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Dubbed "The Alps of Oregon," the Wallowa Mountains are steeped in Native American history and home to hiking, fishing, paddling and fun-filled festivals.



Our annual guide to the top products and companies to help outfit your motorhome for the travel season is here! Pg. 35

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The Phoenix Cruiser 2910T handles well out of the box, but the optional LiquidSpring suspension brings road manners to another level in terms of comfort and control (see test on page 30). Photo by Shawn Spence.



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MotorHome (ISSN 0744-074X) is published monthly by GS Media & Events (a division of Good Sam Enterprises, LLC), 2750 Park View Ct., Ste. 240, Oxnard, CA 93036. Periodicals postage paid at Oxnard, CA 93036 and additional mailing offices. The annual subscription rate is \$19.97 per year in the U.S. For Canadian and International subscriptions, add \$12 per year. U.S. funds only.

Postmaster Send address changes to *MotorHome*, P.O. Box 5860, Harlan, IA 51593-1360.

Canadian Return Address GS Media & Events, 4960-2 Walker Road, Windsor, Ontario N9A 6J3. Publication Sales Agreement #40012332.

Printed in the United States.

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What topics would you like to see more of in *MotorHome*? Travel articles? Maintenance and DIY? Coach reviews? Or something else?

That's the question we asked in the January issue, and here are just some of the many responses we received.

Problem Solving

This is in response to Glenn Smith's letter in January that suggests "Less How-to" articles in future issues. I totally disagree. We subscribed to *Trailer Life* 35 or 40 years ago, and now, for the past 15 years, we subscribe to *MotorHome*. I always look forward to the "How-to" technical articles in each issue.

I also disagree with Smith's theory that if you can afford a diesel pusher you are not inclined to do this type of work. Many of us are very much inclined to "get out and get under." In my case — at 80-plus years of age — I'm still inclined, and I know several others who also do the bulk of their own maintenance, modifications and repairs ... enjoying every minute of it.

For me, it's fun to learn how to service an air dryer, or troubleshoot and repair a malfunctioning leveling system, and other such things, as needed.

It's a real benefit to know our units so that when we're traveling — if a mechanical issue develops while

on the road — we can recognize the symptoms and, in most cases, solve the problem before it becomes a major breakdown. Due to our knowledge, we are also able to help our traveling friends solve problems. Keep the "How-to" articles coming.

Tom Zopff | Clermont, Florida

Focus on Motorhomes

While I appreciate Smith's desire for more travel information, there are many outlets for such information. Similarly, there are plenty of venues for food articles and recipes. The reason I subscribe to *MotorHome* is for motorhome information.

I want to see coach reviews, product reviews, DIY tips and tricks, and plenty of maintenance information. Sure, the occasional location review or food prep idea is welcome, particularly in context with another topic, but the overwhelming emphasis should be on motorhomes.

For those of us who still want an actual paper magazine, we want it to slant toward motorhomes and related products as much as possible. My preference is certainly toward the

Class A's and diesel pushers, though I understand you must also cater to a broader audience of Class C and Class B owners as well. I would prefer less Class B content in the paper version, and that you move more of that content to your website, if I had my druthers.

Patrick Buchanan | Via email

DIY to the End

I just read Glenn Smith's letter in the January issue and all I should say is WOW! When I can no longer do all the repairs and services (including adjusting the full-wall side as I did last Sunday) on our 2017 Newmar Ventana LE, we will not own it. I enjoy *MotorHome*'s "How-to" articles.

Tom Bellm | Springfield, Illinois

Compact Coverage

I'd like to see more coverage on smaller motorhomes — especially those based on the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter chassis — along with minor maintenance tips. I agree with Glenn Smith, who would like to see less maintenance coverage for large diesel-pusher motorhomes, but I enjoy the general maintenance tips for

Featured Letter

Knowledge is Power

I am totally in favor of *more* DIY and maintenance content! My experience has been that the typical motorhome owner is very interested in understanding all the inner workings of their equipment. To most, it is an enjoyable hobby and also gives a "heads up" when dealing with various RV repair facilities. "Knowledge is Power," as the saying goes. Keep the information coming.

Wayne Hancock | Via email



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smaller motorhomes.

And although some travel information is nice, let's not turn *MotorHome* into a travel guide. We can find plenty of information like that online and at our local bookstore.

I'm glad to see more reviews of Class C motorhomes. I've been a subscriber for a number of years and almost canceled my subscription a couple of years ago because of too

much coverage of the big, expensive diesel-pusher Class A's.

Have you ever conducted any research to determine the percentage of your subscribers who own Class B or C motorhomes compared to those who own Class A rigs?

Ken Martin | Eugene, Oregon

The More You Know

We began full-timing seven years

ago when we sold our house (and 40-plus years of stuff) and purchased a Safari diesel pusher to live in. We had no experience or knowledge about motorhomes. Your maintenance articles gave me the knowledge and confidence to do much of our own servicing in order to save money and to ensure things are done right.

Twice, we spent \$200 for a "grease job," and both times I crawled under and found fittings that had been missed. We recently had our Allison transmission serviced. Before leaving the lot, I checked the fluid level at the shifter and found it to be 3 quarts low. Bottom line: Your readers who think they have no need for your DIY articles may be mistaken. We appreciate the balance of the articles in your excellent publication.

Carl and Marty Turner
Nomadic Full-timers

Let It Be

It sounds like Glenn Smith is one of those who doesn't know which end of the screwdriver fits the slot! While there are many other publications that dedicate themselves to the "Where-to" aspects of travel that Smith might prefer, *MotorHome* includes those, in addition to the "How-to." Many RV owners, myself included, prefer to do our own maintenance and have found the "How-to" articles to be very helpful in this respect.

I've been an RV owner since the 1960s and have owned 14 different rigs — ranging from a VW Microbus to a diesel pusher — and I find the tech articles one of the main reasons that I subscribe to *MotorHome*. Please keep the magazine just like it is.

Glen Fotre | Phoenix, Arizona

Details, Details

I just started reading the January issue and, as usual, the P.O. Box section was the first thing I read. I take exception to Mr. Smith's letter. Yes, there are lots of us who can afford to have someone maintain our motorhomes, but we choose to do it ourselves.

I have a 38-foot Fleetwood Providence on a Freightliner chassis.

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I really enjoy reading the “How-to” articles. Lots of the little modifications your magazine discusses are easy to do and they make living in the RV much better. I especially enjoy the upgrades that are promoted, as otherwise I would not be aware of them.

I take care of most everything on my RV. Yes, I do spend a few hours “under the bus,” but I know the condition of all my systems, since I have looked at them myself.

I took the recommended maintenance list from Freightliner and put it in an Excel spreadsheet. I print out the sheet each year and check off each item (date and mileage) as it is done. I also have a copy of a chassis presentation from Freightliner that shows all of the grease fittings. I use that and check off each one as they are completed. I keep the paper copy in my files. This way I can track the maintenance items when they are completed, as some don’t need to be performed each year.

None of it is hard work, which I can attest to because I am 72 years old and a 100 percent disabled veteran of the U.S. Air Force. I would rather know the condition of my motorhome than trust any of the maintenance facilities around here to do the work properly. Oh, yeah, I also do all of the maintenance on my daily driver vehicles.

As far as the coach review articles, who doesn’t like to dream? Most times when I read those, it makes me happier than ever with my rig because it belongs only to me; I’m not paying the bank.

On the subject of more travel articles, I really think you have the proper mix. I enjoy the travel articles, but if I wanted more, I would subscribe to other magazines that specialize in travel. Please keep the current mix.

Bob Doughty | Monaca, Pennsylvania

Can-Do Attitude

In the past 10 years, I have had four motorhomes, each one more complex

than the one before. The most recent one I bought about 18 months ago is a 38-foot diesel pusher on a Freightliner chassis.

Thanks to *MotorHome’s* “How-to” articles, I do all the maintenance, like oil and filter changes, greasing, Allison Transmission fluid and filters, commode seals and anything else that needs repairing or replacing. I love every minute of it, as I learn more about what makes a motorhome tick. I can certainly afford to hire out all of this to professionals, but where is the pride in that? Keep up the “How-to’s” and I will keep up the Can-do’s.

Sonny Sharpe

Lake Waccamaw, North Carolina

Crystal Clear

Let me be very clear: When maintenance and troubleshooting articles stop appearing in your magazine, then my subscription will also stop. Is that clear enough?

Travel articles are also very nice,



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especially when they offer advice that helps us avoid bad choices and to visit the good ones. It's especially fun to get an inside track on things to see and do that are semi-secret (not advertised) but greatly enhance the visit to an area.

The least valuable articles, in my opinion, are the reviews of new motorhomes. I already own one and don't need another (though I suspect those motorhome reviews help pay for printing the magazine).

Jeremy D. | Via email

A Flicker of the Past

In reference to the January article "A Cut Above and Hotter Than Ever" about Zippo lighters, I have a fond memory. Back in the early 1970s, I was working as an auto mechanic in Watertown, Massachusetts. We did repairs for a small fleet of vehicles from a local bank. I was given a Zippo lighter, engraved with a large green N, with an arrow from the right side, arced to the right, giving the direction of Northeast,

as that was the bank's name. I, in turn, gave the lighter to my father-in-law. After he passed away, in the late '80s, it was returned to my wife, and was her only keepsake from her father. The lid on the lighter had become very loose from use over the years, so I returned the lighter to Zippo, as the company guarantees free repairs for the life of the lighter.

A couple of weeks later we received a package from Zippo. When we opened it, we were surprised to find a brand-new lighter, without the Northeast emblem. My wife was upset that she didn't have her father's original lighter, as that was her only keepsake of his.

I called Zippo and explained the sentimental value of the original lighter. I was told that sometimes the company just sends out a new product rather than repair the returned item. I was also told that they would try to locate the original lighter.

A couple of weeks later we received

a package from Zippo. Inside was the original lighter, with the green emblem. It was restored, and in perfect condition. We called and thanked them for their kindness.

I no longer smoke, so I have no need for a lighter, but if I did, it would definitely be a Zippo. Hats off, and kudos, to a great company.

Gerald Goguen | Via email

Attack of the Drones

While staying at Ventura Beach RV Resort in Southern California last Thanksgiving, a man crashed his drone into a tree right next to my motorhome. Luckily, his toy didn't hit my expensive motorhome. He was being a jerk and asked why I broke his drone, which had actually hit a tree and come apart. I told him that he shouldn't be flying his toy around expensive motorhomes and kids. He then took his broken toy and left.

Next, while staying at Pismo Coast Village RV Resort in Central California over the Christmas holiday, I noticed several people learning to fly drones around motorhomes. Shouldn't RV parks and campgrounds ban drones? I believe they could damage RVs or hurt someone when they crash.

Ken Green | Atascadero, California M

Question of the Month

Have you had an experience with a drone user at an RV park? Or, do you own a drone? Do you think RV parks and campgrounds should ban the use of drones?

Send your comments to: MotorHome, 2750 Park View Court, Suite 240, Oxnard, CA 93036; or email letters@motorhomemagazine.com

Editor's note: We received such a large amount of responses to our January Question of the Month that we've posted extra submissions on our website at: www.motorhome.com/motorhomes/motorhome-news/april-2018-p-o-box

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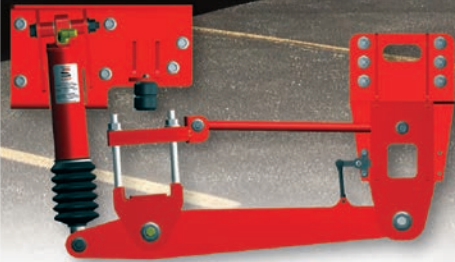
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Plane Sight

The Fantasy of Flight Museum in Polk City, Florida, offers a look at vintage working aircraft

By Dave G. Houser

Aircraft buffs and aviation history enthusiasts are sure to enjoy a visit to Fantasy of Flight — a museum featuring a sampling of the largest privately owned vintage aircraft collection in the world. Housed in a huge hangar on a 300-acre site just off Interstate 4 in Polk City, Florida (between Orlando and Tampa), this impressive aircraft exhibit features planes from the earliest days of flight through the 1950s. Among those on display during our visit: a North American B-25 J Mitchell, 1943 Grumman Wildcat, Sopwith Pup, 1917 Fokker DR1-Triplane, Consolidated B-24J Liberator, P-51C Mustang and a DeHavilland DH-4. The display is subject to change without notice.

What sets the Fantasy of Flight collection apart from other collections is that owner Kermit Weeks does not collect anything he doesn't intend to fly. The aircraft you'll encounter in his museum have been carefully restored to

airworthiness. Weeks has spent most of his life involved in flying. An aeronautical engineer and former international aerobatics competitor, he designed and built his first airplane while still in high school. He began assembling his colossal collection (now numbering nearly 200 aircraft) in the 1970s and founded Weeks Air Museum in Miami in 1985. Outgrowing his facility there, he opened Fantasy of Flight in 1995.

Fantasy of Flight is open seasonally Friday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.; as of press time, the museum had not yet determined the dates of the 2018 operating schedule beyond April 15, so be sure to check the website before planning your trip.

RV sites are available nearby at LeLynn RV Resort (800-736-0409), a Good Sam Park in Polk City.

