a common concept in RVs because of limited water supplies and holding-tank size. Some of these new faucets, however, can provide a residential-like shower feel while still keeping water conservation in mind.



RV shower valves most commonly come in two styles. One is a simple wall-mount with a vacuum breaker or D-Spud, and the other is for a tub diverted with the same shower connection. Be sure to replace the existing faucet with a similar-style fitting.



Camco

Available in three finishes, Camco's ergonomic and adjustable RV/marine showerhead offers the user the option of four distinct shower patterns ranging "from a drenching rain to a gentle shower," according to the company. The shower wand also features a thumb-activated shut-off valve on the handle, and is designed to flow 2.5 gallons per minute (GPM) at 40 psi.

Available through most RV parts retailers, the wand has an MSRP of \$22.99.

Camco, 800-334-2004, www.camco.net



▲ Orbit

Ecocamel

With operations in London, Abu Dhabi and stateside in Minnesota, Ecocamel offers a variety of replacement showerheads suitable for use in an RV. One highlight of the company's product line is the premium British-made Ecocamel Orbit hand-held showerhead. This showerhead is an open-loop halo-shaped design with 40 overlapping jets made of wipe-clean rubber nodules that spray in a bicycle-spoke pattern, providing a powerful, even spray, according to the company. The spray and pressure patterns are aided by internal rifling, which helps propel water through the head while minimizing friction loss. The Orbit also features an air intake, which the company calls AirCore technology, that is designed to improve shower performance. The Orbit has an MSRP of \$69.95.



Also available from Ecocamel is the Jetstorm hand-held showerhead, which creates a "spalike shower" while being a little easier on the pocketbook, according to the company. The Jetstorm has an MSRP of \$39.95 on the Ecocamel website, which offers free shipping. A fixed-mount showerhead is also available.

Ecocamel, 800-419-7000, www.ecocamel.com



◀ DF SA-470K

Dura Faucet

Dura Faucet, based in Camas, Washington, specializes in RV faucets, and offers the largest selection in the industry, according to the company. The company provides an eight-page catalog on its website, which provides numerous types and styles of RV faucets and showers for every need.

Dura Faucet offers several single-function and a five-function shower wand in a number of finishes, plus new pressure-assist hand-held shower-wand kits. Dura Faucet also offers an RV shower slide bar, which is available in six finishes and incorporates a soap dish for a fully adjustable, luxurious shower. MSRP starts at \$46.09

The pressure-assist shower-wand kits, available in five finishes, feature an MSRP starting at \$49.48. MSRP for Dura Faucet shower wands begins at \$22.60. The company offers a limited lifetime warranty on all components.

Dura Faucet, 888-242-5932, www.durafaucet.com



▲ DF-SA300CL

Empire Brass

This Cleveland, Ohio-based company offers a large variety of products aimed at the RV market, from economy models up to durable brass faucets, available in a variety of finishes, including camouflage.

In addition to the faucets, the company offers four basic shower-wand kits for RVs, in white, off-white, chrome and brass. For those looking to amp up their shower experience, the company also offers LED lighted and musical shower wands. The SH40BT Bluetooth hand-held chrome music showerhead connects to your smart device or to the motorhome's Bluetooth-enabled stereo to provide tunes while you enjoy the shower. It has an MSRP of \$99.99. The LED lighted shower wand is available in chrome and features a digital temperature gauge in the handle that informs the user of water temperature. Available through most RV parts stores, this head has an MSRP of \$69.29.

**Empire Brass, 216-431-6567,
www.rvfaucets.com**



SH40-BT ▶



BodySpa ▶

LED Lighted Shower Wand ▶



Oxygenics

The Oxygenics BodySpa has what the company calls a “patented engine,” which simplifies water pressure, turning weak showers into pleasant, powerful ones, according to the company. It does so by creating an aerated shower experience rather than a solid-flow pattern.

The design of the head is futuristic and, other than the pause button on the bottom of the handle, has no moving parts. It is built using nonstick materials, so lime and crud shouldn't be an issue. In fact, the company offers a “never-clog” guarantee as part of its lifetime warranty against component failure. With a maximum flow rate of 2.0 GPM, the BodySpa is available in chrome, brushed nickel and white, and comes with a hose and wall bracket. The Oxygenics BodySpa is available at RV and marine centers and has an MSRP starting at \$42.99.

HARBOR FREIGHT

QUALITY TOOLS AT RIDICULOUSLY LOW PRICES

BADLAND **SUPER COUPON**

12,000 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH REMOTE CONTROL AND AUTOMATIC BRAKE

Customer Rating **★★★★★** ITEM 61256/61889 60813 shown

SAVE \$453

SUPER COUPON \$2999 comp at \$752.99

\$379.99 comp at \$752.99

82060075

LIMIT 3 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

SUPER COUPON

20% OFF

ANY SINGLE ITEM

LIMIT 1 coupon per customer per day. Save 20% on any 1 item purchased. *Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or any of the following items or brands: Tools, Truck Club membership, Extended Service Plan, gift card, open box item, 3 day Parking Lot Sale item, compressors, floor jacks, saw mills, storage cabinets, chests or carts, trailers, tractors, welders, Admiral, Bauer, CovePro, Dayton, Earthquake, Hercules, Jupiter, Lynx, Power, Predator, Stormol, Targem, Viking, Vortex. Not valid on prior purchases. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/14/17.

