

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS: AND THE WINNERS ARE . . . see pg 33

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Full-timing — whether in a large Class A or an expedition-type motorhome like the EarthRoamer shown below — can open up a world of freedom and adventure. Full-timers Emily and Mark Fagan lead us through what it takes to live life on the road on your own terms (see page 58).



The ballots are in for our 2015 *MotorHome* Readers' Choice Awards. See if your favorites made the grade. Pg. 33

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ON THE COVER

The Jayco Seneca 37HJ at Indiana Dunes State Park in Chesterton, Indiana (see test on page 42). The park is located along Lake Michigan's southern shore and has a campground with 140 50-amp sites. Photo by Shawn Spence Photography.



By Bob Livingston

Unraveling the Mystery of Full-timing

Deeply engaged in a philosophical conversation at a gathering of friends — some of them RVers — the topic revolved around the next chapter of our lives. Most of the people talked about retirement down the road and offered suggestions on the perfect plan. I talked about full-time RVing.

Full-timers represent only a small percentage of the RV community, but a very passionate one. The decision to hit the road full time is not easy, and can be filled with anxiety as questions about this mysterious lifestyle (to outsiders) are answered. Full-timer Emily Fagan unravels some of the concerns while describing the attributes of such a lifestyle change in her article that starts on page 58. For me, going full time is the ultimate motorhome experience.

My wife, Lynne, and I got a taste of full-timing as we lived in an RV for a year during a housing transition. Our plan was to only spend a few months in an RV and then move back into a house. We enjoyed the experience so much, we lagged intentionally when it came to finding a new stationary home.

When asked what motivated us to spend the year in a mobile environment, our mutually agreed upon answer was, “not having to deal with stuff.” Most people have spent a lifetime collecting things, and we

are no different. But there was a real feeling of freedom as we focused our attention away from taking care of and protecting “stuff.” Dear friends of ours, Bill and Jan Moeller, who were quintessential full-timers and long-time authors, taught us well, “If you’re going to live in an RV, you need to learn how to get rid of stuff and resist buying things,” said Jan. The Moellers were expert full-timers; Jan even tore the covers off of books to save weight and forced Bill to toss an item of equal weight and size if he wanted to buy something. That brings up another issue: compatibility in close quarters.

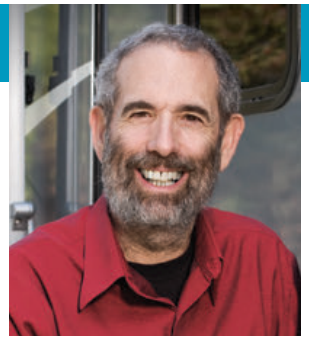
Most people at our gathering couldn’t believe that couples could survive being that close all the time. The overwhelming majority of full-timers will tell you it’s not a problem. While I’ve bumped into a few full-timers who gave up the lifestyle because

of incompatibility, the hundreds of others I’ve talked to feel it was the best decision they ever made.

For some people, making the decision to give up roots is difficult because of the unknown. Coming to grips with selling your home can be unsettling. Lynne and I often talk about doing just that in the future, but we constantly wrestle with the need for a home base. The solution to this dilemma can be as simple as renting your home while on the road. And finding the right motorhome takes a lot of careful research. Bigger may not be necessarily better.

Everyone’s motivation for hitting the road full time is personal. Financial considerations, as well as visiting doctors, dentists, and family, are big concerns. Many full-timers plan their medical appointments around their itinerary, working their way “home” on an annual basis. Without question, traveling in a motorhome is the best way to visit family members who don’t live locally.

I firmly believe that exploring new places, pursuing activities that keep our minds active and making new friends are what really drive full-timers to the road. **M**



“... hundreds of others I’ve talked to feel it was the best decision they ever made.”

Contributors | January



Kristopher Bunker, the former editor of *Trailer Life* magazine, is an avid camper and has been RVing for more than a decade. He is currently a freelance writer living in the central Texas area.



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



Kevin Livingston grew up in RVs. He worked alongside his dad, Bob Livingston, since he was old enough to hold tools. He lives in Reno, Nevada, and enjoys the technical side of the RV lifestyle.



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



E. Don Smith is a Tennessee-based freelance writer and photographer who has been a frequent contributor to *MotorHome* magazine since 2006. He is the proud owner of a Tiffin Phaeton coach.



Pam Windsor is a freelance writer and photographer in Louisville, Kentucky, who enjoys traveling and sharing the stories of the many fascinating people and places she finds along the way.

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King, Circle 113 on Reader Service Card

Have you tried any products or treatments to help prevent damage to your motorhome's windshield? If so, what were the results?

That's the question we asked in our October 2015 issue, and here are some of the replies we received.



Not-so-Crystal Clear

We had Crystal Fusion applied to the windshield of our motorhome when we bought the coach. In our experience, it might help on small chip projectiles, but it does not prevent chips and it is extremely difficult to make chip repairs.

Ken Zimmerman | Gillette Wyoming

Crystal Blue Persuasion

I had Crystal Fusion applied to our coach three years ago. According to the company, Crystal Fusion Technologies, it enables the glass to resist chips and cracks, and makes night driving easier, plus cleaning is fast and water runs off instantly. I agree with those claims and suggest that this product be applied to all coach windshields. The windshield has held up well for the first three years and lots of miles.

Stephen Calderwood | Damascus, Oregon

Rain, Rain Goes Away

I don't have windshield protection on my rig, but I did read somewhere that windshield wipers are virtually useless. I make sure to travel with a fresh application of Rain-X on my windshield and usually the driver and passenger windows. If you apply Rain-X you won't need to use your wipers due to the product's sheeting properties, no matter how heavy the downpour.

Kerry S. Harris | Battle Creek, Nebraska

Rope Opera

Regarding the October 2015 article, "Cover Story," we have a heavy-duty Sunbrella RV cover from Calmark Cover Co. and have found that the

easiest way to pull it up to the top of our Class C is to tie a rope to the front end of the cover and then pull it up the ladder to the top. The ladder rails serve as a funnel to help guide the cover. We store our cover in an extra-large garbage can and pull it up right out of the can in the fall. In spring, we lower it by rope directly into the can. I also use short sections of household pipe-insulation tubes to attach to the sharp edges of the RV and to prevent the cover fabric from wearing. We've had our cover for four years and it stands up well to Colorado winters.

Louis Rubel | Fort Collins, Colorado

Stay on the Marked Trails

I just received the October 2015 issue with an article on my favorite national park, Big Bend. The article was interesting and reminded me of my many visits to the park.