For more information on the museum, call 863-984-3500 or visit www.fantasyofflight.com/collection



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Clear the Way

KING has introduced two new satellite TV antennas with first-ever clear covers for use with DISH and DirecTV satellite services. The new DISH Tailgater Pro VQ4900 and new KING Quest Pro VQ4800 for DirecTV are designed for either portable or permanent mount applications. The clear, smoke-tinted cover allows users to easily see which way the satellite is pointing, and looks cool, to boot. Both units weigh 8 pounds and are only 13½ inches tall, making them highly portable and easy to store. Both are also fully automatic and support multiple TVs. The simple setup process includes automatic satellite acquisition and switching, while easily viewable internal indicator lights keep users informed of antenna performance and signal strength. The units feature dual coaxial outputs and are made using weather-resistant materials to help combat the elements. Both are covered by a 2-year warranty for parts (1 year for labor). MSRP for the DISH Tailgater Pro antenna is \$379; the KING Quest Pro has an MSRP of \$549.
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A Kingly Throne

Looking to upgrade the standard toilet in the lav? Dometic's Moderno toilet is an all-ceramic bowl that's tall and elongated to provide a residential feel. The Moderno features smooth-contour modern styling, in addition to a slow-close seat and silent performance, according to the company. The Moderno's VariFlush capability is also compatible with multiple flushing technologies from Dometic. Also new is the Toilet Control Panel, which can be used in conjunction with the Moderno toilet (but is also backward-compatible with other Dometic products). The panel features HandWave motion sense technology that allows users to flush the toilet without touching the display. Intuitive icons allow users to add water, flush or service, while each of the icons has backlighting to enhance low light visibility. The Moderno is available in white or bone, plus an optional bidet seat (available in white only) is available. MSRPs were unavailable as of press time.



Dometic | 574-264-2131, www.dometic.com

Sound Waves

ASA Electronics has unveiled a new sleek-looking two-way speaker for motorhome applications. The Jensen JWMS350 two-way panel speaker has been engineered to offer improved sound and seamless RV installation. The JWMS350 can be installed either horizontally or vertically to pair up with Jensen's JWM60A and JWM70A wall-mount stereos, though it will also work with most existing systems. The speaker features a single-hole surface mount with hidden screws, making for a professional-looking installation, while the one-piece metal grille adds to the clean lines and high-end aesthetics.



The 12-watt speaker utilizes a 3-inch woofer and ½-inch tweeter while offering a frequency response of 70Hz-20KHz, making it a great choice to pick up the highs and lows associated with general TV viewing as well as a Hollywood blockbuster. The JWMS350 is sold individually and measures 7 inches wide by 3¾ inches long by a bit more than 1½ inches deep. MSRP: \$15.99.

ASA Electronics | 877-305-0445, www.asaelectronics.com

Dry Out

Moisture inside a motorhome is serious business. Excessive moisture can lead to mold and mildew, which can damage the interior, in addition to posing a health risk for everybody inside. Whether the coach is in use or in storage, help eliminate excessive moisture in the motorhome using DampRid Disposable Moisture Absorbers. Simply place a DampRid absorber in the desired location, peel back the top and leave in place. Once the all-natural calcium chloride crystals are exposed to the air, they begin absorbing moisture right away. When the crystals harden and dissolve and the bottom chamber fills with liquid (usually within about 45 days), pour the water out and refill the chamber. Available fragrance-free or with activated charcoal, the absorbers also help remove offensive odors from cooking, garbage, pets and the like. MSRP: \$5.29 at Camping World.



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More Than a Summer Home

Grey Towers, in Milford, Pennsylvania, was the summer home of Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of the U.S. Forest Service. Pinchot spent his boyhood summers at this magnificent château, which was built by his parents in 1886. More than just a "rich and famous" seasonal retreat, Grey Towers would be used by Pinchot to promote natural resource conservation and scientific forestry. Following his time with the Forest Service, Pinchot went on to serve two terms as Pennsylvania's governor. In 1963, Pinchot's estate donated the home — and 102 acres of the grounds — to the Forest Service. Today, the Forest Service operates Grey Towers National Historic Site for public and educational programs.

Built in the style of a French château, the 43-room mansion is open for guided tours (\$8 adults/\$7 seniors) Memorial Day weekend through October, Thursdays through Mondays. The grounds and gardens are open year-round and can be walked independently along the many footpaths and trails. Parking is available for large RVs.

For more information, call 570-296-9630 or go to www.fs.usda.gov/greytowers — *Morey Edelman*



Photo: U.S. Forest Service at Grey Towers

Roanoke, Virginia

Trains, Planes and Automobiles

Located in Roanoke, the Virginia Museum of Transportation houses more than 2,500 items showcasing the state's rich history of rail, air and road. All modes of transportation are represented, but the museum focuses on the story of Roanoke's rich rail heritage. There are more than 50 locomotives and rail cars, including the largest collection of diesel locomotives in the South.

Road exhibits consist of automobiles from nearly every decade

of the 20th century, Greyhound and Trailways buses, and NASCAR exhibits.

One of the museum's main rail features is the No. 611 of the Class J passenger steam locomotives, which could pull 15 cars at 110 mph. The locomotive was built for the Norfolk & Western Railway in the 1940s and is the only one that remains of 14 built.

For more information, call 540-342-5670 or visit <http://vmt.org> — *James Richardson*



Photo: James Richardson



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Pages From the Past

Retracing *MotorHome's* April issues over the years

April showers do in fact bring May flowers, but they also bring an impressive list of notable birthdays for the month. Hans Christian Andersen, William Shakespeare, Charlie Chaplin and William Randolph Hearst were all born in April, as were former Presidents James Buchanan, Ulysses S. Grant and James Monroe. And April is when the motorhome season truly hits its stride, as winter thaws and thoughts turn toward hitting the road.

Those thoughts of road trips were shared by celebrities such as the late Andy Griffith, who professed his passion for his Winnebago Class A in the April 1972 issue. "My family just loves our motorhome," said Griffith. "It is our favorite family pastime now." He also said he was inspired to purchase a motorhome on a hunting trip with Glen Campbell after they toured Clint Eastwood's Condor motorhome. That's quite a feat of name-dropping!

That same 1972 issue included a review of a Mercedes-Benz motorhome

manufactured in Germany, in what would be a precursor to the scores of motorhomes built on Mercedes-Benz (Sprinter) chassis on the road today.

The April 1978 issue examined alternative fuels, comparing the pros and cons of oil, biomass fuels (solar power) and hydrogen, a debate that rages on some 40 years later.

Another discussion that continues to this day is the benefit of traveling in a motorhome versus staying in a hotel. While the first space shuttle flight occurred when the

Columbia launched on April 12, 1981, *MotorHome Life* readers learned that choosing a motorhome over hotel stays on a 27-day trip would result in a tremendous amount of savings (more than \$1,200 based on operating costs).

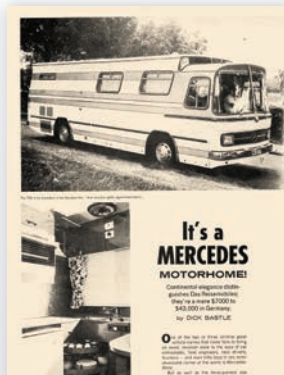
April 1984 brought about yet another hot topic: bloopers made during the motorhome manufacturing process, written from the perspective of a professional RV mechanic. Among his observations were lack of quality control, poor design and arrangement, and incompetent engineering. While his criticisms were based on his own experiences, we can all agree these discussions have continued over the years.

Airstream made waves in the April 1994 issue with the first redesign of the Classic Class A in more than 20 years, with the author touting "the unit's seriously rounded aerodynamic shape" making the unit "little affected by crosswinds or blasts of air from passing traffic."

The turn of the century brought "Millennium Motorhomes" in the April 2000 issue, which highlighted newer lightweight chassis for more fuel-friendly diesel pushers and Class A gassers.

The next decade proved the resiliency of the motorhome market in spite of a soft economy, and in 2012 *MotorHome* featured a comparison of three Sprinter-based Winnebagos, one from each motorhome class. The author (wisely) concluded of the chassis that "It remains a magnificent, versatile platform that will likely serve the motorhome industry for many years to come." Indeed.

And, in April 2017 *MotorHome* introduced its "Ready to Roll" accessories guide as an annual feature. Check out page 35 for this year's crop of top motorhome gear. **M**





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Oregon's Wallowa Wonderland

Exploring this area tucked into the northeastern corner of the Beaver State can leave visitors at a loss for words in terms of sheer beauty

By Rhonda Ostertag

Dubbed the “Alps of Oregon,” the Wallowa Mountains in the northeast corner of the state inspire a free flow of adjectives: idyllic, wild, majestic, challenging, comforting, gorgeous, pristine, perfect. For this Rocky Mountain child from the Continental Divide, the region also says home. I feel it the moment I arrive in the valley or step on a trail.

The range spans about 40 miles in Wallowa County, bridging the Blue Mountains and the Snake River Canyon. Visitors find comparisons to the Rockies, the Sierras and the northern Cascades. For high mountain splendor the compact range more than holds its own.

Not on the road to anywhere and far removed from anything metropolitan, a commitment is required to visit the Wallowa Mountains, but the payoff is tenfold.

Where the valley broadens, open ranchland clears the way to exquisite panoramic views of the Wallowa Mountains. The ranches themselves are scene-stealers with thick grass, milling livestock and attractive barns. The little towns of Wallowa, Lostine, Enterprise

and Joseph provide services and act as mountain gateways. At the southern end of the range, Richland and Halfway pull these duties.

Surrounded by glacial moraine, the 5-mile-long shimmering blue platter of Wallowa Lake attracts with a huge state park campground, day-use areas, lake and marina access, trailheads and scenery, making it an incredible base. Expect a deer or two to wander through camp. Private RV parks broaden the offering and comforts.

U.S. Forest Service campgrounds appeal to the more adventuresome. The primitive camps sit beside clear waters in the Wallowa Mountains and along Hells Canyon Scenic Byway, an All-American Road with windshield views of the high peaks and their desert-steppe counterpart, Hells Canyon National Recreation Area.

Paved routes access and circumnavigate the range. For ventures up river canyons and to more remote trailheads, a dinghy vehicle suitably equipped for gravel roads is needed. But you'll find plenty to occupy your time without leaving the pavement.

WALLOWA COUNTY, OREGON



Getting There ➔

From Interstate 84 at La Grande, Oregon, an eastbound 70-mile horseshoe-shaped drive on Oregon Route 82 deposits visitors in this stunning mountain stronghold.



Above, from left: Hells Canyon Creek Visitor Center affords great views of the Wild and Scenic Snake River. Hells Canyon Boat Launch is located next to the visitor center. Wallowa Lake State Park offers 121 full-hookup sites (36 of which are pull-through) and a dump station.

The Towns

With some blurring of the lines, Wallowa and Lostine are the working towns; Enterprise, the largest (population just shy of 2,000), is the Wallowa County seat; and Joseph is the art hub.

Despite frontier roots, a dozen lifelike bronze sculptures of western wildlife, Nez Perce Indians, cowboys, horses and a barefoot girl reflect the sun from the walks of Joseph. In this strolling town, boots and Birkenstocks are equally represented. Cottage shops attract with gallery art, collectibles and western staples.

At first glance, cowboys and artists would seem two divergent populations. But they are not far apart in spirit, and not mutually exclusive. Ranchers envision a life and carve it from the land; artists cast, carve or capture their visions in mediums of choice.

Enterprise, though, received the first public bronze — a statue of Young Chief Joseph at Warde Park. The piece pays tribute to Native Americans. Another bronze occupies the courthouse grounds — the eagle at the Fountain of Honor.

Foundries in both Joseph and Enterprise offer tours. Valley Bronze in Joseph created bronze wreaths and Freedom Wall stars for the World War II Memorial in the National Mall and Memorial Parks in Washington, D.C.

Although removed from the disruptions of metropolitan life, the

valley is not without its refinements: restaurants, pubs, coffee shops and 9-hole golf. Kart tracks, miniature golf and arcades waylay kids. Tipping the local scales, you can bite into a juicy buffalo burger, sip a local microbrew or stronger spirit, and indulge in handcrafted chocolates. Farmers markets further keep tastes local.

The area plays host to numerous music festivals and special events throughout the year. Most styles of music find a forum in this mountain amphitheater. Listen for oompah notes, alpenhorn drones and ay-ee-oooh yodels at Alpenfest (September 27-30, 2018), lively fiddle tunes during the Wallowa fiddler gathering in July (for 2018 there's a workshop scheduled July 8-13) and the jazz, folk, bluegrass, rock and country of the free summer concerts.

The Wallowa Old Time 4th of July is hard to beat. But come early, not to secure a seat but to watch the pre-lineup, all-corners convergence of freshly scrubbed tractors and hay wagons, ruthlessly groomed ponies, and fresh-from-the-suds goats, sheep and dogs tethered to beaming youngsters walking at the lead. Flags, banners and patriotic ribbons are the dress of the day. For the animals, no neck, ear or tail is safe. A wizened regular explained "The problem with a small town parade is that everyone's in it. There's no one to watch."

While in the valley, you just might witness an old-time bank holdup.

Wallowa County Museum occupies the former First Bank of Joseph where the 1896 robbery took place. Amazingly, one of the robbers went on to become bank vice president.

Homeland of the Niimipu (Nez Perce), the valley marks significant events in July. The tribal homecoming Tamkaliks Celebration & Friendship Potluck — three days of drum and dance — takes place in Wallowa (July 20-22, 2018). Joseph hosts Chief Joseph Days (July 24-29, 2018), saluting the Nez Perce leader and the Old West, complete with rodeo events and native dancing.

The Hells Canyon Junior Rodeo in Halfway (July 7-8, 2018) puts on a dust-flying, heel-kicking

Aneroid lake is about 6 miles from the East Fork Wallowa River Trailhead. Petes Point looms above the crystal waters, which offer good trout fishing in the summer.





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show in miniature. Art is celebrated throughout the year.

History

To the usually peaceful Nez Perce Indians this homeland was Tamkaliks, "A place that makes you stand up and notice." But the year 1877 changed all that. Trouble accompanying the increase in white settlement raised the call for the tribe's eviction.

In response, Young Chief Joseph led his men, women, children and elders on a 1,700-mile freedom quest to Canada, crossing the Snake River at flood stage and traversing rugged terrain. He nearly succeeded, captured short of the Canadian border at Bear Paw, Montana. Although tribal descendants are now dispersed, the Wallows hold their cultural heart.

The story of Young Chief Joseph and his military pursuer, General Howard, live on. The town of Joseph, established 1887, wears the name of the young chief. Two of the high peaks are Chief Joseph Mountain and Mount Howard.