82068340

SUPER COUPON

FREE

WITH ANY PURCHASE

3-1/2" SUPER BRIGHT NINE LED ALUMINUM FLASHLIGHT

ITEM 69052 shown 66111/62522/62573

\$4.97 VALUE

LIMIT 1 - Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or prior purchase. Coupon good at our stores. HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Offer good while supplies last. Shipping & handling charges may apply if not posted up in-store. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/14/17. Limit one FREE GIFT coupon per customer per day.

82077103

HaulMaster **SUPER COUPON**

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

12 VOLT MAGNETIC TOWING LIGHT KIT

ITEM 63100

SAVE 71%

SUPER COUPON \$9.99 comp at \$34.95

\$19.99 comp at \$34.95

82071731

LIMIT 1 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC **SUPER COUPON**

3 GALLON, 100 PSI OILLESS AIR COMPRESSORS

A. HOT DOG ITEM 69269/97080 shown

B. PANCAKE ITEM 95275 shown 60637/61615

SAVE 59%

YOUR CHOICE \$39.99 comp at \$98.62

82071788

LIMIT 1 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE **SUPER COUPON**

#1 SELLING JACKS IN AMERICA

RAPID PUMP® 3 TON HEAVY DUTY STEEL FLOOR JACK

ITEM 69227 62116/62584 68048 shown

WEIGHTS 74 lbs.

SAVE \$66

SUPER COUPON \$141.88 comp at \$141.88

\$84.99 comp at \$141.88

\$74.99 comp at \$141.88

82080244

LIMIT 1 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

PITTSBURGH MOTORCYCLE **SUPER COUPON**

1500 LB. CAPACITY MOTORCYCLE LIFT

ITEM 61632/60536 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$30

SUPER COUPON \$69.99 comp at \$99

\$89.99 comp at \$99

82068827

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Grant's **SUPER COUPON**

MECHANIC'S CHOICE SHOP TOWELS - PACK OF 50

SAVE 44%

SUPER COUPON \$9.99 comp at \$17.98

\$12.99 comp at \$17.98

ITEM 63365/63360 shown 82080556

LIMIT 1 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC **SUPER COUPON**

3 GALLON, 100 PSI OILLESS AIR COMPRESSORS

A. HOT DOG ITEM 69269/97080 shown

B. PANCAKE ITEM 95275 shown 60637/61615

SAVE 59%

YOUR CHOICE \$39.99 comp at \$98.62

82071788

LIMIT 1 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE **SUPER COUPON**

#1 SELLING JACKS IN AMERICA

RAPID PUMP® 3 TON HEAVY DUTY STEEL FLOOR JACK

ITEM 69227 62116/62584 68048 shown

WEIGHTS 74 lbs.

SAVE \$66

SUPER COUPON \$141.88 comp at \$141.88

\$84.99 comp at \$141.88

\$74.99 comp at \$141.88

82080244

LIMIT 1 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

PITTSBURGH MOTORCYCLE **SUPER COUPON**

1500 LB. CAPACITY MOTORCYCLE LIFT

ITEM 61632/60536 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$30

SUPER COUPON \$69.99 comp at \$99

\$89.99 comp at \$99

82068827

LIMIT 1 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

HaulMaster **SUPER COUPON**

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

3/8" x 14 FT. GRADE 43 TOWING CHAIN

ITEM 60658/97711 shown

Not for overhead lifting.

SAVE 67%

SUPER COUPON \$19.99 comp at \$60.95

\$30.99 comp at \$60.95

• 5400 lb. capacity

82075740

LIMIT 1 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

WARRIOR **SUPER COUPON**

29 PIECE TITANIUM NITRIDE COATED HIGH SPEED STEEL DRILL BIT SET

ITEM 62281 61637 shown

SAVE 93%

SUPER COUPON \$9.99 comp at \$59.98

\$109.99 comp at \$59.98

82064588

LIMIT 1 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

SUPER COUPON

FOLDABLE ALUMINUM SPORTS CHAIR

ITEM 62314/63066 66383 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 50%

SUPER COUPON \$19.99 comp at \$39.99

\$27.99 comp at \$39.99

• 250 lb. capacity

82058638

LIMIT 1 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

HaulMaster **SUPER COUPON**

72" x 80" MOVING BLANKET

ITEM 69505/62418/66537 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 66%

SUPER COUPON \$5.99 comp at \$17.97

\$8.99 comp at \$17.97

82057058

LIMIT 1 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

One stop gardens **SUPER COUPON**

SOLAR ROPE LIGHT

ITEM 62533/68353 shown

SAVE 66%

SUPER COUPON \$9.99 comp at \$29.97

\$19.99 comp at \$29.97

• 16 ft. lit, 22 ft. long

82078396

LIMIT 1 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

CENTRAL MACHINERY **SUPER COUPON**

10 TON HYDRAULIC LOG SPLITTER

ITEM 62291 67900 shown

SAVE \$30

SUPER COUPON \$99.99 comp at \$119.99

\$114.99 comp at \$119.99

82065216

LIMIT 4 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

CENTECH **SUPER COUPON**

AUTOMATIC BATTERY FLOAT CHARGER

ITEM 69594 69955 42292 shown

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 85%

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Another offering from Oxygenics is the Fury, which is a more traditional, non-aeration hand-held showerhead. This product gives the user a selection of five spray functions, features an extra-long 72-inch hose for better reach and has an adjustable flow control up to 2.0 GPM. Also available in chrome, brushed nickel and white, the Fury has a starting MSRP of \$43.95
Oxygenics, 800-344-3242, www.oxygenics.com



Fury ▶



▶ Airfusion

Phoenix Faucets

One of the most well-known names in RV and marine plumbing products is Phoenix Faucets, a division of Valterra Products, and a manufacturer of many of the faucets, showers and fittings seen in RVs since 1977. The company has several replacement and upgraded shower offerings that are available through almost every RV parts and accessories retailer.