In writing an entertaining article, Mr. Barber, at one point, went too far. Big Bend is not the place to get lost, or to explore unmarked trails. This is a harsh desert environment.

My wife gave me a book titled "Death in Big Bend" by Laurence Parent, about 18 people who made missteps at Big Bend. Some of these people were successfully rescued, others weren't.

Yes, visit Big Bend and enjoy it. Carry plenty of water with you. Let someone know where you are going in the park and when you expect to return. Get a backcountry permit when it is required. Otherwise, stay on the marked trails.

Bill Wright | Houston, Texas

Mind Your Road Manners

I am writing about a difficult subject: courtesy when driving a motorhome. I have a Class C and have modified the engine and suspension. I also have a race car and enjoy a vehicle that handles well. I do drive curvy, twisty roads and can keep up with almost any traffic.

So, here's the story. I was driving on U.S. Highway 20 from Newport, Oregon, east to Interstate 5. It's a curvy road. There is a 25-mile section where there are no passing lanes, but there are turnouts. I caught up with, and was four cars behind, a Class A towing a Jeep. It was going 25 to 35 MPH in a 55 MPH zone. I could see 20-plus cars behind me. This driver passed by every turnout he came to. I could see some aggressive frustration by the drivers in front of me.

If motorhome drivers are going to travel on those kinds of roads, they better learn how to drive the speed limit and watch for turnouts. When the road opened up, there were a lot of hand gestures as cars passed by. So be aware and be courteous.

Ed Pavone | Vancouver, Washington

Question of the Month

How often have you been stuck behind another RVer who didn't use turnouts on a winding road? Do you think that type of driving is perfectly acceptable, hazardous or simply annoying?

Send your comments to:

MotorHome, 2750 Park View Court, Suite 240, Oxnard, CA 93036; or email letters@motorhomemagazine.com

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Icons of the Old West

Approximately 1.6 million saguaro cacti can be found within Arizona's Saguaro National Park

By Mary Zalmanek

If you haven't seen a saguaro cactus since John Wayne quit making westerns, there's no better place to see this icon of the Old West than Saguaro National Park in Tucson, Arizona. In 1933, President Herbert Hoover proclaimed this tract of land with a remarkable stand of cacti, the Rincon Mountain District, as a national monument. Record low temperatures in 1937 and 1962 killed many of the giant cacti, and decades of trampling by cattle doomed many of the young ones. The National Park Service acquired all grazing rights in the Cactus Forest in 1979, and today the saguaros are making a comeback. Thirty miles away, another remarkable stand of cacti west

of Tucson, known as the Tucson Mountain District, was added in 1961. The park's two distinct districts cover 140 square miles.

Saguaros are native to the Sonoran Desert in Arizona, California and Mexico. They grow slowly, only 1½ inches in the first 10 years. A 40-foot saguaro with multiple arms is likely to be more than 150 years old.

Both districts have visitor centers. The park has more than 150 miles of designated hiking trails. RVs are prohibited on some of the park's narrow and winding roads.

For more information, call 520-733-5153 or visit www.nps.gov/sagu.

By Bobbie Hasselbring

Queen of Tarts

These buttery, not-too-sweet cranberry walnut tarts are perfect for an elegant New Year's dessert or a sweet end to last-minute dinner parties. They're easy to make and a great way to use leftover cranberries and walnuts from holiday baking. They also travel well.

This recipe comes from master pastry chef Elizabeth Charlton, owner of Slow Dough Pastries & Café (902-698-1856, www.slowdough.ca), a bread bakery and pastry shop in the little college town of Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada. Elizabeth's journey from opera to oven is nearly as interesting as her tarts are delicious.

For nearly 20 years, Elizabeth sang with the Vancouver and Canadian opera companies. She made her home in big cities like Toronto and Vancouver, traveled extensively, and lived the fast-paced, highly competitive life of professional opera. After her children were born, she yearned for a change and attended pastry school at night. It took 10 years to earn her pastry chef certificate, but the effort, she says, was worth it. Today, she makes elegant pastries and slow-rise breads for customers who she also counts as friends.



Top: Pastry chef Elizabeth Charlton spent 10 years perfecting her pastry techniques. Above: At Slow Dough Pastries & Café, sandwiches are made with the pastry shop's slow-rise breads.

CRANBERRY WALNUT TARTS

Makes four 4½-inch tarts

Tart dough

- ☐ ½ cup unsalted butter, softened
- ☐ ¼ cup white sugar
- ☐ 1 large egg yolk
- ☐ 2 tablespoons whipping cream
- ☐ 1½ cups all-purpose flour, sifted
- ☐ pinch of salt

► Using a stand or hand mixer, cream softened butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. In a small bowl, mix together egg yolk and whipping cream. Add to the butter mixture in three installments, scraping down the bowl between each addition. Add flour and salt, mixing until just incorporated. Wrap in plastic and chill for 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 400 F.

Roll the dough into a circle 1/8-inch thick. Using the tart pan as a template, cut the dough 1 inch larger.

Line four tart shells with the dough and then refrigerate for 20 minutes. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes to a light golden brown. Remove from the oven and allow to cool for a few minutes.

Filling

- ☐ ⅓ cup brown sugar, packed
- ☐ ½ cup corn syrup
- ☐ 1 egg yolk
- ☐ ¼ cup butter, melted
- ☐ ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ☐ pinch of salt
- ☐ ¾ cup walnuts, chopped (1 tablespoon per tart shell)
- ☐ ⅓ cup dried cranberries (1 teaspoon per tart shell)
- ☐ ⅓ cup fresh cranberries (1 tablespoon per tart shell)

► Mix together brown sugar, salt and corn syrup, scraping down the sides and bottom of bowl, until smooth. In a small bowl, gently combine egg yolk and vanilla extract and then add to the sugar mixture. Allow the melted butter to cool slightly and then dribble it into the other ingredients while they are being stirred.

Assembly

Place cranberries and walnuts into each tart shell and fill with brown sugar filling.

Bake 17 to 20 minutes, until the mixture is set and the top is golden.

Cool for 10 minutes and remove tarts from tart shells. Serve at room temperature or slightly warm.