The father, Old Chief Joseph, rests at the foot of Wallowa Lake. His remains were relocated here in 1926, after his original grave along the Wallowa River had been raided. At the new site, spiritual trinkets and mementos — feathers, beads, grass

Right: The Wallowa Lake Tramway takes visitors up 3,700 vertical feet to the summit of Mount Howard. Below: Minam River in the Eagle Cap Wilderness is prime rafting water.

bundles, carvings, tobacco and dream-catchers — honor him.

Trails at next door Iwetemlaykin (which means "at the edge of the lake") State Heritage Site explore rolling grassland of the ancient homeland and visit the unexpected Knight's Pond, good for wildlife viewing and tranquil thought. Small tribal museums in Joseph and Wallowa preserve the Indian perspective.

Mountain Recreation

Wallowa Lake, in its beautiful mountain surroundings, offers a premier playground for boating, watersport, fishing and swimming. Rentals and licenses are available at Wallowa Lake Marina. The bounty of the region's fishery attracted the Nez Perce and now modern fishers. Wallowa Lake entices with Kokanee and lake trout. High lakes and the sterling Wallowa, Lostine and Minam Rivers likewise call to casters. The Minam is also a rafting water.

More than 500 miles of trail web the Wallows, visiting summits, high lakes, hanging valleys, ice fields, alpine meadows and rushing crystalline



ivers. Eagle Cap Wilderness covers a big chunk of the mountain complex, with more than 30 named peaks over 8,000 feet. The Matterhorn (9,826 feet) and Sacajawea Peak (9,838 feet) loom large. The wilderness namesake is a popular summit hike, most easily accessed via southern trailheads. Deer, elk, mountain goat, marmot and pika lend surprise.

From Wallowa Lake State Park, the Chief Joseph Trail, and the East and West Fork Wallowa River Trails are within convenient reach. You need not hike far to find beauty. Booking a horseback ride or buying a ticket for

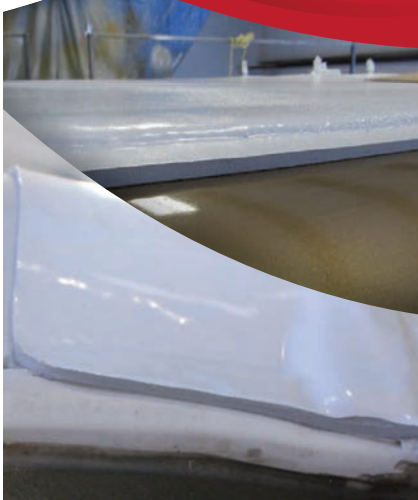


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GETAWAY

WALLOWA COUNTY, OREGON



Above, left: Spirit of Joseph bronze statue watches over the city of Joseph. Above, right: A stock train ambles along the Imnaha River Trail, located in the Eagle Cap Wilderness in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

the Wallowa Lake Tram fast-forwards the adventure. The four-passenger gondola lift ascends 3,700 vertical feet to the summit of Mount Howard (8,256 feet). A short summit trail system builds a 360-degree view stretching to Idaho's Seven Devils and Hells Canyon; a summit deli offers refreshments.

For trail information and passes, U.S. Forest Service offices in La Grande, Joseph and Halfway serve the Wallawas.

Photographers find nonstop subject from the wildflowers at their feet to the mountaintops and building clouds. Relaxing at camp has its own rewards.

Hells Canyon National Scenic Byway

Officially, this byway begins as you exit Interstate 84 for Joseph. From Joseph, it follows Oregon Route 350, Forest Road 39 (Wallowa Mountain Loop Road, a narrow road open in fair weather only), and Oregon Route 86, before returning to I-84 at exit 302, just north of Baker City.

From start to finish, it travels the ranchland of the Grande Ronde and Wallowa River Valleys, passes around and through the Wallowa high-mountain grandeur, overlooks the harsh wild of Hells Canyon and traverses Pine Creek Valley to meet up with the Oregon Trail at Flagstaff Hill.

Departing Joseph (have the fuel tank full), Wallowa Mountain Loop Road twists out of the Little Sheep Creek drainage for an ear-popping ascent to Salt Creek Summit. Snag forests left by the Canal Fire of 1989 patch the mountains in hoary stubble.

The route passes from Wallowa-Whitman National Forest into Hells

Canyon National Recreation Area. Among the Imnaha River recreation sites serving campers is Ollokot Campground.

Where the route again climbs, a sign marks the left turn for the 3-mile paved drive to Hells Canyon Overlook, with its walkway, interpretive panels, wildflowers and inspiring views from the canyon brink. At approximately 1.5 miles deep and an average 10 miles wide, Hells Canyon is the deepest gorge in North America. Across the canyon rise Idaho's Seven Devils.

Where Forest Road 39 meets Oregon Route 86, an official spur east leads to the Snake River at Copperfield, where camping and river recreation are available. The primary tour follows the Pine Creek drainage west out of the mountains and across the valley through Halfway and Richland. Richland provides access to Brownlee Reservoir on the Powder River, with camping at Hewitt/Holcomb County Park.

At Flagstaff Hill, the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center has a fine museum, trails, the Meeker Monument, wagon encampment interpretive program and views of original trail ruts. Summer walks on the sun-baked trails give visitors a tiny taste of the pioneer experience.

Ready to go? Bring the thesaurus for descriptive words while writing postcards. **M**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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By E. Don Smith

Crisp and Clean

Stop getting hosed! Apex Zero-G hybrid's design delivers safe, drinkable water in a durable package

Most of us have used standard vinyl drinking water hoses for our motorhome for decades. And, until now, we never even gave the choice of which water hose to use a thought until it burst or we accidentally left it behind somewhere. Other than making sure a water hose is lead-free and labeled as drinking-water safe, most consumers never spend much time focusing on their selection of a hose for RV use. However, maybe we should.

The first consideration (and most important) when selecting a hose is health and safety, so never use a typical garden hose for connecting a motorhome to the city-water supply or filling the tank. Despite the fact that as youths we all drank from water hoses of unknown origins, there are materials used in some hoses that are not rated "safe" for drinking water. The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) has specific definitions of products that are used in drinking-water products such as pipes, hoses, fittings and fixtures, and there are specified levels of toxins (such as lead) that cannot be exceeded for products claiming to be drinking-water safe.



Above: Each end of the hose has a strong rubber collar to reinforce the connection point, and knurled aluminum fittings for ease of use.

Products not used in the conveyance of drinking water are not required to comply with these rules, and some garden hoses are therefore exempt. Chemicals such as lead, bromine, cadmium, BPA, antimony, etc., can and are present in some water hoses, so it's critical to seek out the right products for use in a motorhome's drinking-water supply lines. If there is any doubt about a water hose being "drinking-water safe," it's a good idea to replace it with one that is.

As you know from handling a standard vinyl water hose, they are very stiff and hard to roll up and store when traveling; this only gets worse in cold weather. Until now we never addressed this problem with water hose stiffness because all hoses were of the same basic type and design. All that has changed and hoses that are lead-free, drinking-water safe, flexible and lightweight are readily available. Apex, a major manufacturer of water hoses, has a relatively new model

called Zero-G that is a hybrid design, rather than the old, stiff vinyl hose. The 25-foot hybrid hose we used can be found online or at select retailers for around \$20-\$25. A hybrid hose has a very flexible inner core that carries the water, and has an outer high-density woven jacket that's tough yet flexible. This outer jacket helps resist abrasion and punctures that can cause leaks.

Apex claims the hose stays flexible down to 35 degrees Fahrenheit and has a 600-plus PSI burst strength.



Zero-G is highly flexible and takes up less space while in a compartment when compared to a traditional hose, making it easy to expose only the length needed from storage bay to hose bib.



Above: Here you can see the difference in appearance of our campsite with the Apex Zero-G hose on the left and an ordinary vinyl hose on the right. The Zero-G easily coils up inside the wet bay and doesn't clutter up the site.

We have not yet tested the extreme temperature claims, but after using one for a while it's obvious that it has many benefits. Overall, the hose is about 40 percent lighter than a traditional vinyl hose, but for most of us, the weight of a 25- or 50-foot hose is not enough to matter. What does matter is its flexibility and that it uses less space while in storage. Another important feature of these hoses is that they are kink-free, so water continues even if the hose gets bent into a tight bend or radius.

One thing we always try to avoid is a big roll of the unsightly white hose lying beside a beautiful coach while staying in a luxury resort. It just makes the whole site look bad. In the past, we

have tried to reduce the visual impact of a 50-foot hose that is outside the coach, but due to the thickness and stiffness of a vinyl hose, the extra length will not easily stow away in the wet bay. Therefore, it usually has to stay outside in an unsightly coil. The super flexible Zero-G hose can be stored easily inside the wet bay, and the user only has to pull out the minimum amount needed to ready the water faucet.

While there are other collapsible hoses on the market, many of them will not flow much water. The main reason is that most feature a narrow

inner diameter (ID). So, although they can hold adequate static pressure when the nozzle is off, there is poor flow pressure once the nozzle is opened. This is why we usually recommend a hose with an ID of at least 1/2 inch or larger.

Apex claims its collapsible Zero-G RV & Marine 1/2-inch ID hose has a "Consistent, high flow equal to a conventional 1/2-inch hose," and based on our results, we have little reason to dispute that claim. The Zero-G hose is available in 25- and 50-foot lengths in the RV & Marine version, and up to 100 feet in length in the utility version.

Overall, I consider this hose a major upgrade to ordinary water hoses and something you should consider. We like the space-saving feature so much we purchased two (different colors) so that we can use one for drinking water and the other for rinsing the tanks. We use the standard Zero-G garden hose (which is also drinking-water safe, by the way) that is a dark gray color for rinsing waste tanks or washing the coach and then we use the RV & Marine version that is blue in color for drinking water. Another great aspect is that the hose comes with a 5-year guarantee from the manufacturer. **M**

Below: On the left is the storage bay we use to store our water hose in when it is not in use. The old-fashioned vinyl hose takes up a lot of space. On the right is the same storage bay with two Zero-G hoses (one in the box and one coiled up). Generally it's not recommended to store a wastewater hose in the same bay as the drinking water hose, but we used this set up only as an illustration to show how much room can be saved when storing these hoses.



For More Information

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WINNEBAGO "LIVING LARGE" IN A SMALLER RV

Winnebago turns 60 this year! This history series explores defining moments in six decades that gave America some of its most beloved motorhomes and towables. And we see what a leading name in RVs is up to, today.

▶ THE THIRD DECADE: 1978-1987

As the 1970s and disco music faded, Americans were doing their best to pull out of a sluggish economy. In 1980, they elected a president who would roll out Reaganomics and thaw the Cold War. Technology was making leaps. IBM came out with a gadget called the personal computer, and NASA launched the first space shuttle.

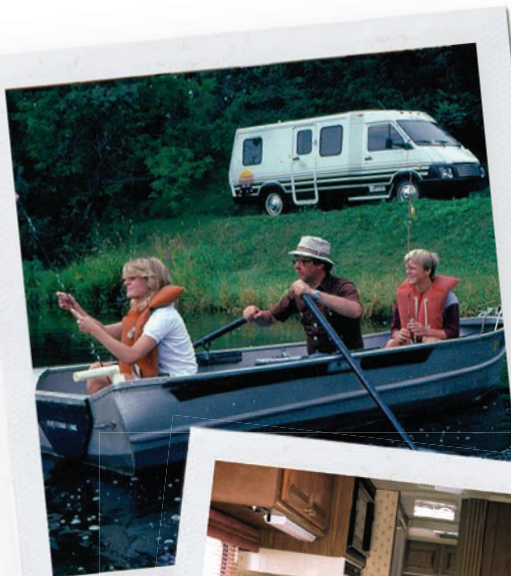
Winnebago was pioneering its own technology, on a quest for lighter-weight, fuel-efficient models. While other RV brands were paring back, Winnebago

invested in its SuperStructure® — economical automotive-style manufacturing that would produce high-quality RVs. It has paid off in dozens

of "firsts" through the decades.

In 1982, the Winnebago Warrior and Itasca Spectrum rolled out, doubling the fuel economy of conventional RVs. Next, Winnebago teamed up with Toyota to go even smaller with the Trekker, a 4x4 SUV that would later spawn the Toyota 4Runner.

Three new Winnebago RVs debuted in 1983 that were truly ahead of their time: LeSharo and Phasar motorhomes, and Centauri vans. All came with fuel-efficient Renault diesel engines that delivered 22+ miles per gallon. The compact, maneuverable options were instant hits, attracting many first-timers to RV ownership.



In the 1980s, Winnebago pioneered compact fuel-efficient Class C's.



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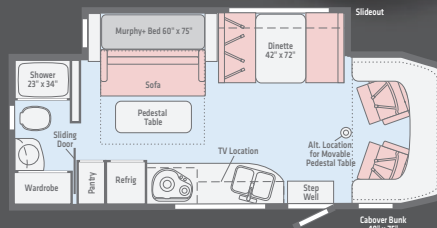
Winnebago pioneered the Class C category with the LeSharo and Phasar of the 1980s, and rocked it again in 2005 with the sleekly styled Navion and View, built on the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter chassis.

Today those luxury models head a full line-up of Winnebago Class C's that includes an option for every budget

and family size. The Aspect, Cambria, Fuse, Minnie-Winnie, and Spirit are built on Ford chassis, while the Trend is built on a Dodge Ram Promaster base. All comfortably sleep 4 to 6, with a choice of amenities and floor plans. Winnebago Class C's are available in lengths from 24'4" to 32'4", and their starting prices range from \$80,108 to \$131,605.



The View



THE VIEW'S NEW FLOORPLAN

There's a new design available in 2018: Winnebago View 24D. Its slideout adds more roominess to the Murphy+ Bed, while the dinette quickly converts to a comfortable bed for even more sleeping capacity.