Phoenix offers everything from the most basic single-function hand-held showerheads, to its Airfusion single-function unit with separate flow controller to the three-function head with flow control, spray, massage and spray/massage combination positions. The Airfusion design uses a vacuum valve built into the bottom of the showerhead. The valve creates compressed air bubbles that quickly expand as they're forced through the head. This results in the water creating a high-pressure spray that feels like a home shower, and the Airfusion uses 20-30 percent less water than conventional showerheads. The complete kit has an MSRP of \$50.06, according to the company.

All of Phoenix's hand-held showerheads have some type of flow control or shut-off, and are available in a variety of finishes to match the faucet and shower décor. The company also features full parts diagrams, parts breakdowns and repair and replacement instructions for all its products on the website. Phoenix showerheads have an MSRP starting at \$10.50 and feature a lifetime warranty.

Phoenix Faucets, 800-222-6041, www.phoenixfaucets.com, www.valterra.com



AS-500W ▶

Relaqu/Averen Inc.

Relaqu, a division of Averen Inc., a California company, offers a few RV shower faucets and shower wands, including the compact, Euro-styled AS-500W. With a spring-loaded handle-grip valve, the stylish AS-500W has a good, pressure-boosted shower flow, according to the company. The valve is designed to remain in the "off" position until the handle is grabbed, optimizing water savings — especially for outside showers. The AS-500W has an MSRP of \$29, and is available through most RV parts stores.

Relaqu, 626-336-2870, www.avereninc.com M



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IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

A TALE OF TWO MOTORHOMES, THREE DECADES AND FOUR GENERATIONS

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

We get a lot of things from our families: our grandmother's eyes, our uncle's forehead, our father's adventurous spirit and so on. But for the Elliotts, their inheritance wasn't limited to just the love of travel — they also got the classic RVs to go with it.

The Elliotts have always been a camping family. Carleton and his wife, Toni, started early in their marriage with a travel trailer, which they then swapped with his parents in 1981 for a 28-foot Winnebago. This was later replaced by a used 1979 Newell purchased specifically to make a three-month trek across the United States with their young children, Tyler and Tara, in 1986. While on the trip Carleton decided to

trade that motorhome for yet another Newell, this time a 36-foot 1983 unit that they picked up at the Newell factory in Miami, Oklahoma. At the time, it wasn't a popular move with his wife.

"We had just bought one motorhome, and now I turned around and got another one. I don't think she talked to me until we got to New Mexico," Carleton remembers with a laugh.

Fortunately, that coach proved to have staying power. It became the foundation for 26 years of travel as their brood grew to five children and later stretched to include a bevy of grandchildren. Still, the Newell was not the reigning monarch of the family reunions at Lake Powell; that honor went to Toni's grandpar-



The Elliott family has been enjoying Newell coaches for more than 30 years. Tara, Carleton, Tyler and Toni stand proudly in front of their 1979 Newell.

ents' brand-new 40-foot Prevost. Purchased in 1990 and custom-converted to their specifications, it was the family's pride and joy.

"I never even thought about owning it myself," says Carleton. "We never thought Grandpa would part with that motorhome."

So it came as quite a surprise to



The pair of coaches can garner quite a bit of attention, providing the Elliotts the perfect opportunity to tell their fascinating story.



Carleton when Grandpa handed him the keys three years ago. At 95, Toni's grandparents could no longer travel as they once had, and the Prevost had been sitting, unused, for several years. They felt that by giving it to their granddaughter and her husband, they would at least know it was going to a good home. It was an offer Carleton and Toni couldn't refuse.

It was clear from the start that the Prevost would need some updating. Mechanically, the unit was in excellent condition, with about 100,000 miles on the Detroit Diesel 8V92 500-hp engine and six-speed Allison transmission. Prevost has a well-deserved reputation for building quality bus shells, and this conversion coach was no exception. But the motorhome had seen years of heavy use, and the exterior paint and interior appliances, flooring, cabinetry and furnishings all showed wear. In addition, Grandma had been fond of gold, rose and Victorian frills, resulting in a décor that did not quite fit the Elliotts' style. They made the decision to undertake a total renovation, a task that took about 18 months. Carleton did most of the

Left: Victorian frills and lighter surfaces made the Prevost conversion's old interior seem too dated for the Elliotts. **Right:** The cabinetry (minus door fronts) is all that remains to be seen of the original interior. New flourishes include soapstone countertops and darker furniture.

work on weeknights in the shop of the family's California-based business, with the help of his now-adult son and co-owner, Tyler.

"I basically started with the front bumper and ended with the back bumper," Carleton says of his renovation plan.

That included essentially gutting the interior. The old flooring was removed and replaced with ¾-inch plank wood flooring in the main living area. In the kitchen, all the cabinetry received a new lacquer finish, cabinet fronts were replaced with glass and backlighting was added. Carleton added soapstone countertops, a stainless-steel barn sink and new plumbing fixtures for a more modern look. The old appliances were removed, replaced by a double-door residential counter-depth refrigerator and a convection microwave. Instead of a traditional stovetop, Toni and Carleton chose to optimize counter-space by using two portable induction

plates that could be stowed in the drawers instead.