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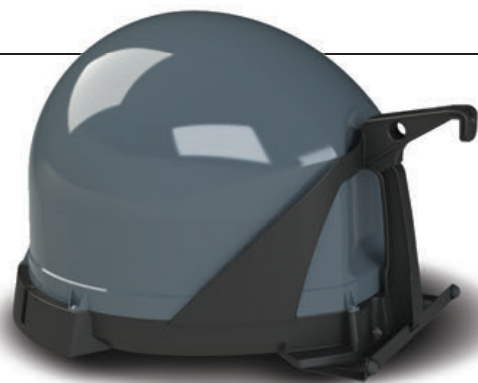
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In a Class (B) of its Own

Coachmen RV, a division of Forest River Inc., has entered the high-end Class B motorhome market with its new Galleria. Built on an extended Mercedes-Benz Sprinter platform, the interior of the Galleria provides the impression of a private jet with plush interiors featuring custom-made maple cabinetry with radius doors and soft-close hinges. The cabinets are complemented with Corian countertops, Euro-style sink and induction cooktop. Luxuriously upholstered cab seats swivel to face the companion seats for conversation or dining when using the removable pedestal table. Exterior amenities include an armless power awning, 100-watt solar panel, Truma furnace/hot-water system, Onan 2.5-kW generator, macerator waste system and a 13,500-Btu air conditioner. Three floorplans will be offered, with a starting MSRP less than \$128,000.

Coachmen RV, a division of Forest River Inc. 574-389-4600, www.coachmenrv.com



The King of Antenna Mounts

Portable satellite antennas have become a big part of the RV lifestyle — but the challenge is often where to mount them while in camp. King has introduced a new bracket that is designed for ultimate compatibility with all vehicles, according to the company, and is customized to fit KING Tailgater and KING Quest portable satellite TV antennas. Installation is easy — simply attach the Portable Antenna Mount to the antenna and hang the mount on the window, ladder or other suitable place on the RV. No drilling is required, and heavy-duty mounting tape provides for installation on the side of an RV, as needed. Constructed from high-performance, automotive-grade polymer designed for outdoor use, the Portable Antenna Mount has an MSRP of \$34.99.

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

I'm a Fan

A good roof vent/fan inside your motorhome is important for a variety of reasons. It can keep the interior free from smoke and odor while cooking, and by keeping it open during storage, can help prevent mold and mildew from forming. But for those of us who store our rigs outdoors, leaving roof vents open isn't always an option, as rain and its attendant dirt and debris may find their way in. A good solution is the new MAXXFAN Deluxe vent fan that has an industry-exclusive, patented, built-in rain shield. The fans also feature a high-power, four-speed motor for efficient exhausting of air, as well as a white or smoke-tinted manual opening lid and keypad controls at the ceiling. Like all MAXXFAN models, the MAXXFAN Deluxe comes with a standard 2-year limited warranty and a lifetime warranty on the lid. MSRP: Manual \$335 to \$353. Remote \$456 to \$471.

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A Light Alternative

The innovative N233 by Nokero International is an affordable, clean and safe light source that can replace propane gas outdoor lanterns or candles, according to the company. It is also perfect for emergency preparedness or anywhere you might use a lantern, flashlight or torch. Small enough to fit in your pocket, but bright enough to light a room, Nokero lights provide an incredible 15 hours of light after a day's charge in the sun. The N233 is highly versatile and can be held as a torch or flashlight, hung by its clip or used with its included tabletop stand. Its rechargeable battery is said to last up to five years. The N233 comes fully charged and ready to use. MSRP: \$17.99.

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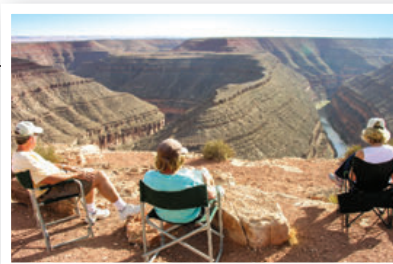


Photo: Morey Edelman

Mexican Hat, Utah

Awesome Views in Utah

Pull into Goosenecks State Park, located in the Four-Corners region, and you can park within feet of the canyon rim. Look out over the San Juan River as it meanders through this desert country and take in the incredible views. Glowing sunsets and a stellar night sky are also yours to revel in.

Over millions of years, the river cut into the uplifting land, creating this incredible canyon. Today, Utah State Parks has set aside this overlook for viewing and primitive camping. Only basic services are available with a single restroom, so come prepared.

To get to Goosenecks, take U.S. Highway 163 to state Route 261, travel 1 mile, then take a left on state Route 316 and drive 3.5 miles. All roads are paved. Ignore the warning sign when you turn onto Route 261 about no RV travel, as you will actually turn off of Route 261 before the cause for the warning (the infamous Moki Dugway).

For more information, call 435-678-2238 or visit <http://stateparks.utah.gov/parks/goosenecks> — *Morey Edelman*

Maumelle Park, Arkansas



Photo: Arline Chandler

Camping in Nature Next Door to Big-city Life

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers campground in Maumelle Park wraps around the edge of the Arkansas River, and is only 20 minutes from downtown Little Rock, Arkansas. RVers with rigs of all sizes are accommodated in 128 campsites with electric hookups. Some sites line the riverbank; others are shaded by a canopy of pine and hardwood trees. Guests embrace the tranquility of nature, yet city shopping, theaters and restaurants are quickly accessible.

The campground offers boating and fishing on the Arkansas River, one of the mighty Mississippi's largest tributaries. Anglers often

hook crappie, bream and white bass. Migrating eagles are frequently spotted in large numbers.

Nuttall Trail winds through wooded areas of the park. Playgrounds, group shelters, picnic tables, hot showers, a boat ramp and a dump station make up the park's amenities.

To reach Maumelle Campground, take exit 9 off Interstate 430 at Little Rock and travel 7 miles west on Arkansas Route 10.

For more information, call 501-868-9477 or go to www.recreation.gov/camping/maumelle/r/campground-Details.do?contractCode=NRSO&parkId=71932 — *Arline Chandler*

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A view of Castillo de San Marcos National Monument from across the Matanzas River.

America's Oldest City

In addition to its long history, St. Augustine, Florida, is home to the nation's first wax museum, a large collection of Tiffany glass and the famed Fountain of Youth

By Pam Windsor

Proudly the oldest permanently occupied European settlement in America, St. Augustine, Florida, offers history, charm and the feel of Old Europe thanks to its Spanish heritage. While Florida was first claimed for Spain by Juan Ponce de Leon in 1513, the city of St. Augustine was established by Spanish explorer Pedro Menendez de Aviles in 1565. Last year the city celebrated its 450th anniversary.