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MSRP STARTING AT:	\$131,605

During its 30th birthday in 1988, Winnebago became the first RV manufacturer to produce 200,000 units in its history. By 1990, the RV icon had broken sales records, opened a new market in Japan, licensed its "Flying W" brand to equipment and apparel, and earned its first spot on the Fortune 500 — ranking 10th for its core value: Innovation.

➔ **IN JUNE:** How Winnebago's classic Rialta in the 1990s laid the groundwork for today's runaway Class B hit: The 2018 Revel.



Don Cohen, editor of WinnebagoLife.com, and his wife Terry have been loyal Winnebago Navion owners since 2012. "Winnebago really provides exceptionally high values and construction quality," says Don. "They stay in great condition."



A Class C with Class

Phoenix Cruiser, a factory-direct builder in Elkhart, Indiana, specializes in sleek-looking motorhomes that are fun to drive — especially with the optional LiquidSpring suspension upgrade **By Bob Livingston**

The explosive growth of the RV industry has created a renaissance of sorts when it comes to the buying behavior of motorhome enthusiasts who are making Class C's more fashionable than ever. Attribute much of that resurgence in popularity to Euro-inspired chassis that portray the industry as forward-thinking in response to energy conservation. But compact motorhomes are also stylish and have amassed a reputation for surprisingly comfortable livability while being easy to handle on the road and in campgrounds.

Does that put the bigger, Ford-based Class C motorhome on the endangered species list? Not by a long shot — and Phoenix Cruiser is focused on marketing smooth-looking Class C motorhomes, built on Ford's venerable E-450 platform, that offer uncompromised livability and generally a lower price point.

"Value" is the operative word here.

The Phoenix Cruiser 2910T we tested has a factory-direct price of \$115,012, which can be as much as \$40,000 less than a comparably equipped Sprinter-based model. Considering average yearly usage, the difference in price can buy a lot of additional fuel. Tag on the flexibility of factory-direct marketing, and owners can reap the benefits of modest customization and

end up with a Class C that meets all their requirements, including high-quality componentry and fit and finish.

If overall length is a big consideration, then it's hard to beat a Ford-based Class C. The 2910T spans just a bit beyond 31 feet and the interior layout reflects the generous proportions. Triple slideouts make an enormous difference in the available floor space, and relatively conventional floorplanning makes the best use of livability segmentation.

The very front of the 2910T is relegated to entertainment rather than additional sleeping facilities, and the area segues nicely into the living quarters where the opposing slides

ABOVE: Phoenix Cruiser body is blended nicely into the Ford E-450 cab and chassis. Smooth lines and full-body paint are aesthetically pleasing.

create a claustrophobic-free seating/dining area. Additional square footage in the living area makes it possible to employ a dinette booth on the patio side and a convertible couch on the driver's side — both taking up the majority of the slideout space. From here the aisle splits the galley and bathroom before terminating in the rear bedroom, where an RV queen bed moves with the third slideout. It's a good two-person plan with accommodations for the occasional guest or two, who will find comfort on the couch that makes into closely positioned twin beds that measure 28-by-74 inches each. The couch bed can also be used as an RV queen and the cushions are thick and easy to sleep on — a unique design that also reclines for lounging, has movable footrests and operates electrically. The dinette during mealtime is more suitable for two adults with flatter bellies. While the couch and dinette were upholstered in ultraleather in the test motorhome, subsequent units will be covered in real leather.

Cooking aficionados will be squelched somewhat by the galley configuration, but still can get most meal preparation handled on the available counterspace. The cooktop and microwave occupy a cabinet structure that shares part of the streetside slideout with the sofa. There's plenty of space for foodstuffs, and when the cooktop cover is down the counter is more usable, but occupants need to exercise caution when bending over the stove to prevent head knocking on the cabinet. While on the subject, care — and acclimation — is needed when entering the motorhome and

BELOW: Dinette is a cozy fit in the patio-side slideout. Four people can dine at the table, but two will be more comfortable, as space between the large table and cushions is a little tight for those with larger profiles. Drawers under seats and overhead cabinets provide plenty of space for needed items. Galley is compact but spacious enough for modest meal preparation. Generous storage accommodations make it easy to organize foodstuffs and cooking/eating utensils.



moving into the slideouts, where low headroom can impact taller people.

Completing an L-shape galley configuration is the single stainless-steel sink, storage facilities and a flip-up extension that augments the solid-surface counter. Across from the galley counters is the RV refrigerator, which is only 6.3 cubic feet, but will suffice for most trips.

The split bath is not designed for luxuriating, but takes advantage of efficient space utilization. Strategically placed doors can be positioned to close off the entire area from the front and turn the rear into a large master bedroom suite. The shower on the right side does not impede the aisle until the glass door is opened for access.

It's not overly big, but the skylight helps with headroom; the showerhead, though, could be improved.

Across the aisle is the toilet room, which is fitted with a small porcelain toilet that's a little close to the wall but is still situated to get the job done with minor gymnastics, as well as a fair-size solid-surface counter with oval sink and lots of room for toiletries. A full-length mirror is on the toilet room door.

Out back, the bedroom is cozy and well-equipped. A 60-by-74-inch memory foam mattress tucked tightly into the rear slideout is the obvious focal point. The memory foam mattress is comfortable and the overhead cabinets serve double-duty

The couch configuration converts into two twin- or a single queen-size sleeping surface. By day, the backs recline and footrests kick up; the mechanism is electrically operated. It's comfortable for lounging, but requires neck turning to watch the forward-mounted TV. Slideout opens living area nicely, and future models will have leather upholstery.





as nighttime storage areas, since there are no nightstands.

A small aisle is formed between the foot of the bed and the wardrobe structure on the right-side wall. There's enough room to dress and access to the ¾-length wardrobe closets and

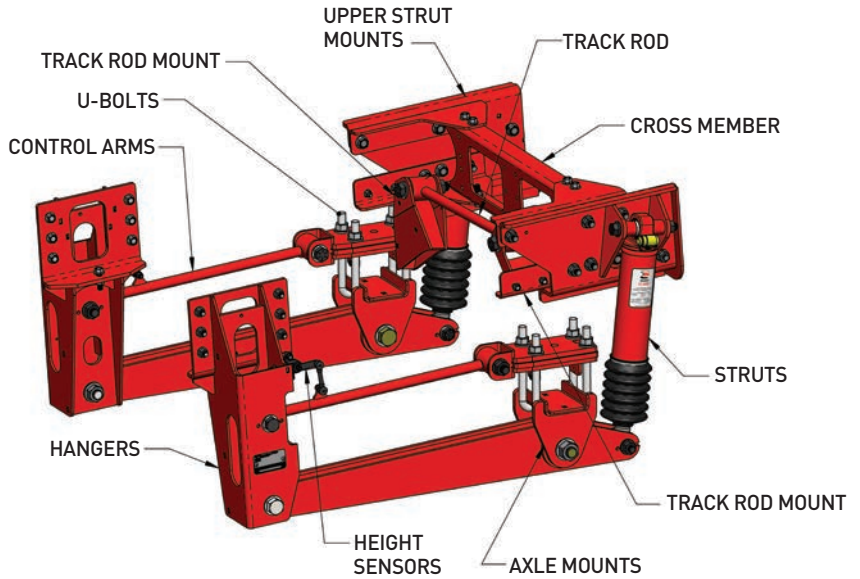


Split-bath results in streetside toilet room. Porcelain commode is close to wall, but there's space to use sink and access storage cabinets.

drawers, which are within arm's reach. A solid-surface counter, splitting the wardrobes, offers a good catch-all for loose items, or can serve as a makeup table, albeit, the user will have to furnish a portable mirror. Above the counter is a smallish TV and DVD player, and additional storage areas.

There are a number of higher-end features that set the Phoenix Cruiser

LIQUIDSPRING TECHNOLOGY



Courtesy, LiquidSpring

apart from other Class C's in this price range. The soft ceiling, handsome wood-type floors, nicely finished cabinetry, individually controlled LED ceiling lights and MCD slow-rise window shades transform the interior into a warm-looking environment. Popular options like HWH leveling jacks, two Fan-Tastic Vent fans and a Dometic capacitive touch thermostat — and the must-have items in the Premium Convenience Package — add to the panache.

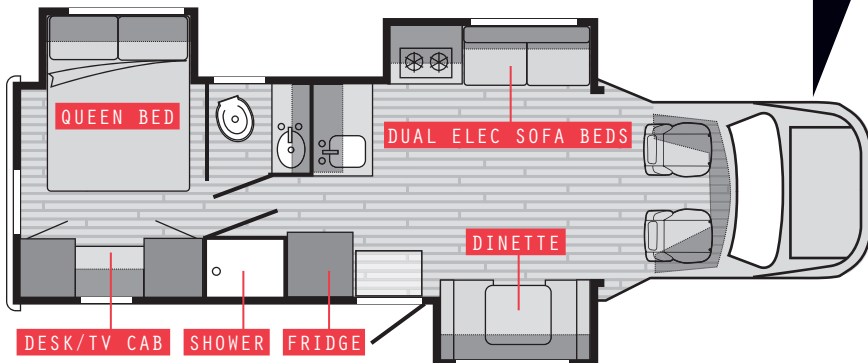
Outside storage facilities are not in abundance, but more bulky items can be stashed in a side locker with a pullout drawer and in the large trunk-type compartment. What really stands out is the utility center, which is well-organized and neatly situated.

Electric dump valves and a Thetford macerator pump make dumping the tanks a breeze, and there's even black- and gray-tank flushing accommodations, something that is rarely provided for both tanks. Those who enjoy primitive camping will like the gravity freshwater fill provision.

The Phoenix Cruiser is more than a pretty face in an RV park. Sleek lines enhanced by full-body paint, the lower profile and longer wheelbase are not just afterthoughts. Company engineers set out to build a Class C that would handle better than most and banked on aerodynamics with curved walls and roofline, a shorter rear overhang and a 93-inch body to keep the motorhome well planted on the roadways. And the company has succeeded with aplomb. To make the ride and handling even better, the company offers a Compressible Liquid Adaptive Suspension System (CLASS) upgrade from Liquid-Spring (<https://liquidspring.com>), right from the factory.

Ford's E-Series cab and chassis use underpinnings that have been around for a long while, and it has a good track record for reliability and driving manners. It's not perfect, exhibiting some bumpiness on the highway and tail-wagging in windy conditions and when passed by high-profile vehicles. But for the most part,

PHOENIX CRUISER 2910T



people like the seating position and road feel, and in many cases elect a Class C because it's less intimidating to drive.

We were intrigued by the LiquidSpring option and set up back-to-back tests with identical Phoenix Cruiser models, with and without the upgraded system.

Our first encounter with the patented LiquidSpring five-link suspension that takes the place of the standard rear leaf springs and shocks was last year when we tested the effectiveness of the components on a Class A built on Ford's F-53 chassis (see "Suspension Transformation" in the July 2017 issue).

The system uses sophisticated electronics to manage compressible liquid silicone that flows to specially designed struts and control arms, improving stability while reducing road shock and vibrations — a job that is normally relegated to shock absorbers. Unfortunately, shocks are subject to heat, which compromises damping. Adding air bags can help tame the ride somewhat, but they are also subject to tradeoffs between ride quality and handling.

Compressible liquid, managed through electronic controls, can improve the ride over a broad range of spring rates. This is accomplished via sensors for suspension height, speed, braking and steering input, processing information through proprietary algorithms that allow the system to react to — and correct — body roll in milliseconds. During the test, the controls were set for the comfort mode, which provides the best ride quality but allows the system to respond to driving conditions by adjusting spring rate and load levels without driver input. In a nutshell, the system takes the motorhome through the best of both worlds: super comfortable response on normal highways with compensation for better handling when needed.

Overall, the motorhome with the LiquidSpring option was superior to drive with flatter response to steering input and better control, although the



Rear storage locker is a welcome feature that can handle larger items. Ladder to roof folds up to allow the door to swing open. The utility bay is well thought out and is fitted with electric dump valve controls, gray- and black-water flush hookup, and a Thetford macerator pump and hose.

stock Phoenix Cruiser was no slouch to drive in a standard configuration. Severe turns were negotiated with better precision, exhibiting fewer side-to-side gyrations, which made it even easier for the copilot to take notes while under the LiquidSpring influence.

Generally, the ride was softer and body roll was more controlled on curvy roads. Control while transitioning from the roadways to abrupt shoulders was improved, and sharp jolts were

reduced to a point where interior noise was kept at a lower-than-expected level. There was also a big improvement in vibration on campground and gravel roads.


The Phoenix Cruiser handled better than most Class C's right out of the box; adding the LiquidSpring components turned this motorhome into a real driving machine, one that will undoubtedly limit fatigue on even the longest trips. While the


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TEST

PHOENIX CRUISER 2910T

WHAT'S HOT

LiquidSpring upgrade option, stylish exterior and body paint, utility bay, rear locker, electric couch, HWH leveling jacks, MCD window shades

WHAT'S NOT

Tight dinette, limited headroom in entry and slideouts, showerhead, lack of nightstands, close-fitted toilet



suspension option raises the sticker price \$10,000, the immediate and long-range benefits make a strong case for the modifications. For one, any reduction in vibration and suspension jolting (and bottoming out) will increase longevity. Smoother sailing will help keep the structure intact, and limit stress on fasteners and joints — and appliances and accessories. Owners who make the investment in the LiquidSpring componentry should realize better service life with fewer trips to the dealer for repairs.