The carpeting in the bedroom was replaced, as were the striped-and-flowered pink wallpaper and the brass bed. The cabinetry was lacquered in contrasting pale gray and cream, and the window treatments updated. Recessed lighting was also added throughout.

The bathroom became one of the highlights of the renovation. The shower walls were covered with 6-by-12-inch black porcelain plank tiles, laid vertically and fitted tightly so that they give the illusion of a seamless, solid surface. The shower seat and floor were both done in river rock, and the old rose-embossed shower door was replaced. A new vanity was added, as was a tiled backsplash. The final result rivals the bathroom in any upscale penthouse.

The main living area includes a sofa and loveseat as well as a dinette, with all of the upholstery

FAMILY TIES

No amount of money can purchase the family history these motorhomes share, but both the Newell and the Prevost bus conversion are excellent choices for anyone in the market for a used motorhome. A 36-foot Newell from the early 1980s can be found for between \$29,000 and \$69,900, depending on condition. A 1990 40-foot Prevost Xl conversion coach is a little harder to come by — in researching this article, more than half of those listed were already sold. The average asking price hovered around a range from \$65,000 to \$100,000.



▶ Even after more than 60 years combined on the road, the Newell and Prevost classic rides continue to deliver.

The Classic Ride

done in easy-care dark ultraleather “because we have grandkids in here nonstop,” said Carleton. Woodwork was lacquered to match the kitchen cabinetry, with all of the hardware picked out by Toni. In terms of entertainment, an in-motion satellite dish was added, as were new televisions and sound systems.

One difficulty in undertaking a remake of this magnitude was getting the old furnishings and appliances out and the new ones in. The door simply wasn’t wide enough, so everything had to go in and out through the front windshield. However, the most challenging job of the entire renovation, by far, was updating the front dash.

“I had to take every single gauge off, but I had to leave it wired in because I still had to be able to drive it around. I wrapped each one in a zip-lock bag and kept all the wires separate so nothing got mixed up,” Carleton says.

Tyler remembers coming in the next morning after his father had started on the dashboard.

“I took one look at it and said, ‘What in the world are you doing?’” he laughs.

“I really didn’t know what I was getting into. I started it up every other day just to see if it still worked,” Carleton remembers.



The retro colors, light fixtures and wood finishes give this Newell its vintage look. The comfortable king bed is the main feature in the Newell’s rear bedroom.

In addition to the interior renovation, the Prevost also got new exterior paint, and Carleton added three new 15,000-Btu roof air conditioners, new brakes, shocks and tires. Thus far, he has been thrilled with the results.

“I really have no unfulfilled dreams so far as this motorhome goes,” he says. He knows that the lack of slideouts and the extra square footage they provide might be considered a detriment to some, but “there’s a lot to be said for nonslideouts when you are driving.” The couple has put about 25,000 miles on the Prevost since the completion of the work in early 2016, including business trips and family vacations.

And what about the Newell that used to park side by side with the Prevost over more than two decades of family camping?

It’s in good hands — son Tyler’s hands, to be exact. He and his wife, Christa, and their toddler were already following in the family tradition, first in a 1977 Winnebago, and later in a 1992 American Eagle. However, when the opportunity came to purchase the motorhome he had traveled in as a child, Tyler jumped at the chance.

Newell is well-known for producing a high-end, high-quality product, and since this coach had been meticulously maintained by his father, it really didn’t need much work. Two of the rooftop air-conditioning units needed replacing, so Tyler installed Coleman-Mach 8 15,000-Btu low-profile units. He did not want to alter the retro feel of the coach, so he kept his changes

small: upgrading most of the lighting to LED, replacing the older televisions, and adding a skylight in the kitchen area. Otherwise, the coach still has the original leather upholstery, black Formica kitchen countertops, original LP-gas stovetop, convection oven and Dometic refrigerator. Tyler likes the nautical feel inspired by the interior decor, and right now he says there isn’t much about the Newell he would change except possibly to replace the old Kohler generator with a quieter new Onan for dry camping.

“And, in a perfect world, maybe a Detroit Diesel 8V92 for a little better hill-climbing speed,” he adds with a smile.

Tyler loves the vintage look of the Newell with its rounded aluminum skin and striped paint, noting that the coach tends to garner a lot of attention in campgrounds. The attention doubles when the Newell is accompanied by his parents’ Prevost, and Tyler notes that “it’s fun to tell the story whenever I get the opportunity.”

As for Toni’s grandparents (Tyler’s great-grandparents), they are now 97, and Tyler says they are thrilled to know that the Prevost retains its spot as the family monarch.

“It is great that it is always there, and that both of these motorhomes are still camping side by side. They may have changed generations, but they are still part of the family,” he said.

And that, more than anything else, is why this 1990 Prevost bus conversion and 1983 Newell are truly classic rides. **M**

River rock adds interest to the floor and seat in the Prevost conversion’s sleek black-tiled shower.

Bag It

I love the big 7-inch screen on my GPS. What I don't love is that after a few bumps on the road, I need to stretch forward and straighten the screen up so I can read it better. The solution I found was to cut the side out of a plastic sandwich bag and hold it over the mounting ball and snap the GPS unit in place. The thin plastic (you don't need anything thicker) is sufficient to increase the tension between the ball and socket to keep the GPS in place.