Luanne Hickey, who grew up here, says many people aren't aware of St. Augustine's place in American history.

"When we were growing up and going to school and learning about U.S. history, most of the focus was on British history — Jamestown and Plymouth Rock. I know by meeting people from all

over the world that many people don't know about St. Augustine or about the rich Spanish history in our country."

Over the years, St. Augustine has endured attacks on many fronts, but stood fast. You'll see the Castillo de San Marcos, the only remaining 17th-century fort in the country, which sits in the middle of downtown. Now a national monument, this fort served many masters. Historians note that St. Augustine has flown under a number of different flags, including the Spanish, British and Confederate.

Hickey works at Ponce de Leon's Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park, one of the area's most popular attractions. She says there are many theories about the mythical fountain and Ponce de Leon's connection. As she explains it, Ponce de Leon traveled with Christopher Columbus on his second voyage to America in 1493 and eventually became governor of Puerto Rico. While there, it's believed that natives told him about an island where he would find gold and a magical rejuvenating spring. In 1513 he set off to find it, eventually arriving here. It was Ponce de Leon who gave the state its name, "La Florida" for land of flowers.

At the time, this land sat on a natural artesian

Getting Here

Located between Daytona Beach and Jacksonville, St. Augustine can be accessed from the north or south via Interstate 95, U.S. Highway 1 or A1A Scenic and Historic Coastal Byway. If visiting the St. Augustine Historic District, free parking for RVs is available on Riberia Street, between West Castillo Drive and Orange Street.

ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

spring that provided water to the Timucuan Indians. Today, you can still drink from the “Fountain of Youth.” The taste might surprise you. It’s a little bitter due to a long list of trace minerals like sulfur, carbonate, boron, chromium, phosphate, gold, sea salts and others.

It’s said to be very good for you, but does it actually have rejuvenating properties?

“If you believe,” says Hickey. She says she drinks it.

The park houses more than just the fountain and offers an interesting overview of the region’s history. You’ll see a replica of a Timucuan village. Excavations on site that began in the 1970s first uncovered artifacts from the Timucuan Indians, then the Spanish settlers who followed.

“When they [the excavators] started digging, they found Spanish artifacts and remains of buildings,” explains Hickey. “So we know this was where the [Menendez] settlement was actually located.”

Evidence of St. Augustine’s unique history is everywhere throughout the city, with different sections depicting different time periods. As you stroll along St. George Street and throughout other parts of the historic district,



From above left: Presidents and their first ladies are on display at Potter’s Wax Museum. The Lightner Museum (in the former Alcazar Hotel) houses an impressive collection of crystal glass.

you’ll find many structures — each with a story all its own.

In 1887, oil and railroad magnate Henry Flagler built the luxurious Hotel Ponce de Leon as a resort for the rich. This amazing model of Spanish Renaissance architecture now houses Flagler College, but is open for tours.

Flagler also built the lavish Alcazar Hotel, which now serves as the Lightner Museum, named for another wealthy American who also left his mark on St. Augustine. Otto C. Lightner bought the hotel to house his unique collection of items from the Gilded Age, which has several floors of items including artwork, furniture and Tiffany glass.

The St. Augustine Lighthouse is a towering black-and-white structure

built as a watchtower in the city’s early days, with additions added later. If you’re up for a climb, you can travel the 219 steps to the top for a stunning panoramic view of the city. A sign inside compares the climb to that of a 14-story building. Patrick Haney of Plant City, Florida, took the challenge.

“It was tiring, but I went to the top. From there, you can see all around the coast,” he says. “It was very windy today, so it was a little scary up there. I had to take my hat off or risk losing it.”

On this particular day, the winds topped 25 mph. You feel the true force of the wind when you’re up that high. It’s exhilarating, though, to make the climb, then look out over that magnificent view.

And while St. Augustine is rich with

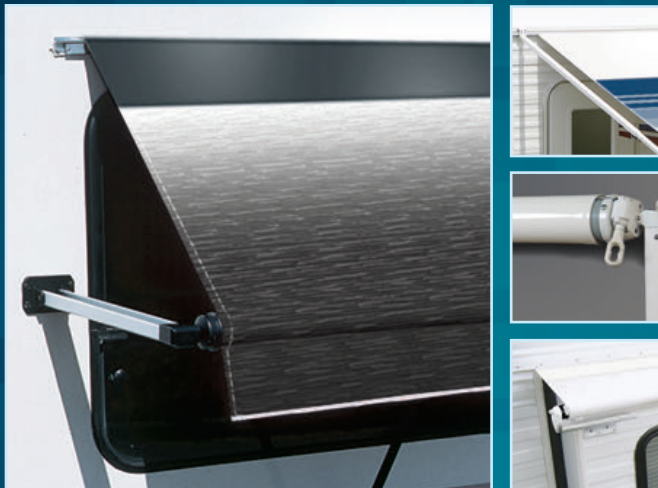


Ponce de Leon’s Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park commemorates the founding of La Florida by Spanish explorer Ponce de Leon and his legendary search for the Fountain of Youth. It is the actual site of the original Spanish settlement in St. Augustine of 1565.

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GETAWAY

ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA



The former Hotel Alcazar now houses the City of St. Augustine offices and the Lightner Museum, which features the art collection of Chicago publisher Otto C. Lightner and 19th-century artifacts.

history, there are many other attractions.

"This city reminds me a little of Key West. I love the history, but I also like some of the other things that are offered," notes Judy LaPrade. "I'm a golfer and I really enjoyed the World Golf Hall of Fame."

The World Golf Hall of Fame is located several miles north of the historic district, but if you have any interest in golf, it's worth a visit. You'll see the history of golf from its earliest days to the present. As you walk past numerous displays, you'll get a close look at the different types of balls and clubs used over the years, the many different trophies golfers strive to win and learn the stories of the legendary players of the game.

Chris Sheehan grew up in Augusta, Georgia, home of the Masters Tournament, and has a deep appreciation of golf.

"Walking around the Hall of Fame was incredible. From the history of the game, to the greats who played it, and all the memorabilia, it was fascinating to see."

Other interesting stops include the Alligator Farm Zoological Park with rare and exotic birds, animals and

reptiles. Special attractions include two albino alligators. The city is also home to America's first wax museum. It was created by George Potter in 1948, who brought his collection of wax figures from London, England. Potter's Wax Museum is home to more than 150 wax figures, and while there are some newer famous faces, many you'll remember for the important roles they've played throughout history. You'll see Ponce de Leon, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, six Confederate generals, Albert Einstein, Adolf Hitler, Winston Churchill and many others. There's also



See rare albino alligators at the St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park.