Phoenix Cruiser builds only Class C motorhomes and during its more than 20 years as a premium manufacturer has made downsizing without compromising quality a specialty. The factory-direct buying experience presents unique opportunities for the potential owner. Prospective buyers can interact directly with company personnel and end up with a motorhome that reflects their personality and expectations. There may only be nine models to choose from (including two on a Sprinter platform), but the available floorplans, appliances and equipment are quite substantial; there's even a four-wheel-drive option for the Ford chassis to help meet the company's adventure and luxury mantra. **M**

Phoenix USA

877-754-8535, www.phoenixcruiser.com

Specifications

Chassis

Model	Ford E-450
Engine	6.8-L V-10
SAE hp	305 @ 4,250 rpm
Torque	420 lb-ft @ 3,250 rpm
Transmission	6-speed automatic
Axle Ratio	4.56:1
Tires	LT225/75R16
Wheelbase	220"
Brakes	Disc
Suspension F/R	Twin I-beam with coil springs/leaf springs
Fuel Capacity	55 gal
Fuel Economy	9.38 mpg
Warranty	3 years, 36,000 miles (chassis), 5 years, 60,000 miles (powertrain)

Coach

Exterior Length	31' 3"
Exterior Width	8' 2"
Exterior Height (with A/C)	10' 1"
Interior Width	7' 6"
Interior Height	6' 4"
Construction	Aluminum frame, laminated walls/roof/floor; one-piece fiberglass roof; block-foam insulation; full-body paint
Freshwater Capacity	46 gal
Black-water Capacity	23 gal
Gray-water Capacity	35 gal
Water-heater Capacity	6 gal
LP-gas Capacity	10 gal
Air Conditioner	15,000 Btu with heat pump
Furnace	30,000 Btu
Refrigerator	6.3 cubic-foot
Converter	55 amps
Inverter	1,800 watts
Batteries	(1) 12-volt chassis, (2) 6-volt coach
AC Generator	4 kW
MSRP	\$115,012
Warranty	1 year

Wet Weight

(Water and fuel tanks full; no supplies or passengers)

Front Axle	4,260 lbs
Rear Axle	9,200 lbs
Total	13,460 lbs

Chassis Ratings

GAWR, F/R	5,000 lbs/9,600 lbs
GVWR/GCWR	14,500 lbs/22,000 lbs
ROCCC	1,040 lbs (deduct weight of passengers for net cargo capacity)

GAWR	Gross Axle Weight Rating
GVWR	Gross Vehicle Weight Rating
GCWR	Gross Combination Weight Rating
ROCCC	Realistic Occupant and Cargo Carrying Capacity (full water, no passengers)

2018 GUIDE TO MOTORHOME ACCESSORIES

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO GET YOUR MOTORHOME READY TO ROLL



The hard part is over: You already own a motorhome. But, your responsibility to yourself, your family and your friends to complete the ultimate motorhome experience has only begun. In order to fully realize your motorhome's capabilities — in terms of livability and performance — there are thousands of products to consider, from everyday maintenance items to cutting-edge electronics to appliances offering the absolute best in comfort. And though

sorting through those items may seem like a daunting task, we've gathered everything you'll need in the following pages to ensure the best possible experience. Some are requirements, some are novelties, but all are guaranteed to improve your time on the road and in camp. We've tapped in to the many years of experience that the *MotorHome* team has to offer to provide you with the most comprehensive list of products and manufacturers on all things motorhome.



CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Cleaners and Waxes

A motorhome's exterior is the first line of defense against weather, UV rays, and normal wear and tear. The best way to ensure increased longevity is to remove dirt and debris from the exterior (or interior) using one of these products. And, they help your pride and joy look good, too. Be sure to check to see if a particular product is compatible with the surface material on which you plan to use it.

- Dicor, www.dicor.com
- Dometic, www.dometic.com/usa
- Gel-Gloss, www.gel-gloss.com
- Gold Eagle, www.goldeagle.com
- Griot's Garage, www.griotsgarage.com
- Meguiar's, www.meguiars.com
- Poli Glow, www.poliglow-int.com
- Pro-Tec, <https://proteproducts.com>
- ProtectAll, www.protectall.com
- RejeX, www.rejex.com
- Reliable Products, www.reliableproductsonline.com
- Roadmaster Voom! RV, www.roadmasterinc.com
- Shurhold Industries, www.shurhold.com
- Star brite, www.starbrite.com
- Surf City Garage, www.surfcitygarage.com
- Thetford, www.thetford.com



Sealants

When a motorhome is exposed to the

elements (or even when it's under cover), seams and seals can crack if not properly maintained. Regular maintenance on your motorhome should include using one or more of these products at least once a season, or as necessary.

- Alpha Systems, www.alphasystemsinc.com/productcare
- Dicor, www.dicor.com
- EternaBond, www.eterabond.com
- GE Silicone, www.caulkyourhome.com
- Geocel, www.geocelusa.com
- Loctite Products, www.loctiteproducts.com
- Sika Corp., www.usa.sika.com



RV Covers and Tire Covers

The best defense (apart from a climate-controlled storage facility) against the extremes of Mother Nature is to employ the use of a motorhome cover. Covers are available in a variety of color schemes and varying degrees of protection; we recommend spending a little more to get a good quality cover designed for the specific climate in which your motorhome will be stored.

- ADCO, www.adcoprod.com
- CalMark Cover, www.calmarkcovers.com
- Carver Industries, www.carvercovers.com
- Classic Accessories, www.classicaccessories.com
- Covercraft Direct, www.covercraft.com
- Coverking, www.coverking.com
- CoverQuest, www.coverquest.com
- Elements, www.campingworld.com/elements
- Empire Covers, www.empirecovers.com

DINGHY TOWING



Tow Bars

Towing a dinghy vehicle allows for the ultimate freedom when it comes to exploration or everyday errands. Bringing along a second vehicle enables you to leave the motorhome in camp, and also to visit locations where length and height restrictions prohibit motorhomes. These tow bars make the dinghy-vehicle connection safe and secure.

- Blue Ox, www.blueox.com
- Demco, www.demco-products.com
- Roadmaster Inc., www.roadmasterinc.com



Dinghy-Braking Systems

Installing an auxiliary braking system on a dinghy vehicle is a necessity, as many states have laws requiring the use of braking a towed vehicle over a certain weight (i.e., 2,000 pounds). These braking systems range from portable to permanent, but they will all help bring your motorhome and dinghy combination to a smooth, safe stop.

- Blue Ox, www.blueox.com
- BrakeBuddy (Hopkins Towing Solutions), www.hopkinstowingsolutions.com
- Demco/SMI, www.demco-products.com
- Roadmaster Inc., www.roadmasterinc.com
- RV Innovations/RVibrake, www.rvibrake.com
- VIP Enterprises, www.viprv.com

Tow Dollies

If your favorite dinghy vehicle isn't approved by the manufacturer for flat towing, you may want to use a tow dolly. These are trailers towed behind the motorhome. The front (or all four) tires of the dinghy are secured on the dolly and kept off the ground, eliminating the prospect of drivetrain damage or a voided warranty.

- Demco, www.demco-products.com
- Roadmaster Inc., www.roadmasterinc.com



ELECTRONICS/ELECTRICAL

Backup/Sideview Cameras

When piloting a large motorhome, seemingly simple maneuvers like backing up, changing lanes and repositioning at the RV park can be a bit more complex than while driving a passenger car. Such actions are generally easier when you have a copilot, but can also be assisted by a rear- or sideview camera system. These products provide a real-time view of your motorhome's surroundings, including other cars, pedestrians and objects around the campsite.

ASA Electronics, www.asaelectronics.com

Furrion, www.furrion.com

Hopkins Towing Solutions,
www.hopkinstowingsolutions.com

iBall, www.iballhitchcam.com

Toren, www.swifhitch.com

GPS

Are we there yet? A global positioning system (GPS) can answer that age-old question, and so much more. Available as portable or in-dash installations, common features include at-a-glance distances, ETA, points of interest, restaurants, shopping options and real-time traffic information. Some



models even have RV-specific details, including campgrounds, dump stations and clearance measurements. The larger screen on a typical GPS unit makes for a much more practical — and safer — application than the smaller displays on most smartphones.

Garmin, www.garmin.com

Magellan GPS, www.magellangps.com

Rand McNally, www.randmcnally.com

TomTom, www.tomtom.com/en_us/drive/camper-caravan



Solar Power

For additional off-the-grid power options — or if you'd simply like to avoid running the motorhome's generator — a solar-power system is well worth the expense. These systems allow users to harness the power of the sun to help run lighting and small appliances, ensuring the campground experience is as residential as possible. Options range from sophisticated multipanel installations capable of supporting residential refrigerators to single panels that attend to less demanding power applications.

AM Solar, www.amsolarrv.com

Deltran USA, www.batterytender.com

EEZ RV Products, www.eezrvproducts.com

Go Power, www.gpelectric.com

Nature Power, www.naturepowerproducts.com

Samlex Solar, www.samlexsolar.com

Sunforce Products, www.sunforceproducts.com

Zamp Solar, www.zampsolar.com



Energy Management Systems

Whether portable or hard-wired, these systems help protect the sensitive electronics on a motorhome.

When plugging in at an RV park or campground, the reliability of clean, consistent power can be dicey at best. So much more than simple surge protectors, these systems often also offer sophisticated analysis and power cutoff when faced with certain conditions, from damaged wiring and receptacles to over- and under-voltage conditions.

Camco, www.camco.net

Hughes Autoformers,
www.hughesautoformers.com

Progressive Industries,
www.progressiveindustries.net

Technology Research, www.trci.net



Inverters

An inverter can provide the necessary juice to run power-grabbers such as a residential-style refrigerator, TVs and other small appliances when 120-volt AC hookups are not available (or during generator quiet hours). Using the battery bank as a power source, inverters can produce between 150 watts and 3,000 watts of 120-volt AC electricity, and many also feature multistage charging circuits for added versatility.

Progressive Industries,
www.progressiveindustries.net

Samlex Solar, www.samlexsolar.com

Sensata Technologies,
www.magnum-dimensions.com

Tripp Lite, www.tripplite.com

Xantrex, www.xantrex.com

Generators

One of the main draws to the motorhome lifestyle is the ability to enjoy residential comfort, regardless of the location. And, when you're set up lakeside, at the beach or in the mountains, shorepower options aren't



always available. An AC generator provides 120-volt AC power when needed for onboard appliances. When selecting a generator, be sure to calculate the expected power draw during a typical day of RVing, keeping in mind that air conditioners require an extra amount of amperage during startup.

Champion Power Equipment, www.championpowerequipment.com
 Cummins Onan, <https://power.cummins.com>
 Generac Power Systems, www.generac.com
 Honda Power Equipment, www.powerequipmenthonda.com
 Powerhouse Generators, www.powerhouse-products.com
 Yamaha, www.yamahamotorsports.com/generator



LED Lighting

It's no secret that LED lights last exponentially longer than traditional incandescent bulbs. But, as LEDs continue to be the lighting source of choice among many manufacturers, prices continue to come down to a more reasonable level than ever. And, if your motorhome's lights aren't compatible with LEDs, a variety of LED retrofit kits are available to let you enjoy increased, cooler lighting with a fraction of the power draw.

Alpenglow Marine Lights, www.alpenglowlights.com
 Command Electronics,

www.commandelectronics.com
 Diamond Group, www.dg-usa.com
 EEZ RV Products, www.eezrvproducts.com
 Jirah, www.jirahled.com
 M4Products, www.m4products.com
 Star Lights, www.starlightsinc.com
 Super Bright LEDs, www.superbrightleds.com



TPMS

When you got in your vehicle this morning, did you check the tire pressure before heading down the road? Most of us are guilty of neglecting the tires on our vehicles, so a tire-pressure monitoring system (TPMS) will do it for you. A TPMS uses sensors in the tires (wheel- or valve-stem mounted) to relay real-time pressure information to a monitor in the cab. Plus, they can keep tabs on your motorhome and dinghy vehicle at the same time, providing a number of alerts should the tires become under (or over) inflated.

Advantage PressurePro, www.advantagepressurepro.com
 Doran Manufacturing, www.doranmfg.com
 EEZ RV Products, www.eezrvproducts.com
 Hopkins Towing Solutions, www.hopkinstowingsolutions.com
 Minder Research TireMinder, www.minderresearch.com
 RV Innovations Tire Patrol, www.rvbrake.com
 Tire Traker, www.tiretraker.com
 Truck System Technologies, www.tsstruck.com
 Valor TPMS, www.valortpms.com

ENTERTAINMENT

Audio/Video

Who says getting away from it all has to mean, well, getting away from it all? Campfire cookouts are great fun, but so is curling up on



the motorhome's sofa and watching a movie or the local news. Home-entertainment systems (TV, audio and receivers) continue to evolve across the board, including in the motorhome segment. Most new motorhomes come equipped with some type of entertainment system, but upgrades are part of the fun, right?

ASA Electronics, www.asaelectronics.com
 Furrion, www.furrion.com
 Fusion, www.fusionentertainment.com
 Insignia Products, www.insigniaproducts.com
 KING, www.kingconnect.com
 Patrick Industries, www.patrickind.com
 PQN Audio, www.pqnterprises.com



Satellite Programming Providers

Campground cable hookups can be unreliable, and even when they do work, there's usually a limited amount of programming. So, if watching TV is in your plans, selecting a satellite provider is generally your best bet. Some providers allow for pay-as-you-go programming, meaning you only need pay when you're actually using the service. Equipment can be rented or purchased and, in some cases, you can even bring along the box from your residential provider.

Bell, www.bell.ca
 DirecTV, www.directv.com
 DISH Network Corp., www.dish.com
 Shaw Direct, www.shawdirect.ca



Mobile Satellite Antennas

To get that satellite service, you'll need an antenna. Options range from portable to fixed-mount, and from in-motion to stationary. Do some research based on your viewing habits to help select the antenna that's right for you.

KING, www.kingconnect.com

KVH Industries, www.kvh.com

Winegard, www.winegard.com



Internet/Wi-Fi/Cell Boosters

Our increasing reliance on Wi-Fi for emails, audio and video streaming, and even devices for climate control makes products like these a must-have. Boosters are designed to increase the strength of existing signals rather than create new ones, so you will still need to be in an area with satellite/cellphone coverage to take advantage of the technology.

Boosters are designed to increase the strength of existing signals rather than create new ones, so you will still need to be in an area with satellite/cellphone coverage to take advantage of the technology.