We just returned from a Utah-to-eastern seaboard trip, and our GPS held firm for the full journey of nearly 6,600 miles. We do avoid toll roads, and some of those eastern highways will loosen your fillings, but I no longer have to adjust the GPS, which helps me keep my eyes on the road and to stay in our own lane.

Neldon Sommerville | West Jordan, Utah



DIY Double Play

We wanted to share with you a couple fixes that we have learned after several years of RVing.

1. We have a quick-and-easy fix for loose bumper caps that store sewer hoses: Wrap the edge of the cap with duct tape to make the cap fit more tightly in the end of the bumper. No drilling is required. It's worked great for us for some time now, and the only downside is replacing the duct tape.

2. We save ourselves from stubbed toes and other foot injuries by driving the metal stakes we use for various items through foam can koozies. We buy the preformed foam koozies with a hole in the bottom (bright colors work best). Insert the stake through the top of the koozie and through the hole in the bottom, then drive it into the ground to hold tents, mats, etc. It definitely saves your toes and feet from injury.

Kurt and Teresa Klimkiewicz | Dearborn, Michigan

Storage ABCs

I carry all kinds of stuff in my RV compartments, so much that I cannot remember in which compartment is the item I need. My solution: I numbered the compartments on the outside of my RV and inventoried the contents in each compartment. Then I alphabetized the list and recorded the compartment number where the item is stored opposite the name of the item. Now when I need something I look at my list and can go directly to the compartment where the item is located.

Bobby Voyles | Greensboro, Georgia



Tag It

After driving away with my motorhome's water hose still attached, I looked for a way to make sure I didn't forget anything so critical the next time I broke camp. A paper checklist seemed too clumsy, so I searched for a solution that worked better for me. I finally hit on beach-towel clips attached to the motorhome's steering wheel. Each clip has a key tag with a chore that needs to be done before I leave. If your local RV supply store doesn't carry towel clips, they can be ordered online.

Richard Sturtz | Walloon Lake, Michigan



Have an Idea?

Quick Tips is looking for submissions. Please send your DIY ideas to: *MotorHome* Quick Tips, 2750 Park View Ct., Ste. 240, Oxnard, CA 93036, or email letters@motorhomemagazine.com. Be sure to include any photos, illustrations or drawings. If your tip is selected for publication, you will receive \$35. All payments require an FEIN or SSN.

Hang in There

Upset when an RV resort refused to honor his gift certificate despite previously being assured of its validity, a reader turned to Hot Line for help. He wrote:



“ I am having a problem with a local RV resort. Several months ago I purchased a certificate for \$75, which the resort said would never expire. However, when I later tried to use it, the person at the front desk refused, and wouldn't give me my money back. I contacted the manager/owner, who said if I sent him my original certificate, he would immediately refund my money. I did trust him, but made notarized copies of the original document for my own records before sending to him. He has not responded, and it has been several days now. I would appreciate any help you can provide for me.

Delbert Zirkle | Lakeland, Georgia

This is a great opportunity to point out that sometimes, a positive resolution can take a bit of time. It's important to be patient, and to give all parties involved ample time to process your case. In Zirkle's case, he only waited a few days before contacting Hot Line, but did appear to receive some good news after our intervention, as detailed in his follow-up letter.

“ I'm writing to let you know that the resort finally paid me. I would like to thank you for your assistance. I am still disappointed that it would not honor my certificate, but I have my money back, so all is well.
D.Z.

Fridge Frustration

When the hinges on his refrigerator failed, a reader asked Hot Line to help secure a reimbursement for the unit's replacement.

“ On December 13, 2013, I purchased a new Itasca Cambria

30J. It was equipped with a Norcold refrigerator, model N 822 RT. On July 27, 2016, when I opened the refrigerator door, it fell off the hinges, almost striking my foot. I am amazed that a refrigerator door hinge that's only 2½ years old would break at the bottom hinge pin.

I had the door replaced at a cost of \$372.50. I am asking that Norcold reimburse me for the cost.

I only use the coach three months out of each year, and there are only 11,000 miles on the odometer.

Alfred Conrads | Hudson, Florida

Hot Line forwarded Conrads' letter to Norcold. We received a copy of a letter the company sent to Conrads, which included an additional nice gesture from Norcold:

Dear Mr. Conrads,

It was great speaking with you. The door reimbursement check should already have been mailed to you. Thank you for your patience and for being a loyal Norcold customer.

Please accept [the enclosed] cleaning products as a token of our appreciation.

**Kim Gordon, Senior Manager,
Customer Service
Thetford Corp./Norcold Inc.**

We then heard back from Conrads a short time later.

“ I am pleased to inform you that Norcold sent me a check for \$238.70, which was for the cost of the door and shipping.

A.C.

Successful Complaint Resolution

Periodically, we like to remind readers of the best practices for securing a positive resolution to their Hot Line complaints.

The most important element in the process is a well-written letter, which should spell out your issue(s) in simple terms and include what you would consider a fair resolution. Be sure to include copies of any receipts, work orders or any other pertinent information regarding the repair/replacement of the product(s).