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GETAWAY

ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

a collection of American presidents and their first ladies. And throughout the museum, you'll note how realistic they all seem, due to their human hair, handmade uniforms and costumes, and most importantly, their eyes.

"The eyes are all prosthetic, meaning they're the same eyes used in a human being if you lose your eye," explains assistant manager Linda Manz. "What the artist does is color, shape and size them according to every character. So, if you go around the museum, those eyes have a tendency to follow you, especially if you use your imagination."

Celebrity figures include Michael Jordan, the characters of "Star Wars," Britney Spears, Johnny Depp from the "Pirates of the Caribbean," and others. Have any of the celebrities ever seen their own figures?

"Yes," says Manz. "Johnny Depp visits St. Augustine quite a bit. And he pops in and sees himself and others."

And what does he think of his Captain Jack Sparrow figure?

"Oh, he loves it," she says.

There are dozens of campgrounds and RV resorts in and around St. Augustine. Just north of town is the North Beach Camp Resort, located on the A1A Scenic and Historic Coastal Byway in Vilano Beach. The resort is situated among 30 heavily wooded acres on a barrier island between the saltwater North River and the Atlantic Ocean, and has 150 full-hookup sites, Wi-Fi, laundry facilities and a convenience store.

Full-time RVers Bill and Nancy Mills like to camp at Anastasia State Park.

"It's a very nice park, though a little far from the beach. We like to do a lot of fishing so it's a pretty good walk for us to go to the beach."

Mills also noted that there are limited spots for large RVs, so you'll need to plan ahead.

"The campground is beautiful and well-maintained. There's plenty of room between sites and lots of vegetation. We have water and electric, which is nice. There's no sewer, but we don't really need it for a 10-day stay.

Castillo de San Marcos is a massive fortress that took more than 20 years to build. It helped protect Spain's fleets from the English and pirates.



Photo: Dave Houser

Full-service Ocean Grove RV Resort is just steps from the Atlantic Ocean in St. Augustine.

We have large tanks, so for an RV park, it has all the things we want."

Some of St. Augustine's most alluring attractions are its beaches. Most are easily accessible to the public and offer plenty of parking. You'll have no trouble finding a spot to enjoy the sun, the sand and the water.

If you visit St. Augustine, note the warm, easygoing, people-are-happy-here feel to it. Relax and enjoy all it has to offer. **M**

CAMPGROUNDS AND RV RESORTS

Anastasia State Park

904-461-2033, www.floridastateparks.org

The Fountains Premier Motorcoach Resort

904-365-5600,
www.thefountainsofstaugustine.com

Indian Forest Campground

800-233-4324, www.indianforestcampground.com

North Beach Camp Resort

800-542-8316, www.northbeachcamp.com

Ocean Grove RV Resort

800-342-4007, www.oceangroveresort.com

Stagecoach RV Park

877-824-2319, www.stagecoachrv.net

AREA ATTRACTIONS

Lightner Museum (Alcazar Hotel)

904-824-2874, www.lightnermuseum.org

Ponce de Leon's Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park

904-829-3168, <http://fountainofyouthflorida.com>

Potter's Wax Museum

904-671-6866, www.potterswaxmuseum.com

St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park

904-824-3337, www.alligatorfarm.com

St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum

904-829-0745, www.staugustinelighthouse.org

World Golf Hall of Fame

904-940-4123, www.worldgolfhalloffame.org



Photo: Courtesy Visit Florida

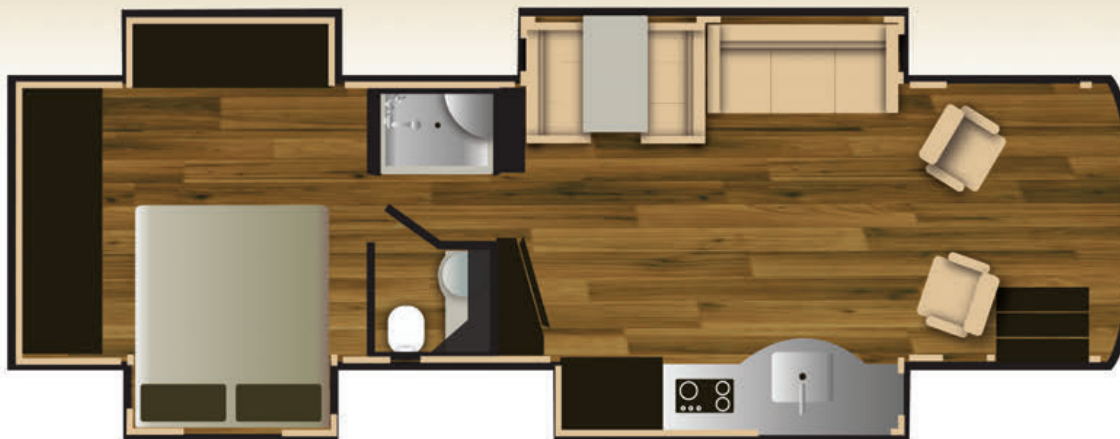


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IN HOT WATER

A visit to Hot Springs National Park in Arkansas proves to be a cleansing experience

You may have heard by now that 2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the National Park Service. To celebrate, MotorHome will be bringing you a yearlong series of unforgettable experiences — from mild to wild — that are unique to America's national parks. Places where we hope you'll Find Your Adventure in the months ahead.

In a modern era where we jump out of the shower and are out the door in minutes every morning, it may seem odd to think there's a place where the act of taking a simple bath — literally being in hot water — becomes a leisurely event, a special occasion to be savored.

That's exactly the case in Hot Springs National Park, however. Here at the foot of Arkansas' Ouachita Mountains, nearly 1 million gallons of mineral-rich hot water spills forth from 47 protected springs every single day. A serendipitous superabundance that gave the town of Hot Springs its name and turned it into America's original spa resort.

The water flowing from these springs was considered so special, in fact, that President

Andrew Jackson made the area the first-ever federal reserve in 1832. While Yellowstone may have become the original national park 40 years later, the Hot Springs Reservation was the mold it and the rest of America's national park system were cast from.

Today, Hot Springs bears the distinction of being the only national park to be located entirely within city limits. In fact, the town and the park flow together so seamlessly that



Hot Springs National Park is all about the water. Here, a World War II-era Duck exits the water after a scenic cruise around Lake Hamilton.