C. Crane, www.ccrane.com

PDQ Connect, www.pdqconnect.com

Shakespeare Marine, www.shakespeare-ce.com

Singlepoint, www.yoursinglepoint.com

SmoothTalker, www.smoothtalker.com

weBoost, Wilson Electronics, www.weboost.com

Wi-Fi Ranger, www.wifiranger.com

Winegard, www.winegard.com

FRESHWATER SYSTEMS

Hoses/Pumps and Connectors

Having freshwater at your fingertips is one of the most basic needs of camping or RVing in any form, so



getting the most from your motorhome's freshwater system is important. When selecting a hose for connection at the city-water inlet, be sure it is designed for drinking water, as many lower-cost garden hoses may contain traces of lead, BPA or phthalate, which can be harmful and/or affect the taste. Additional accessories like upgraded water pumps and various adapters and fittings can add to the ease of use.

Camco, www.camco.net

Camping World, www.campingworld.com

Flojet/Jabsco, www.xylemflowcontrol.com

Lippert Components, www.lci1.com

Pirit, www.pirithose.com

Shurflo, www.shurflo.com

Teknor Apex, www.apexhose.com

Valterra, www.valterra.com

Xylem, www.xylemflowcontrol.com



Water Filters

The most expensive water hose in the world can still allow harmful contaminants and an off-putting taste and odor to enter a motorhome's freshwater system. Using a water filter at the connection (or under the sink) can improve not only the taste, but also protect the faucets, sinks and shower enclosures from damage. For drinking purposes, selecting a filter with a rating of 1 micron or less produces the best results.

Camco, www.camco.net

Clearsource RV, www.clearsourcerv.com

Culligan, www.culligan.com

Flow Pur, www.flowpur.com

Hydro Life, www.hydrolife.com

Multipure, www.multipure.com

RV Water Filter Store,

www.rvwaterfilterstore.com

Water King, www.waterking.com



RV Water Heaters — Tank and Instant

Almost every motorhome is equipped with a water heater, as hot water is one of the main factors that separates camping from RVing. It's important to maintain these systems to ensure optimum performance. Traditional water heaters heat the water in a tank for delivery, while on-demand water heaters utilize sensors and micro-processors to instantly heat water. Whichever your motorhome features, a hot shower is a great way to end a day of adventure.

Atwood Mobile Products, www.atwoodmobile.com/water-heaters.asp

Girard, <https://greenrvproducts.com>

Precision Temp, www.precisiontemp.com

Suburban (Airxcel), www.airxcel.com/suburban/products/water-heaters

Truma, www.truma.com/us/en/home/index.html



Hydronic Heat and Hot-Water Systems

These systems are generally installed

at the manufacturer level, but it's important to understand how they work if you're considering buying a motorhome so equipped. Hydronic systems use diesel fuel or LP-gas and 12-volt DC and 120-volt AC power to provide hot water and heat to the motorhome by circulating water through fan-powered heat exchangers and piping enclosed in the floor and chassis. Cold air is heated through tightly packed fins, resulting in a warm, cozy interior, plus hot water on demand.

Alde, www.alde.se/usa

Aqua Hot, www.aquahot.com

Oasis/ITR, www.itrheat.com

Precision Temp, www.precisiontemp.com

Exterior Shower Accessories

An exterior shower can be a lifesaver when it comes to hosing down after a long day in the backcountry, or even for cleaning the barbecue grill. Over time, components like the fittings, hoses and showerheads will need to be replaced. Believe us, whoever is responsible for cleaning the floor in the motorhome will thank you.

Camco, www.camco.net

Dura Faucet, www.durafaucet.com

ITC Marine, www.itc-marine.com

LaSalle Bristol, www.lasallebristol.com

Phoenix Faucet, www.phoenixfaucets.com

Thetford, www.thetford.com

INDOOR LIVING



Shades

When a motorhome is exposed to the elements, such as direct sunlight, the

interior can heat up in a hurry. Using quality shades not only helps to keep internal temperatures at bay, but can also lessen the reliance (and strain) on climate-control systems. Plus, many windshield shades can be customized to include photos of your favorite destination, wildlife or even family members.

Auto-Motion Shade,

www.automotionshade.com

Carefree of Colorado,

www.carefreeofcolorado.com

Dicor (United Shade), www.unitedshade.com

Irvine Shade and Door,

www.irvineshadeanddoor.com

Magne Shade, www.magneshade.com

MCD Innovations, www.mcdinnovations.com



Climate Control

Though your motorhome is most likely already equipped with a climate-control system, upgrading to a more efficient, quieter model with more features may be a relatively simple task. Most systems utilize a standard 14-inch hole in the roof, so swapping out for the latest and greatest can be a simple affair.

Airxcel, www.airxcel.com

Atwood Mobile, www.atwoodmobile.com

Dometic, www.dometic.com/usa



Powered Roof Vents

We all know that one effective way to beat the heat is to keep the air inside

moving. These fans can dramatically cool a motorhome's interior, plus they are effective to combat mold and mildew resulting from moisture. They require a low current draw (unlike an air conditioner), and some models offer rain sensors and/or can be controlled via remote control for additional convenience.

Airxcel, www.airxcel.com

Fan-Tastic Vent, www.fantasticvent.com

Heng's Industries, www.hengsindustries.com



Appliances

These products really up the residential comfort ante in a motorhome. From ranges to refrigerators with icemakers to washer/dryer combinations to dishwashers, RV park convenience has never been as attainable as in recent years. Remember that upgraded appliances may weigh more than the old ones, and that many may require additional power sources (see: inverters) to help with their improved technological demands.

Airxcel, www.airxcel.com

Atwood Mobile, www.atwoodmobile.com

Dometic, www.dometic.com/usa

Fisher and Paykel, www.fisherpaykel.com

Furrion, www.furrion.com

Splendide, www.splendide.com

OUTDOOR LIVING

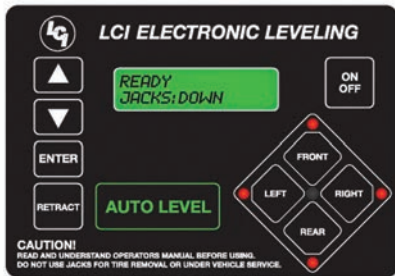
Awnings and Accessories

A picnic under the awning ranks right up there with a campfire in terms of enjoyment, so installing a quality awning is a good choice. However,



these aren't merely yards of fabric that help block the sun: many are powered for one-touch deployment and can include integrated lights or powered channels, allowing owners to enjoy auxiliary speakers and fans.

Awnings by ZipDee, www.awningsbyzipdee.com
 Camco, www.camco.net
 Carefree of Colorado, www.carefreeofcolorado.com
 Dometic, www.dometic.com/usa
 EEZ RV Products, www.eezrvproducts.com
 Fiamma, www.fiammausa.com
 Girard Systems, www.girardrv.com
 Lippert Components, www.lci1.com
 ShadePro, www.shadepro.net



Leveling Systems

As anybody who has stumbled across the living room in a slanted motorhome knows, a leveling system is a necessity when it comes to in-camp comfort. Modern systems require little more than the push of a button for leveling within seconds. Finally, you can free up your motorhome's storage compartments from all those wooden blocks.

BAL/NORCO Industries, www.norcoind.com/bal
 Bullseye Leveling, www.bullseyeleveling.com
 HWH Corp., www.hwhcorp.com
 Lippert Components, www.lci1.com
 Quadra Manufacturing, www.thebigfootleveler.com

POWERTRAIN



Motor Oils and Lubricants

As with passenger cars, changing the motor oil is one of the best ways to ensure increased longevity of your motorhome's engine. You should always follow the manufacturer's changing intervals, and we recommend erring on the side of caution with a high-quality oil or lubricant when it comes time to make the change.

Amsoil, www.amsoil.com
 Castrol, www.castrol.com
 Delo, www.deloperformance.com
 Havoline, www.havoline.com
 Lucas Oil, www.lucasoil.com
 Mobil 1, www.mobiloil.com
 Pennzoil, www.pennzoil.com
 Prestone, www.prestone.com
 Quaker State, www.quakerstate.com
 Royal Purple, www.royalpurpleconsumer.com
 Shell Rotella, www.rotella.shell.com
 STP, www.stp.com
 Valvoline, www.valvoline.com

Tires

Tire inspection should absolutely be part of your pre-departure checklist.



Even tires that appear to be in great shape can "time out" before they show signs of wear, so checking the date of manufacture on the sidewalls is an important part of any inspection. Expect to change a motorhome's tires every seven years (or sooner if conditions dictate) if it's stored outside, or every 10 years if the motorhome is stored indoors in a climate-controlled setting.

Continental Tire, www.continental-truck.com/truck
 Goodyear, www.goodyearvtires.com
 Michelin, www.michelinvtires.com



Engine Power Enhancements

A little more oomph can be a good thing, and these tuners, chips and engine programmers are an effective way to squeeze more horsepower or torque from your motorhome's engine. Always check with the vehicle manufacturer before installing these products to be aware of the effect (if any) they may have on the warranty.

5 Star Tuning, www.5startuning.com
 aFe Power, www.afepower.com
 Banks Power, www.bankspower.com
 BD Diesel Performance, www.dieselperformance.com
 Bully Dog, www.bullydog.com
 DiabloSport, www.diablosport.com

Edge Products, www.edgeproducts.com
 Hypertech, www.hypertech.com
 SCT, www.sctflash.com
 Snow Performance,
www.snowperformance.net
 Superchips, www.superchips.com



Suspension Enhancements

A bumpy ride is more than an inconvenience, as it can lead to increased driver fatigue in a much shorter timeframe. These suspension enhancements can help smooth out the bumps and imperfections in the

road for a more enjoyable driving experience.
 Bilstein, www.bilsteinus.com
 Blue Ox, www.blueox.com
 Hellwig, www.hellwigproducts.com
 Koni, www.koni-na.com
 Lippert Components, www.lci1.com
 LiquidSpring LLC, www.liquidspring.com
 MORryde, www.morryde.com
 Roadmaster, www.roadmasterinc.com
 Safe-T-Plus, www.safe-t-plus.com
 SuperSprings, www.supersprings.com

Fuel Additives

These products have been formulated to provide a variety of benefits, from increased fuel economy and performance to helping extend the life of some vital components. Individual results may vary.
 Amsoil, www.amsoil.com
 Gold Eagle, www.goldeagle.com
 Lucas Oil, www.lucasoil.com
 Marvel Mystery Oil,
www.marvelmysteryoil.com





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Pleasure Way, Circle 113 on Reader Service Card

Red Line, www.redlineoil.com
Royal Purple, www.royalpurpleconsumer.com
Star brite, www.starbrite.com

SANITATION

Sewer Hoses

Repeat after us: Spending more money on a higher-quality sewer hose and accessories will help avoid messy (and embarrassing) mishaps. Not that we're speaking from experience, or anything ...



Blueline, www.prestofit.com
Camco, www.camco.net
Lippert Components, www.lci1.com
Thetford, www.thetford.com
Valterra, www.valterra.com

Toilets

The toilet that came standard with your motorhome no doubt does the trick, but why scrimp on comfort when so many upgraded replacements are available and easy to install? These



products are available in plastic or porcelain, and in foot-flush or hand-flush, plus some have begun incorporating sensors for improved opening, closing and, er, evacuation.

Dometic, www.dometic.com/usa
Thetford, www.thetford.com



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Big Pine Key/Lower Keys, Circle 102 on Reader Service Card



Holding-Tank Chemicals

Better living through chemistry is never more apparent than when the holding tanks begin to stink or become clogged. Holding-tank chemicals are designed to cut down on foul odors and to break down solids for a smoother flow. Plus, they can help lubricate the seals within the system to avoid costly component failures.

- Camco, www.camco.net
- Century Chemical (Travel Jon), www.centurychemical.com
- Dometic, www.dometic.com/usa
- Eco-Save, www.eco-save.com
- Star brite, www.starbrite.com
- Thetford, www.thetford.com
- Valterra, www.valterra.com
- Walex, www.walex.com
- Worldwide Monochem, www.monochem.net

Sewer Vents

These products are placed on the sewer vent on a motorhome's roof to help eliminate foul odors before they seep into the rest of the motorhome. They



- also aid in the evacuation of the tank.
- 360 Products, www.360productsnorthamerica.com
- Camco, www.camco.net
- Coil n'Wrap, www.coilnwrap.com
- LaSalle Bristol, www.lasallebristol.com
- Lippert Components, www.lci1.com
- Ventline, www.ventline.com



Macerators

Dumping a motorhome's holding tanks is one of the less desirable jobs while RVing, so why not make it easier with a macerator system? These systems work by grinding up the solids in the tanks for expulsion through a smaller opening (usually 1 inch). A pump makes sure the waste goes where it needs to, and some can even pump in slight uphill locations.

- Clean Dump, www.cleandump.com
- Flojet, www.xylemflowcontrol.com
- Thetford, www.thetford.com
- Valterra, www.valterra.com



Holding-Tank Monitors/Sensors

Most motorhomes likely already have a tank-sensor system installed, but older models can be unreliable and susceptible to false readings due to bad (internal) sensor location. Adding new probes or replacing the system with one that uses external sensors can help you identify when it's truly time to dump the tanks.

- Garnet Technologies, www.garnetinstruments.com
- Horst Miracle Probe, www.rvprobes.com



Portable Waste Tanks

In off-the-grid situations, a motorhome's holding tanks can fill up faster than you'd expect. A portable waste tank allows you to manage tank levels without the need to break camp. They attach using the sewer hoses from your motorhome and are usually on wheels for easy transport to the nearest dump station.

- Barker Manufacturing, www.barkerfmfg.com
- Camco, www.camco.net
- Thetford (SmartTote2), www.thetford.com



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BUILT TO LAST

THE DODGE TRAVCO CLASS A REMAINS A TRUE ICON OF THE MOTORHOME INDUSTRY

This article is one in our continuing series looking at motorhomes that have stood the test of time and can still make dreams come true. Each has earned the right to be called "the classic ride."