Complaint letters must be typed, should only include points that are relevant to your case, and be no more than two pages in length. **M**

Take Action

Contact Hot Line for Help

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

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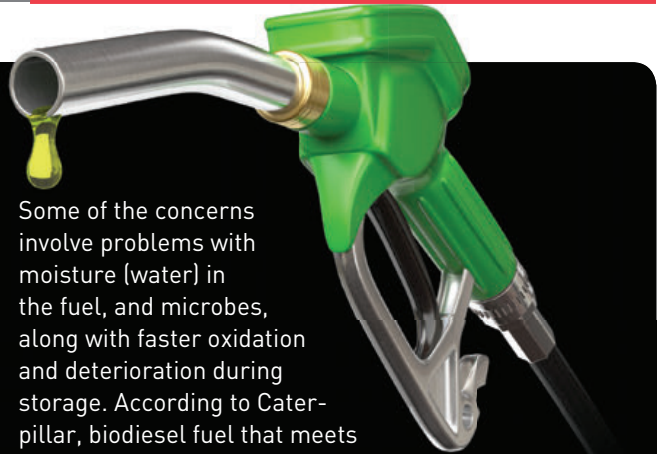
By Ken Freund

Biodiesel Concern

Q I'm a longtime Good Sam member and I have a question to which I can't seem to find a definitive answer. What is the main drawback to using biodiesel fuel in a Cat 3126? I've inadvertently used it in our engine and it clogged the fuel filter after approximately 200 miles. This is obviously a drawback, but I've been told by Cat techs that it also will damage the engine internally. Due to the fact that biodiesel is becoming so widespread in the western states, I'm wondering how I'm going to find pure diesel out there.

Don Moffet | Clemmons, North Carolina

A There are many formulations, blends and percentages of biodiesel fuel. Some biodiesel fuel is made from soy, while other types are made from fats or oils, etc. Generally, these contain somewhat less energy per volume than distillate diesel fuel made from crude oil.



Some of the concerns involve problems with moisture (water) in the fuel, and microbes, along with faster oxidation and deterioration during storage. According to Caterpillar, biodiesel fuel that meets the requirements that are listed in Caterpillar's specification for biodiesel, ASTM D6751, or DIN 51606, should pose no problems. I also found an older guide online at http://sebd.biz/Technical_Articles/CAT42001.PDF which covers this subject. The 3126 is an older engine and was designed before biodiesel became popular. I would try to stick with regular diesel or use the lowest percentages of biodiesel available at a station. If you follow factory recommendations, you should be OK.

Air Conditioning Quits

Q We own a 2006 Fleetwood Bounder 34F on a Workhorse chassis powered by an 8.1-liter Vortec engine. The dash air conditioning works great while the RV is in gear, but blows hot air when the RV is idling out of gear. How do I correct the problem?

Jim Boynton | Pasco, Washington

A First, you need to narrow down the part of the system that's causing the problem. I would begin by opening the hood as soon as the motorhome comes to a stop and have an assistant stay at the controls, and while stopped with the brakes on, shift from drive to neutral. Watch the front (center) of the air-conditioning compressor, and note if the clutch assembly is spinning or if it stops. If the electrically controlled compressor clutch is disengaging at idle, you'll have to troubleshoot that circuit, which includes the relay and wiring. If it

continues to spin at idle, look for the problem elsewhere. Another possibility is that the condenser (which transfers the heat to the air in front of the radiator) is either partially blocked with bugs and/or debris that may cause insufficient air to pass through when not driving. If it's clean, determine if the electric auxiliary fan is coming on and blowing air through the condenser. If the fan is not working, there won't be sufficient cooling at idle, and it's even possible that the over-pressure protection switch (which can be triggered when insufficient airflow causes refrigerant pressure to rise) may be shutting off the compressor. You can bypass the relay to make the fan run continuously when the ignition is on, for testing. Always stay clear of belts, pulleys and fan blades.

Fuel Overflow When Filling

Q We own a 40-foot 2002 American Eagle with a 150-gallon fuel tank and fuel filler caps on both sides.

When I refuel the motorhome, fuel belches back out unless I open the cap on the other side. This happens sometimes even after I've stopped pumping. Also, it's very hard to get the tank to take fuel; the pump keeps cutting off as though the tank was full. When I open the cap on the other side, fuel runs out before the pump cuts off. This happens using pumps at a regular station (not a truck stop), and even when I use the slowest possible flow on the pump. I have to have my wife watch the other side and tell me when it runs over so I can stop pumping. This is annoying and expensive, aside from spilling fuel on the pavement, which has to be cleaned up. Is there a vent that might be clogged? Maybe there's a fuel cap that will let the tank vent without spilling fuel?

Bobby Watson | Via email

A This can be a real nuisance for owners, and those waiting in line behind you. Opening the cap on the

other side provides a vent for the tank as it's filled, and the need to do this indicates that the vent(s) are restricted in some way. Inspect the vent hoses; they should not have low spots where liquid fuel can collect and block off the flow of air. Also, make sure they are not kinked or otherwise pinched in tight-radius bends or where they go through tight spaces. You don't want a cap that vents like that because if you park on a slope to one side the fuel would run out.

Battery Goes Dead When Disconnected

Q I own a 2016 Thor Chateau 22B motorhome. Since I bought it new it has had a problem with the house battery going dead while in storage. I connect to shorepower and get it charged and then switch it to store mode, which is supposed to disconnect the battery. It will be dead and need charging within about

a week or two. I had the dealer check it and was told everything was "within spec." The engine battery does not die, nor do batteries on store shelves, so why would the house battery die if it is disconnected? Should I physically disconnect the cable?