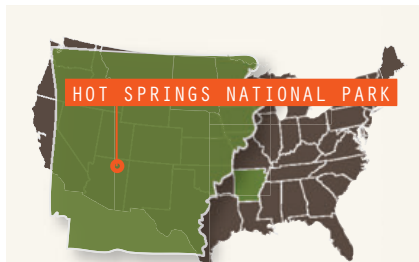


it's often hard to tell where one stops and the other begins.

This unique amalgamation has created one of the most unusual national park experiences in America. So sit back and relax as we relate the adventures to be had only in Hot Springs National Park.

Not Ordinary Water

Like the roots of the town, Hot Springs' waters run deep — about 8,000 feet below the surface, to be exact.



Taking the Waters

Located in what Native Americans once called the "Valley of the Vapors," the hot springs here have been welcoming visitors since 1541, when Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto's expedition is said to have visited.

Hot Springs National Park's waters bubble up from 47 protected springs at a constant 143 degrees Fahrenheit. Radio-carbon dating has estimated the water is more than 4,000 years old.

The naturally pure spring water here is old as well, having been radio-carbon dated to 4,400 years of age. To put that in perspective, that means the water bubbling up from the ground today fell as rain about the same time the Egyptian pharaohs were building their pyramids.

Those waters surface at a remarkably consistent 143 degrees Fahrenheit. What's not used in the town's spas is cooled down and piped to several public drinking fountains, where people line up to fill jugs of the surprisingly palatable water.

Ultimately, it's this resource the park was designed to protect, as its holdings cover not only the developed stretch known as Bathhouse Row but also the hills around town where every new rainstorm helps recharge the aquifer for future generations. In other words, Hot Springs National Park is really all about the water.

Soaking It Up

It's said that Native Americans from many different tribes peaceably shared these hot springs in what they called the Valley of the Vapors. Hernando de Soto was the first European visitor in 1541, and both locals and out-of-towners have been bathing in the waters here ever since.

Gradually the health-oriented pilgrims the hot springs attracted came from greater distances — as far away as New York and Chicago — drawn by claims of the water's healing properties. Locals responded by building hotels and the first crude bathhouses for the comfort and privacy of their guests.

By 1888, an earlier Victorian version of what's become known as Bathhouse Row had sprung up along the town's Central Avenue. Those structures were in turn replaced by the eight far grander and more ornate



IN HOT WATER

buildings — several of which date back to the early 1900s — that occupy the Row today.

To get a look at how upscale this second generation of bathhouses became, take a walk through the 1915 Fordyce Bathhouse, which is now the Hot Springs National Park visitor center. What you'll find on its four floors are generous amounts of marble, stained glass and statuary that created an atmosphere of relaxed opulence. Of particular interest are the re-created treatment rooms, some furnished with period electrical contraptions full of dials and switches that frankly look a little scary. Not to mention a fully equipped gymnasium that is clearly the forerunner to the modern health clubs.

Taking the Waters

After seeing all this preserved in its museumlike state, take a walk several doors down the sidewalk and check in at the front desk of the 1911 Buckstaff Bathhouse. One of only two existing bathhouses that still allow visitors to bathe in the hot spring water, the Buckstaff — the longest continually operating spa in town — is old-school all the way.

"IT IS BY FAR THE MOST GRUELING PART OF THIS NATIONAL PARK ADVENTURE, BUT DO YOUR BEST TO SUFFER THROUGH ALL THIS RELAXATION WITH A BRAVE FACE."



Above from left: The 216-foot-high Hot Springs Mountain Tower offers sweeping 100-mile views of the Ouachita Mountains and beyond. The grand 1922 Quapaw Bathhouse offers a modern spa experience that includes treatments such as superoxygenated baths and hot-stone massages.

From the vintage-looking tubs to the European-style bathing regimen itself (which includes a good loofah back-scrubbing from your uniformed attendant, a sitz-bath, a session in the cramped metal box known as the steam cabinet and a hot pack-wrap followed by a light massage), very little seems to have changed in the

last century. Simply put, this is the place to go if you want to have an experience similar to what visitors like Babe Ruth and Franklin Delano Roosevelt took to relieve everything from hangovers to the symptoms of polio.

The other original bathhouse still operating is the nearby Quapaw Bathhouse. Built in 1922 beneath a soaring rooftop dome, it was thoroughly remodeled in 2007. Not surprisingly its treatments are a good bit more modern and include soaking in a series of communal



View from the Hot Springs Mountain Tower.



The Good Sam Club and Camping World debuted back when VW Beetles towed Winnebagos.

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For the Good Sam Club and Camping World, 1966 was the start of something big. Both of the now-iconic brands launched during that memorable year when hemlines made headlines and "Good Vibrations" topped the charts. Fast-forward half a century, and the two companies are now recognized as the world's largest organization of RV members and America's largest retailer of RVs and RV accessories. Stay tuned throughout 2016 for golden-anniversary giveaways at Camping World and nostalgic looks at both companies' early days in the pages of *Trailer Life*, *MotorHome* and the *Good Sam RV Travel & Savings Guide*.

Hot Off the Press

North America's only comprehensive printed directory of RV parks and campgrounds, the annual *Good Sam RV Travel & Savings Guide* is now available at all 115 Camping World locations and on www.campingworld.com. The 2016 edition features detailed listings for 12,500 privately owned RV parks and public campgrounds, including 2,100-plus Good Sam Parks that offer members a 10 percent nightly discount. Good Sam's annually updated RV park ratings help travelers decide where to stay, and state and provincial maps lead them to their destinations. Members can purchase the 2016 edition for \$6.95 (plus shipping and handling charges for online orders), a considerable discount off the \$19.95 retail price. As an added perk, the guide's Camping World coupons ante up \$1,500 in savings.



Half-Price Tickets to RV Shows

Did you know that Good Sam's parent company operates 15 RV shows across North America and members can save 50 percent on two adult tickets at each event? For a list of 2016 shows, visit www.gsevents.com. To receive the discount, show your membership card at the ticket office. To receive the discount online, enter your Good Sam membership number.