Ralph and Michelle McClelland tackled their 1966 Travco renovation as a "couple's project."

It seems like all the motorhome owners we meet have a tale to tell about finding their classic ride, and Ralph and Michelle McClelland are no exception. When I ask how he came about purchasing his vintage 27-foot Dodge Travco, he smiles.

"That's an interesting story," he says. "My father-in-law dragged it home with the tractor."

The motorhome had been sitting idle in a neighbor's field for 20 years when Ralph's father-in-law made a \$1,000 offer for the derelict 1966 Class A. He worked on it for years, getting it in running condition and even redoing the interior, but the project was never completed. Eventually the Travco was passed to Ralph and Michelle, who purchased it from her father two years ago. A recently retired engineer, Ralph had

been thinking about restoring vintage cars in his newfound spare time, but decided to tackle the Travco instead.

"We kind of wanted to finish it for him," Ralph says. "Plus, a car is usually all guy; there's not a lot for a wife to get involved in. A motorhome renovation is a great project for a couple."

They were drawn to the Travco's "immaculate lines," immediately recognizable from its role as a screen star on *The Donna Reed Show* as the Stone family's "house bus," and one of Charles Kurault's RVs from the *On the Road* segments of CBS News. More recently, the Travco has enjoyed new attention as the ride of François Arnaud's character on the NBC television series *Midnight, Texas*. In addition to its "cool look," McClelland notes that "the fiberglass

shell lasts forever."

"These things are tanks," he says admiringly.

For RV enthusiasts, Travco motorhomes are in the same league as industry icons such as the Airstream and the Avion, and for good reason. The aerodynamic Class A was built from 1965 until the late 1980s, available in lengths ranging from 21 to 32 feet. The concept began in 1961, when Ray Frank built the original "Dodge Frank Motor Home," a more conventional, boxy-looking RV. Frank moved to a more rounded fiberglass body and increased the window sizes, and the motorhome evolved into the Travco/Dodge design that graces the motorhome the McClellands own today.

The original Dodge chassis used in the Travco could handle a gross



Photos: Ralph McClelland, Richard Flatte



Above: Laminate flooring, refinished cabinetry and Art Deco upholstery combine to brighten and modernize the Travco's interior. Right: The McClelland's vintage motorhome on the day it was towed via tractor from a neighboring farmer's field after sitting idle for 20 years.

vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of more than 6 tons, and utilized a live dual-rear-wheel axle and an I-beam front axle suspended on semi-elliptical leaf springs. It was powered by the Chrysler 318 CID V-8, a small and efficient engine that was known to cruise at up to 70 mph. It is no wonder that the motorhome became a best seller soon after its release.

Despite its good bones, the McClellands' Travco still needed a tremendous amount of work. While Ralph was confident in his mechanical skills, he admits he's "no painter," so the couple turned to Martin Custom Autobody in Walnutville, Illinois, for full-body paint. Because old weatherstripping around the windows had failed, there was also significant damage to the previously renovated interior. The McClellands also had the company work on the interior, repainting the original oven, bolsters and dash, and replacing the steering column.

As a part of the interior renovation, the couple decided to replace the captain's chairs with modern, more comfortable seating. The dinette and sofa were reupholstered in a red Art Deco pattern, and they installed wood-look laminate flooring. The resulting living space is bright and cheerful, managing to look both modern and vintage at the same time. Ralph credits Michelle with the Travco's appearance.

"The color selection, the decorating — that's all her," he says.

There was also plenty of work to do below the surface. The wiring and plumbing systems had to be modernized, including replacement of the toilet in the unit's wet bath. A previous owner had replaced the tired Chrysler 318 with a Dodge 360 engine, but after so many years without use, it had to be rebuilt, along with the braking system. Ralph picked up the job where his father-in-law left off.

"You name it, it's been re-done,"



he laughs. "The A/C still works, and the windshield wiper arms are the same, but that's about it."

While the McClellands use their 1966 unit primarily for rallies and short trips, other owners, like the Rattes, have been making extensive treks aboard their 1968 Travco — like the one from their Long Island home to Florida — for more than 30 years. Richard Ratte never had to do an extensive renovation on his motorhome because his 27-foot Travco was in basically good condition when he purchased it in 1986. He found it in a lot in New Jersey with an asking price of \$5,000, and he was able to drive it home without an issue. In fact, his Travco is still powered by the original Chrysler 318 engine. It needed its head

VINTAGE LONGEVITY

Despite their age, there are Travcos available on the used market. Condition and price vary greatly, and many are projects that an ambitious owner started but could never finish. Prices range from as little as \$1,000 for a unit in need of a total renovation up to \$15,000 for a Travco in excellent condition with a rebuilt engine, good paint and a refurbished interior. Get educated before you buy — read up on maintenance issues and renovation advice at www.travcoforum.com, Travco pages on vintage RV sites like Good Old RV's and Tin Can Tourists, and at Dodge Travco Motorhome Lovers on Facebook.

► Travco designer Ray Frank is widely credited with coining the term "motorhome."



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The Classic Ride



Richard Ratte (shown below, right with his wife, Pat) transformed his 1968 Travco 27-footer into a four-wheel-drive beach machine with a nautical-themed interior.



shaved, but otherwise, "it's still going strong," he says proudly.

In 1987, Richard converted his motorhome to four-wheel drive using an axle from a 1968 Dodge WM300 Power Wagon, allowing he and his wife, Pat, to drive their motorhome on the beach. He replaced the refrigerator and the air conditioning units, and switched out the heavy cast-iron Kohler generator with a vintage 1970 6kW Onan. The interior, with its dark louvered cabinetry, has maintained its period look, though it has been updated with an ocean blue color scheme and various decorative nautical touches. The wet bath was tiled both for practicality and to brighten the room. For the exterior, Richard pressure-washed and painted the Travco himself, choosing earth tones to match the East Coast beaches the couple frequents. Otherwise, the motorhome is much the same as the day he bought it.

Both the Rattes and McClellands note that there are challenges involved in purchasing a vintage motorhome, even one as well-built as the Travco. The lower the price, the more likely it will need extensive work.

"When you find one today, there's a good chance it's been sitting around for years. Even though the fiberglass body is durable, you can see a lot of damage from water and neglect," Richard observes.

It is certainly a scenario familiar to Ralph McClelland, and a good reason

why he and Richard recommend some mechanical experience before tackling major system repairs. Fortunately, the Travco has an advantage over many other vintage motorhomes in that its Dodge chassis was widely produced, making used parts more accessible.

And as with many iconic motorhomes, a close-knit community of owners and enthusiasts has evolved, so advice and assistance are always available on forums and through the Dodge Travco Motorhome Lovers Facebook page (www.facebook.com/groups/358395874142/about), which has nearly 2,000 members.

If, after careful consideration, you still love the vintage look and are considering a major RV renovation, Ralph has some encouraging advice.

"If you can re-do a room in your house, you can take on a project like this one."

Restoring a vintage motorhome is an affirmation of our history and of the American spirit. In this disposable age, where thousand-dollar cellphones are considered obsolete in just a year or two, the Dodge Travco is proof that some things are built to last. Still running the road, still seeking adventure at 53 years and counting — definitely, a classic ride. **M**

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Box Leveling

As frequent snowbirds in Florida, my husband, Chuck, and I are often camping at sandy environments near shimmering lakes, shell-strewn beaches or in the Florida scrub. During our early RVing experience, leveling in sand was a challenge, as the interlocking leveling blocks would sink into the sand. Our solution was to flatten lightweight cardboard soda boxes and position them in front of (or behind) the tires where the levelers are needed. The 12-pack soda cases are long enough to accommodate several leveling blocks.

Debbie Robinson | Manasquan, New Jersey



Snap to It

We prefer natural ventilation in our motorhome, whether we're boondocking or even if full hookups are available. However, when the door is open and the breeze is blowing through the motorhome, the paper towels in the galley tend to unroll. We recently acquired a slap bracelet at a state fair. It works well, slapped around the paper towels, to hold them in place. When we don't need to use it, we leave it in its flat state, and slip it into the silverware drawer, next the silverware tray. Or, you could always wear it on your wrist!

Coleen Sykora | Soldotna, Alaska

A Better Homecoming

We have started a new routine when returning home from a motorhome trip. On the last night before the final drive home, we clean the inside of the RV. Then we pack most of our stuff into collapsible InstaCrate totes sold at Walmart, Costco and Sam's Club. Upon arriving home, we simply empty the refrigerator and carry in the totes and our hanging clothes. It makes for a better homecoming.

Jim Stroh | Loveland, Colorado

Support Hose

I was looking for an inexpensive way to support and protect the sewer hose, as it always seems to be exposed to the elements and susceptible to damage. I took a length of plastic gutter and cut it to size to easily support the waste line, as well as to protect the tubing from long-term exposure to UV radiation. I use the gutter on the top and the bottom of the hose, which also makes it easier to route the hose where I want it. It doesn't look too bad, either. The whole thing only costs \$5 at the local home-improvement store.

Michael Staroste | Montreal, Quebec, Canada



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.

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Window Shopping



When a motorhome owner found a manufacturing defect with one of the windows on his Class A, he became frustrated after it appeared he wouldn't receive any help with the repair bill. He wrote:

“ We own a 2015 Newmar Ventana LE 3812. While preparing for a trip to Goshen, Indiana, I was washing the motorhome and noticed water running down the inside of the driver's-side top window. I examined the problem and discovered that the top solid window, above the sliding one, had slipped down approximately 1 to 2 inches, so we taped it up before leaving. On June 18, 2017, we stopped at the Newmar plant in Nappanee, Indiana. However, since we didn't have an appointment, we were told Newmar technicians would not be able to check it. On June 30, 2017, I took the coach to Service Auto Glass in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The estimate was \$462.95, as the window needed to be replaced since the original glass was too small for the frame that was cut, and the putty on the bottom of the frame had become soft and let the window slip down. I called Newmar customer service that same day to explain what the technician at Service Auto Glass told me. I provided the name of the technician, as he could explain it better. Newmar customer service said that the manufacturer would work with me on a resolution.

On July 21, 2017, I picked up the motorhome from Service Auto Glass and paid the \$462.95. I then turned the invoice over to Newmar.

I never heard back from Newmar, so I called again on July 24, 2017, to see if the manufacturer was going to make good on getting the window repaired. Newmar declined, stating the coach was out of warranty. Does a miscut window size ever really run out of warranty?

Ron Asmussen | Colorado Springs, Colorado

Although we don't believe such a mistake as an incorrectly cut window should run out of warranty it, like many other unforeseen defects, can and does. However, when such a situation occurs, it's always best to encourage the manufacturer to review it on a case-by-case basis, which we did. We heard back from Newmar a short time later.

This letter is in response to a correspondence by Mr. Ron Asmussen, concerning a window repair on his 2015 Ventana LE diesel pusher. Upon receiving the letter, I made contact with Hehr International, the manufacturer of the window. After a full review, Hehr agreed to cover the cost of replacing the window. I telephoned Asmussen, and left

a detailed message that he will be receiving a check for \$462.95. As always, it is Newmar's goal to work with our customers in a fair and efficient manner.

Jeff Johnson, Owner Relations Representative, Newmar Corp. Nappanee, Indiana

Motorhome Recalls

The following recalls have recently been issued by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA):

Forest River Inc. is recalling certain 2018 Coachmen Galleria motorhomes, models GAB24FLM, GAB24QM and GAB24TM. The inverter was installed using a lead wire that may not be able to handle the amperage draw. Forest River will notify owners, and dealers will replace the lead wire, free of charge. Owners may contact Forest River at 574-825-8590. Forest River's number for this recall is 225-0587.

Newmar Corp. is recalling certain model year 2016-2018 Bay Star, Bay Star Sport, Canyon Star, Dutch Star, Essex, King Aire, London Aire, Mountain Aire, New Aire, Ventana and Ventana LE motorhomes. These vehicles may have a loose power connection at the Automatic Transfer Switch (ATS), possibly resulting in a buildup of heat. Newmar will notify owners, and dealers will inspect the electrical connection at the ATS, tightening as necessary, free of charge. Owners may contact Newmar at 800-731-8300.

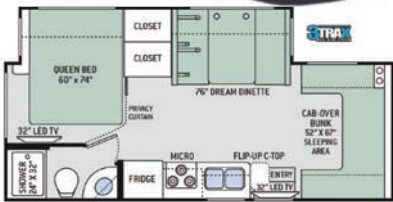
REV Recreation Group is recalling certain 2018 American Coach American Dream, American Revolution, Fleetwood Discovery, Discovery LXE, Holiday Rambler Endeavor, Endeavor XE and Monaco Marquis recreational vehicles. Water may enter the 12-volt harness connectors due to missing gaskets or the placement of the pin connectors, potentially causing an electrical short. REV will notify owners, and dealers will inspect and, if necessary, install a gasket for each affected harness pin connector and reroute harnesses that terminate near luggage compartment No. 5, free of charge. Owners may contact REV at 800-509-3417. REV's number for this recall is 171213REV. **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.

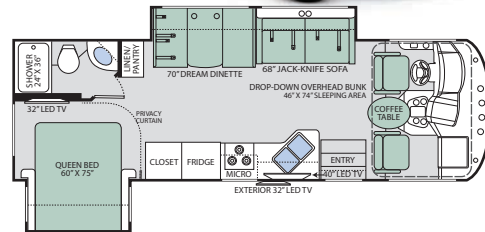


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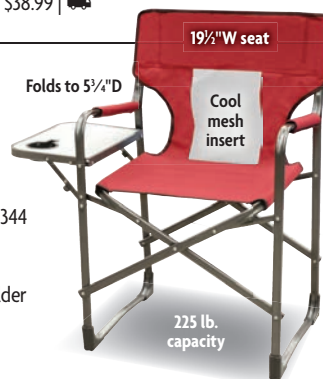
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By Ken Freund

Parking Brake Problems

Q We have a 1998 32-foot Itasca Suncruiser on (I think) a P30 GM chassis. The emergency brake has malfunctioned (our model is connected to the driveshaft). We have been unable to find RV mechanics with experience, or even Chevrolet mechanics in our area, who know how to repair a model this old. Can you recommend anyone in our area who can help with this problem?