Frank Olson | Colorado Springs, Colorado

A Actually, all batteries self-discharge over time, even those sitting on a shelf, but it's a much slower process that takes months, not days. I'm not sure what your dealer's definition of "within spec" is, but you definitely have a problem, which should have been handled under warranty. It's important to get this fixed as soon as possible because deep discharging will damage the batteries. Apparently something is not getting disconnected from the batteries and they are discharging. With the batteries in storage mode and the motorhome not plugged in to shorepower, measure the voltage

going into or at the house fuse panel. It should be zero. If it's not, and I strongly suspect that's the case, bring this up with the service manager or owner of your dealership, and if you don't get a proper resolution, contact the manufacturer. In a pinch, as you suggested, disconnecting one battery terminal or installing a mechanical disconnect switch will do the job for certain.

Low Water Pressure

Q I own a 2016 Fleetwood Discovery 40E that has terrible water pressure. I am led to believe this is common in most RVs. The kitchen faucet pressure is not adequate. The front half-bath has adequate pressure. The master-bath sink pressure is not adequate, nor is the handheld shower. Pressure is so low that it takes extra time to rinse shampoo from your hair and the flow can't reach all body parts. The shower

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has a single-handle diverter, and the position between hot or cold water is extremely small. Mostly it's hot or cold, and sometimes I get a warm shower. My tech tells me the low pressure is a result of water-saving devices installed. To fix the diverter he recommends installing a residential water mixer at a cost of about \$340. Will the new water diverter solve the water pressure and fine line between hot and cold water? What can I do to alleviate my problem myself, and where can I find the water-saving devices located in my system?

Bill Kramer | Las Vegas, Nevada

A Fortunately, most RVs do not suffer from unsatisfactorily low water pressure, and if you have a problem, a good start is to check for any water restrictors, which are simple components that have a smaller hole in the center that reduces water flow. Sometimes the parts simply have smaller passages

rather than a separate restrictor. These water restrictors can generally be found in the base of the handheld shower wand or the faucet assembly. The fact that one bathroom has sufficient pressure tells me that the restriction is likely in the motorhome's plumbing, and not the supply. You can check for a source of the low-pressure problem by unscrewing the screen on the faucets and shower head. Of course, do this with the water pump off and outside water supply valve closed. Take a look at the metal filter screens that are often installed in these faucets and the showerhead. It may look like a rubber washer with brass or silver screen in the opening. The particles of junk that can build up in a plumbing system under construction can be flushed through the pipes and plug up those screens when the RV is first filled with water. The same can apply to the inlet filter on the water pump. And speaking of pump, check the make and model of your

water pump, as you may be able to upgrade to a better-quality model with higher pressure and flow specifications, which could also help solve the water problem.

Water-mixing valves in RVs are often somewhat lower quality than those used in residences. If you can get a good home-style unit installed for just \$340, that seems like a good, affordable investment, but be sure you get some type of performance guarantee in writing so you aren't in the same boat if things don't work out.

Lastly, it's not unheard of that the water system could be plugged in spots from either calcium buildup from the water-heater tank, or sand or silt from a poor campground water source (another good reason to prefilter water going into a coach). As a last resort, tracing the plumbing lines back from the faucets with poor flow, and opening connections, or checking back at the Manabloc manifold (if equipped) may help find your problem.



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Genset Quits — Tip

We had exactly the same problem as noted in the “Genset Quits” letter in the January issue with the genset on our 2003 motorhome after only 80 hours of use. I found by opening the float bowl drain that it had little fuel in it. I pulled the fuel line off and put the end in an empty soda bottle and pushed the prime button. No fuel was pumped. After a time to cool down, the electric pump worked fine for awhile and then stopped. I went to the Onan/Cummins shop and got a new pump for around \$100. No problems at all for about 90 hours, then the same thing. As I felt that paying more than \$1 per hour just for fuel pumps was unacceptable, I purchased an electric fuel pump made by a company that we used on hot rods in the 1970s (be sure to get a low-pressure carburetor pump) for \$35. It was still working fine 350 hours later when we traded up for a 2015 model. No problems with the new genset, and I heard that they solved the bad-pump problem finally, so a new Onan pump should be OK and is an easy do-it-yourself job; two mounting screws, two hose clamps and two 12-volt DC plugs under the panel in the genset compartment that has the start/stop/prime button on it. I hope this can save others the frustration I had diagnosing the problem.

Stephen Mackey | Woodbury, Minnesota

Thanks for writing, Steve. As you’ll read in the following pages, I’ve received a lot of letters regarding genset fuel pump failures!

Your troubleshooting procedure is good, and that’s a good tip regarding pump replacement and saving money.

Genset Quits – All Choked Up

In regard to the “Genset Quits” problem in the January issue, I had the same problem with my Onan Emerald Plus 4000 genset. I also replaced the fuel filter along with the spark plugs and the fuel pump, none of which helped. I took mine to an Onan service center and it could find nothing wrong. The techs told me the same thing — they

ran it for an hour with no problems, but when I got it home it ran for about 15 minutes and then surged and quit. Finally, I pulled the air cleaner off and started it up. When it started surging I stuck my hand up the intake and manually “adjusted” the choke plate. It ran perfectly. I disconnected the electrical lead going to the choke and it starts and runs great in cold weather and hot. I would check the choke.

Craig DeLong | Orange, California

Thanks for sharing your experience, Craig. Your letter is the only one among the genset comments mentioning a choke problem. It’s a good idea to check the choke as you mention and make sure it’s not stuck. However, where you live it rarely goes below freezing, so your “cold” weather is not the same as those in Alaska or Minnesota, for example. In really cold climates it may not work out to disconnect the choke, as the engine likely won’t start without it.