Club Events

Good Sam get-togethers at RV-friendly regional gatherings

Havasu Balloon Festival and Fair
January 15 through 17

Lake Havasu City, Arizona

Taste of Southern California

April 22 through 24

Golden Village Palms RV Resort
Hemet, California

North Carolina Campout

April 28 through May 1

Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park at Daddy Joe's
Tabor City, North Carolina

Old Fashion Dirt Track Weekend

May 27 through 28

Perris Auto Speedway
Perris, California

Campout for Charity 2016

June 3 through 5

Iroquois County Fairgrounds
Crescent City, Illinois

Western Weekend — Above and Below

June 3 through 5

Grand Canyon Caverns
Peach Springs, Arizona

Good Sam Fun Weekend

June 10 through 13

The Villages at Turning Stone
Verona, New York

Jenny Brook Bluegrass Festival

June 23 through 26

Tunbridge World's Fairgrounds
Tunbridge, Vermont

State/Provincial Rallies (Samborees)

Good Sam State/Provincial Rallies (also known as Samborees) give members a chance to camp together for a few days while sharing RV tips, enjoying activities and spreading the Good Samaritan spirit.

► Find the full schedule of upcoming regional events and State/Provincial Rallies at www.goodsamclub.com/events.



RVERS OF THE YEAR

In online voting last fall, Good Sam members named Habitat for Humanity volunteers Bill and France Moriarty the club's 2015 RVers of the Year. Get to know these civic-minded members at www.goodsamclub.com/rveroftheyear.



Above from left: Hot Springs National Park's Bathhouse Row harkens back to a time when the town was America's first spa resort. A tribute to hometown-boy-made-good Bill Clinton. Generous use of marble, stained glass and statuary lent the bathhouses an air of relaxed opulence.

pools of varying temperatures, private MicroSilk tubs that supersaturate the water with oxygen, a manmade steam "cave" and the latest spa treatments like hot-stone massages and salt body polishes.

Both the old and new approaches have their fans. Which means the only way to decide which you prefer is to try them both. It is by far the most

grueling part of this national park adventure to be sure, but do your best to suffer through all this relaxation with a brave face.

A Simple Prescription

After you've "taken the waters" it's time to get out and explore some of the rest of the park and surrounding areas. But don't just take our word for it.

One of the common elements in the health regimens prescribed to spa visitors in those early days was to enjoy a vigorous walk in the fresh air surrounded by the beauty of nature. Hot Springs National Park makes that easy with 26 miles of hiking trails, many of which can be accessed from the path that runs behind Bathhouse Row.

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IN HOT WATER

One worthwhile destination accessible by foot (or by vehicle if your bathhouse experience left you feeling a little too relaxed) is Hot Springs Mountain Tower. At 216 feet tall, this land-bound crow's nest offers sweeping 360-degree vistas spanning more than 100 miles in every direction. The view itself is fantastic and becomes more meaningful when you realize that it's the landscape below you from which Hot Springs National Park's waters flow.

Speaking of the town of Hot Springs and water, no attraction combines the two quite like National Park Duck Tours. These 75-minute tours aboard amphibious World War II-era landing craft known as "Ducks" take in the town itself with a humorous and informative commentary from the driver before splashing into Lake Hamilton for a little scenic cruise.

Finally, take a step back in time to the era when notable underworld figures like Lucky Luciano and Al

Capone visited Hot Springs with their entourages for weeks at a time. You can learn more on a tour of the Gangster Museum of America located directly across the street from the park's Bathhouse Row.

In Hot Water

Of course, those underworld figures

knew what it was like to be in trouble with the law. And Hot Springs, Arkansas, was where they came to get away from it.

How ironic then that, when it comes to choosing a secluded hideout, they picked Hot Springs National Park. A place where getting yourself into hot water is the whole idea. **M**

For More Information

ATTRACTIONS

Buckstaff Bathhouse

501-623-2308, <http://buckstaffbaths.com>

Gangster Museum of America

501-318-1717, <http://tgmoa.com>

Hot Springs Mountain Tower

501-623-6035, hotspringsar.com/info/tower/tower.htm

Hot Springs National Park

501-620-6715, www.nps.gov/hosp

National Park Duck Tours

501-321-2911, www.rideaduck.com

Quapaw Bathhouse

501-609-9822, <http://quapawbaths.com>

CAMPGROUNDS

Catherine's Landing at Hot Springs

501-262-2550, www.rvcoutdoors.com/catherines-landing

Cloud Nine RV Park

501-262-1996, www.cloudnineriv.com

Hot Springs National Park Gulpha Gorge Campground

501-620-6715, www.nps.gov/hosp/playourvisit/campground.htm

J & J RV Park

501-321-9852, <http://jjrvpark.com>

Lake Ouachita State Park

501-767-9366, www.arkansasstateparks.com/lakeouachita

Young's Lakeshore RV Resort

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2015 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

AND THE WINNERS ARE ...

MOTORHOME READERS SELECT THEIR FAVORITE RV PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

In our never-ending search for the best RV products and services, the most obvious place to start is, of course, the Internet (Isn't it always?). Select a subject, click through to a review site and, voila!, the answers to all your queries are at your fingertips. Or are they?

True, sites like Yelp and Angie's List are an effective measure of worldwide popularity, but do they really reflect how your specific experience is going to be? So much of what we love as RVers and about RVing is subjective; nobody knows RVs like an RVer. And when it comes down to it, how much in common do we really have with a 19-year-old

college student with pink hair and a pet iguana?

In our opinion, the best way to harvest other people's suggestions for RV-related paraphernalia is to begin with a population of similarly minded peers who at least have a common background in the subject matter. That's why we hold our annual Readers' Choice Awards poll, and invite you — our readers, avid enthusiasts of all things motorhome — to vote on your favorite RV products, services and destinations. As always, we list the top three positions in each category, with the winners of each awarded the coveted *MotorHome* Readers' Choice Awards Gold medal.

CLASS A MOTORHOME



● Gold: Tiffin Motorhomes

Tiffin is a family-run business in Red Bay, Alabama. The manufacturer is responsible for some of the top Class A motorhomes in the industry, including the Phaeton, the Zephyr and the Allegro series. The Allegro pictured here is one of Tiffin's more popular models, featuring handcrafted cabinetry, energy-efficient lighting and a seamless windshield. 256-356-8661, www.tiffinmotorhomes.com

● Silver: Winnebago Industries, 641-585-3535, www.winnebagoind.com

● Bronze: Newmar Corp., 800-731-8300, www.newmarcorp.com

CLASS B MOTORHOME



● Gold: Winnebago Industries

Winnebago's Class B Touring Coach models include the Era and Travato, which combine many of the amenities found in larger coaches with the easy-driving, higher-MPG attributes of a family van. The Travato shown here is built on the Ram ProMaster chassis and is available in two floorplans, the 59K and 59G, with optional bike and kayak racks. 641-585-3535, www.winnebagoind.com