Robert King | Tulsa, Oklahoma

A These systems are known as the J71 AutoPark Brake and have a reputation for being problematic. There are several problem areas including hydraulics, switches and other controls, but when properly set up and maintained the brake can provide satisfactory service. One excellent free online resource with photos and text is by Roger Haag (aka oldusedbear) in Bookings,



Oregon (www.rvautopark.com). He also sells some parts. Another good source of parts and info is Ultra RV Products in Centralia, Washington (800-417-4559, www.ultrarvproducts.com). Most of the work can be done by a DIYer. I don't know of any such shops in your area personally. However, typing "The Best 10 RV Repair in Tulsa, OK" into the www.yelp.com website brought up some shops with good reviews. You could also ask the Ultra RV folks if they can recommend shops around Tulsa.

Freshwater Antifreeze Contamination

Q During a recent winterization of our 2000 37-foot National Tradewinds 7370, my helper and I managed to pump about ½ to 1 gallon of Walmart RV Antifreeze into my motorhome's freshwater tank (it holds 90 gallons). How do I wash this antifreeze out of the freshwater tank come spring? Flush with some bleach and/or peroxide? Anything else? Should I worry about RV antifreeze contamination?

Don Feltner | Via email

A When it comes time to sanitize the system, add enough water to fill the tank along with ¼ cup of plain household bleach for each 15 gallons. Turn on the pump and run water through the entire plumbing system, including the water heater and washing machine plumbing, until you smell the chlorine. Leave that in for at least four hours to kill any germs. Then, drain the freshwater tank and flush the

system with clean water. When filling again, throw in the contents of a box of baking soda and flush again, if the chlorine smell bothers you. The baking soda will freshen the taste of the water. You can also use a product like Camco's TastePURE Drinking Water Freshener. Don't use peroxide. Antifreeze for potable RV water systems is designed to be nontoxic, so small remaining traces of it won't be harmful.

Backfiring and Power Loss Cured

I have a 1996 motorhome on a P30 454 Chevrolet chassis, and the dealer and others said the backfire and loss of power under load problems I was experiencing with it was a fuel filter and/or weak fuel pump. I eventually figured out that the problem was burnt and melted spark plug wires. It gets so hot under the doghouse that the wires melted and started to short. It can happen within a few as a couple of hundred miles even with high-quality wires. It's easy to see;

simply run the engine in the dark and look for sparking at the plugs.

The eventual solution was to install silicone high-temperature racing spark-plug wires and boots. Problem solved. Standard GM wires are not able to withstand the very high temperatures. You can get them from racing supply websites.

Michael Dion | Cedar Park, Texas

Thanks for writing, Michael, and for sharing your experience. Ignition problems can mimic fuel-supply problems, and vice versa, and are often misdiagnosed. The GM big block V-8 engines from the era of your motorhome have a well-deserved reputation for burning plug cables and boots. The cause is heat radiated from the nearby exhaust manifolds. There have been a number fixes, including heat shields and special boots, insulated cable sleeves, etc. I recommend that all owners take the time to inspect these cables carefully; viewing them while the engine is running at night is a good way to do it.

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Fuel Starvation — Comment

This is in regard to the "Fuel Starvation" letter in the January issue. While your advice to Dan Knowlton was excellent, I had a different problem. Due to uneven airflow around the engine, spark plugs and wires to cylinders 6 and 8 (right rear) would fail before the others, causing symptoms similar to Dan's. Please download the following and read page 7-4 (www.gmcmi.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/P30-Chassis-Manual.pdf). I did the modification suggested in Figure 7-5 and the changed plugs and wires. Problem solved. By the way, you will find that the P30 chassis are actually P37 chassis, and the VIN will reflect this. There are differences between the two, with the major one being how the front-end alignment is accomplished. The rest of that manual is very eye-opening.

Larry Turner | San Antonio, Texas

As noted in "Backfiring and Power Loss Cured" (previous), fuel and ignition problems can mimic each other's symptoms. Therefore, anyone diagnosing such problems should be wary and consider all possibilities. An automotive ignition oscilloscope will reveal such misfiring. Thanks for writing, and for sending the URL of the chassis manual. I have an original paper copy of the GM manual, but additional copies are getting scarce and many P-chassis owners will appreciate having this.

Over the years many of us have gotten into the habit of calling the GM motorhome P chassis "P30" although if you look on page 3-2 you will find GM refers to the motorhome chassis as P32 (I don't see any reference to P37 as you state). It's a minor point and I like to call it the P chassis to differentiate from G chassis, which were widely used on Class C motorhomes of the same period.

Bathroom Odors — Tip

Regarding the January "Bathroom Odors" letter, I really feel for the Itasca owner's issue with the bathroom

odors. We have a 2012 Winnebago Sightseer 33C that developed a very similar issue. We really enjoy this coach and one of the first things I did when we bought it in 2012 was to install a Sani-Con macerator. I had no odor issues until about three years ago, at which time periodic sewer odors were apparent in the bathroom. I removed every possible access panel, the main control panel in the hallway, the toilet (installed new seals), the panels in the storage bins, bought a remote reading borescope to look in every possible place, filled (from inside the coach) the gray- and black-water tanks with water, and fussed a whole lot. After about a year, I decided to replace the plumbing roof vent covers with the 360 Siphon plumbing vent covers (based on an article in *MotorHome*). While doing so I decided to flush the vent lines with a garden hose — guess what, the black tank vent pipe was plugged. A sewer snake solved that problem and

I added a T-fitting behind the hallway control panel for easier access should this occur again. As an experiment to see if the macerator was contributing to the problem, I stripped it out of the coach and have used the coach for more than a year without any odors (except maybe on rough roads that empty the traps). My current thought is that either when the coach was tilted enough that the vent was under “water” or that sufficient solids splashed upon it, the discharge flow rate using the macerator was insufficient to clear the vent line. Using a standard 4-inch gravity drain sure empties the tank faster, and you can hear the vent sucking air as the tank empties. Perhaps the Itasca owner has the same issue.

Lynn Eberhardt | Meridian, Idaho

Thanks for sharing your experiences. You sure went through a lot to solve this. Based on many owner reports, I find that tank vent problems are



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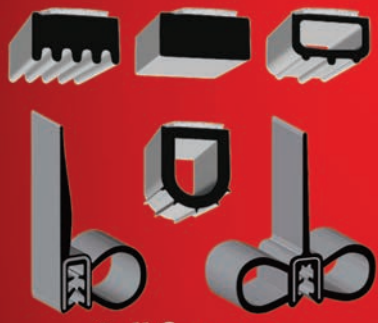
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responsible for a high percentage of stubborn odor problems. I recommend that readers check these early on in any troubleshooting session.

Intermittent Diesel Overheating

Q I have a 2006 Mandalay Coach Presidio on a Workhorse chassis. When the engine is cold, the water temperature will stay cool for several miles, but once the temperature gauge starts to rise it will go up to the $\frac{3}{4}$ mark and the fan comes on. Once the fan comes on, the temperature will drop to $\frac{1}{2}$ (normal) but as soon as the fan stops it climbs right back up until the fan comes back on. This continues as long as I drive — outside temperatures or weather do not change it. I changed the thermostat and it made no difference. It's a 330 Cummins with an Allison transmission and the transmission temperature stays under the $\frac{1}{2}$ mark.

Parker Wilson | Via email

A From your description, I think that this condition might be caused by a partially clogged radiator, which therefore cannot transfer heat as well as it used to. At 12 years of age, it could be a buildup of mineral deposits, which clogs the tubes and coats the surfaces, insulating and preventing heat transfer. It could also be caused by a film of dirt and crud coating the outside and fins of the radiator. I would address the exterior first. Often, bugs, leaves and other debris collect on the surface opposite the fan. If you can't solve it, take the coach to a Cummins dealer, which can usually diagnose the problem.

Descending Steep Grades — Comment

This is in response to Kenneth Barnes' problem in the January issue about overheating brakes on long descents. I own a 2015 Winnebago Vista and have no problem with overheating brakes. When descending grades I put the

(continued on page 64)

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(continued from page 61)

transmission in tow-haul mode; this keeps the torque converter locked up for greater compression braking and the transmission will automatically downshift. If the brakes are applied, the transmission will downshift further. I have found while dinghy-towing my Jeep Wrangler Unlimited that I rarely use the brakes, even on extended 7-percent downgrades.

Gary Thompson | Pahrump, Nevada

Thanks for writing, Gary. Yes, drivers of motorhomes that have this tow-haul feature should use it when descending long, steep grades. Not all chassis have that option, but it can be used — along with downshifting and planning ahead by controlling speed before the downgrade is approached. Towed vehicles should also have auxiliary braking systems, as this takes a large load off the brakes and adds safety, and is required by law in most places.

Design Issues

Q What baffles me to no end is the problem of water intrusion, and endless hours of toil finding the entry point and fixing the damage. I had a 1973 Class A Sportscoach and was fighting the drops over my left ear at 2 a.m. and other inconvenient times. I now have a 2004 Gulfstream 35 with a Ford V-10. I made sure when we bought it that mechanically and appearance-wise it was good and then, after a while, noticed all the places water was entering and causing havoc with the inside and outside walls causing us to regard the caulking gun and Flex Seal spray as our best friends.

It looks like the wall construction from the '73 Sportscoach has not changed a bit. Manufacturers still use wood compounds that swell and start rotting while losing integrity. Why on earth have the manufacturers not found a non-wood, non-rotting, non-swelling material to build walls? Perhaps a plastic compound with vertical channels so the water could run out the bottom if leaks should occur?

And then, of course, so many fasteners rust and break off and can't be extracted, plugging up the screw hole. And furthermore, the interior panels are always a one-off and can only be replaced with some oddball color. I contacted a company in Canada to fix the exterior covering and it wants \$3,000 per area of damage; I have five such areas. That is when I realized that it would save precious funds and aggravation if water avoidance management made the coach more expensive at the outset. (And I would not have to sleep with a caulking gun under my pillow.) Perhaps you know the answer to why these issues continue — or perhaps they have been solved and I wasn't in the loop.

Keep up the good work, and all the best for the next 50 years.

Klaus Golombek
Bellingham, Washington

A Actually, Klaus, the issues have been solved. Some manufacturers are switching over to a great product called Azdel, which is a composite substrate for use in laminated RV walls. Azdel is impervious to moisture, so if there is a leak, the chances of delamination are almost none. That said, the traditional construction methods are still being used by many manufacturers; however, new types of sealants are available that help to minimize the chance of leaks. Even with those, regular roof inspections and resealing is a must. For a more permanent solution, some folks are installing heavy-duty rubber roofs such as those from RV Armor and RV FlexArmor, etc. These roofs are "poured" on and seal the roof as well as it can be sealed. **M**

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER



Living History

Virginia's Pamplin Historical Park offers experiences that prove the past doesn't have to be boring

By Alan Rider

When most of us were in school, history class was a tedious affair all about memorizing dates, places and people from what all too often seemed like long ago and far away. Well, I'm here to tell you I've discovered a place where the past is anything but dull.

That fascinating corner of the world is central Virginia's Pamplin Historical Park (804-861-2408, www.pamplinpark.org). Located just down the road from Appomattox Court House, where Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant 153 years ago this April, this 422-acre private park takes what can be an abstract concept — like the Civil War — and makes it uniquely personal.

Like the best museums, Pamplin immerses visitors in the subject practically from the moment they walk in the door. That door leads into the National Museum of the Civil War Soldier, a 25,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility that takes a landmark period in American history and, simply put, breathes new life into it.

It does this in part by focusing not on the well-known generals, but on the everyday life of the common soldier. While the museum doesn't ignore the macro level story of the War Between the States, its goal is to allow visitors to view the conflict through the eyes of the ordinary farmers and shopkeepers who took up arms and clashed at more

than a dozen nearby battlefields.

Perhaps the museum's most engaging gallery is an exhibit titled "Duty Called Me Here," where visitors get to choose one of 13 actual Civil War soldiers and listen to their stories in their own words by way of provided audio players and headphones. At the end of the tour you learn what ultimately became of your newfound "comrade-at-arms" at the end of the war.

Pamplin Historical Park actually features four separate museums and three antebellum homes along with re-created exhibits on life in slave quarters and military encampments. There are also miles of walking trails that run through the remnants of trenches and earthworks built by both sides during the pivotal nine-month siege of nearby Petersburg, a strategically important railroad town that was

considered the gateway to the Confederate capital of Richmond.

The real attraction here, however, is something they call Civil War Adventure Camp (advance reservations required). Think of it as your chance to participate in one of those Civil War re-enactments that are so popular around the country, without the commitment of time and money such events normally entail.

After you and your fellow volunteers are sworn in and don your uniforms, "officers" will run the group through military drills that include the use of signal flags. You'll eat more or less period-correct food (you haven't lived until you've had hardtack) and bed down in log-walled tents like the ones actual soldiers used on this same patch of ground during the long winter of 1864-1865.

The camp concludes the following day with skirmishes between the blue- and gray-clad campers. The high point for me, however, was the chance to fire an actual black-powder musket, and watch one of the park's full-time "soldiers" light off a 150-pound "portable" mortar. It was an experience that gave new meaning to the phrase "going out with a bang."

Whether you choose to take the time to participate in the camp or not, one thing is clear: Pamplin Historical Park is a chance to experience history on a whole new level, one that can only be found along The Road Ahead. **M**

“This 422-acre private park takes what can be an abstract concept — like the Civil War — and makes it uniquely personal.”

The Past Comes Alive ☺

Pamplin Historical Park immerses visitors in the Civil War era with four museums, three antebellum homes and re-created slave quarters and military encampments.



Photos: Alan Rider and courtesy Pamplin Historical Park

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