Genset Quits — Continued

I had the same trouble with my Onan 4000 genset. I suspected everything you pointed out and could find no reason for the failure. Every 15 minutes the generator would stop for no reason. I took a clear gas line from the gas pump to carb, and another line from the input to gas pump, and submerged it in a gas tank, and I also set up a meter to check voltage to the pump. I started the genset and it ran for 15 minutes, then stopped because of no gas flow to the carb. Voltage to the pump was still 12 volts DC. I replaced the gas pump and no further problems since then.

Richard McGregor | Via email

A clear gas line is a handy method for troubleshooting, but I don’t recommend using one permanently, as they aren’t as robust as a heavy neoprene hose designed for the job. Hose failure could easily lead to a fire that might destroy the whole motorhome. Also be careful whenever fuel lines are opened to avoid ignition sources including static electricity discharges, **(continued on page 73)**

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COACH & POWERTRAIN

(continued from page 70)

sparks from temporary electrical connections, hot engine parts and smoking, where applicable. Wear eye protection and keep a fire extinguisher handy whenever working around your coach.

Genset Quits — Ideas

In your reply to the "Genset Quits" letter, I believe an important clue was overlooked. The fact that the genset surges for a few seconds before shutdown indicates a fuel-starvation condition. The overheat sensor would result in an immediate shutdown with no surging. The fact that it starts again after a period of time could point to a vacuum forming in the supply system. Possibilities include insufficient venting of the supply tank. Another cause that would result in similar symptoms is vapor lock, or the fuel boiling in the supply line. The fact that it is operated in a hot environment could compound problems caused by the supply line routing too close to hot components. Running the unit with the compartment door open may help in diagnosing the problem.

Mike Gelt | Lake Charles, Louisiana

Thanks for sharing your experience working in a shop in a warm climate, Mike. Your suggestions all make sense and are possibilities that owners should consider. A possible partial vacuum in the fuel tank (causing starvation or vapor lock) due to faulty venting can be quickly checked by removing the filler cap and listening for a "whoosh" that intruding air makes. If the problem goes away when the cap is left loose, it indicates a venting problem. Vapor-lock problems can be checked by temporarily using clear fuel lines to the genset to see if fuel is present or boiling. **M**

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Where To, Bub?

How a little creative route planning can make your next trip uniquely yours

By Alan Rider

I've been to Hell and back. And not only did I live to tell the tale, I actually enjoyed my visit. What's more, you can, too.

That's because we're talking about a slightly more temperate version of Hell. Namely the small town of the same name, located 15 miles northwest of Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Now, I bring this up, not for bragging rights, but to illustrate a problem that's common to all motorhome owners. You see, while we have a pretty good handle on how we're going to get where we're going, we sometimes have a bit of trouble deciding where it is we want to go in the first place.

I mean, think about it. How many times have you sat around your dining-room table poring over your road atlas trying to answer the question, "Where to next?" Yeah, me too.

It's in moments like these that I've been known to get a little creative, whimsical even. Which explains why I've made the trip from Why, Arizona, to Whynot, North Carolina, just because well, why not?

Now admittedly, these are not destinations that are high on most vacationers' lists of potential itineraries (though Why has the nearby Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and Whynot is home to a large concentration of pottery studios). But, as I've said many times before in this space, I believe it's the journey that's the thing,

not the destination.

One possible exception is an endpoint that's been high on my must-get-to list for some time now: Pie Town, New Mexico. Now any burgh with pie in its name can't be all bad, but the two small cafes here serve up some of the best and most unique pies anywhere (New Mexico Apple Pie with green chili and pine nuts, anyone?). It's also another perfect illustration of my point: While you can eat pie anywhere, the journey to Pie Town to do it would be half the fun.

The best part is, when you begin to open your mind to the idea of visiting these off-the-wall locations, you discover the possibilities are very nearly limitless. Take the day I was feeling a little down and stumbled

into the little town in Quebec province called Saint-Louis-du-Ha!-Ha! (yes the exclamation points are actually part of the name). Cheered me right up, I can tell you.

And call me a masochist, but there's a part of me that can't wait to visit Boring, Oregon, 40 minutes southeast of Portland. I figure it would be the ultimate test of my overarching travel philosophy: that any day on the road — even one in Boring — is a good day.

Of course, these are just a few of the possibilities calling out to motorhome owners with, as Chuck Berry sang, no particular place to go. Let's see, there's Mexican Hat, Utah (trust me, sombrero not required), and Ono, California (oh, yes!). A trip from Surprise, Arizona, to Eek, Alaska, would require trading the RV for a bush plane at some point, but it sure would be something to tell the grandkids about, now wouldn't it?

The point here is simple: Rather than going the same places everyone always goes, add a little creativity to your trip planning and you'll end up having an experience that's uniquely yours.

And if we happen to meet up in Sweet Lips, Tennessee, or Toad Suck, Arkansas, let's just nod at each other knowingly, secure in the knowledge that we've discovered the good stuff along The Road Ahead. **M**

“Rather than going the same places everyone always goes, add a little creativity to your trip planning and you'll end up having an experience that's uniquely yours.”

Offbeat Retreats ☺

To RVers looking for truly unique experiences from across the country, locations such as Hell, Michigan, and Whynot, North Carolina, often offer playful homages to their eclectic names.



Photos: Courtesy LCCVB, Visit North Carolina



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