● Silver: Pleasure-Way Industries, 800-364-0189, www.pleasureway.com

● Bronze: Leisure Travel Vans, Triple E Recreational Vehicles, 877-992-9906, www.leisurevans.com

CLASS C MOTORHOME



● Gold: Winnebago Industries

Winnebago offers eight families of Class C's, from the Mercedes-Benz-based View to the larger family-friendly Spirit models. The iconic Minnie Winnie, shown above, is available in five floorplans and features flexible sleeping accommodations and larger rear-trunk storage, making it a great choice for families as well. Plus, the Minnie Winnie comes in at a friendly price. 641-585-3535, www.winnebagoind.com

● Silver: Jayco Inc., 574-825-5861, www.jayco.com

● Bronze: Forest River, www.forestriverinc.com

DINGHY AUXILIARY BRAKING



● Gold: SMI Manufacturing

Auxiliary braking systems are a must when towing a dinghy, and SMI offers three popular products — the Air Force One, Stay-IN-Play DUO and the Delta Force. All SMI systems come with a 5-year warranty and are made in the USA. 800-893-3763, www.smibrake.com

● Silver: Roadmaster, 800-669-9690, www.roadmasterinc.com

● Bronze: RVibrake, 800-815-2159, www.rvibrake.com

DINGHY VEHICLE



● Gold: Honda CR-V

The CR-V has been a favorite among RVers, and is the gold-medal winner for 2015 even though it is no longer dinghy-towable. Beginning with the 2015 model, Honda switched to the continuously variable automatic transmission and no longer offers a manual, flat-towable version. RVers looking to take advantage of the CR-V's dinghy-towable prowess need to find an appropriately outfitted 2014 or earlier model. 800-999-1009, www.automobiles.honda.com

● Silver: Jeep Wrangler, www.jeep.com

● Bronze: Jeep Cherokee, www.jeep.com

FUEL ADDITIVE



● Gold: Lucas Oil Products

Lucas Oil offers a variety of lubricants and fuel additives for motorhomes and dinghy vehicles. From fuel treatments to motor oil and everything in between, the company has been a favorite among RVers for many years. Popular products include engine-oil stop leak, oil stabilizer and injector cleaners. 800-342-2512, www.lucasoil.com

● Silver (tie): AMSOIL, 800-956-5695, www.amsoil.com

Silver (tie): Gold Eagle Sta-Bil, 800-367-3245, www.goldeagle.com

● Bronze: Stanadyne Performance Formula, 800-842-2496, www.stanadyneadditives.com

FUEL STATION



● Gold: Pilot Flying J

Pilot Flying J is the largest operator of travel centers and travel plazas in North America, with more than 650 retail locations, 52 Goodyear Commercial Tire and Service Centers, and 44 Boss Shops. It also has more than 4,400 diesel lanes with diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) available at the pump. 800-562-6210, www.pilotflyingj.com

● Silver: Shell, www.shell.us

● Bronze (tie): Buc-ee's, www.buc-ees.com

● Bronze (tie): Costco Wholesale, 800-955-2292, www.costco.com

● Bronze (tie) Love's Travel Stops, 800-655-6837, www.loves.com

HOLDING-TANK CHEMICALS



● Gold: Thetford

Thetford's line of holding-tank products

controls odors and keeps valves clean. Aqua-Kem offers the most powerful odor control available (100 percent biodegradable), and is designed to liquefy waste and break down tissue fast to prevent clogging. Eco-Smart products provide extended odor control and quickly break down and liquefy waste and tissue to prevent clogs. 800-543-1219, www.thetford.com

● Silver: Happy Camper, 503-781-2486, www.5starhappycamper.com

● Bronze: Camco Manufacturing, 800-334-2004, www.camco.net

MOTORHOME AWNING



● Gold: Carefree of Colorado

Carefree of Colorado has been designing and manufacturing awnings for more than 40 years. The company focuses on the design and development of RV awnings and related comfort and convenience products, and claims that its commitment to quality, value, performance and style is what sets it apart from the competition. www.carefreeofcolorado.com

● Silver: Dometic, 800-544-4881, www.dometic.com/usa

● Bronze: Girard RV, 800-382-8442, www.girardrv.com

MOTORHOME CHASSIS



● Gold: Freightliner Custom Chassis

Freightliner Custom Chassis Corp. combines advanced technology and engineering with premium components and exceptional workmanship to deliver some of the more popular motorhome chassis on the road today. Offerings



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include pairings with Allison transmissions; air suspensions, shocks and equalizer beams; a 60-degree wheel cut; and 9-inch frame construction. 864-487-1700, www.freightlinerchassis.com

● Silver: Ford, www.ford.com

● Bronze: Spartan Chassis, 800-543-4277, www.spartanchassis.com

PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING PRODUCT



● Gold: 5 Star Tuning

Specializing in custom tuning for motorhomes and other RV applications, 5 Star Tuning unlocks an engine's hidden potential with more horsepower, additional torque and increased efficiency, resulting in an improved driving experience. The family-owned business provides custom tuning products and services so RVers can tackle the latest road trip in confidence. 843-536-1244. www.5startuning.com

● Silver: Banks Power, 800-601-8072, www.bankspower.com

● Bronze (tie): Snow Performance, 866-365-2762, www.snowperformance.net

● Bronze (tie): Henderson's Line-up Brake & RV, 541-955-0769, www.hendersonslineup.com

RV BATTERY



● Gold: Interstate Batteries

All those bells and whistles in your motorhome obviously need power to operate, from starting the engine to running the appliances with or without hookups. Interstate Batteries offers

6-volt deep-cycle, starting, dual-purpose and sealed AGM batteries. Interstate's website features an interactive battery selector to help you find the right product for your coach. 866-842-5368, www.interstatebatteries.com

● Silver: Trojan Battery Company, 800-423-6569, www.trojanbattery.com

● Bronze (tie): Exide Technologies, 678-566-9000, www.exide.com

● Bronze (tie): Lifeline Batteries, 909-599-7816, www.lifelinebatteries.com

● Bronze (tie): Optima Batteries, 888-867-8462, www.optimabatteries.com

RV CAMPGROUND/RESORT



● Gold: Disney's Fort Wilderness

That famous Disney magic isn't confined to theme parks, and Disney's Fort Wilderness Resort is proof that RVs and Mickey Mouse are a great match. The resort includes a pool with waterslide, archery, horseback riding and canoeing, among other opportunities. Of course, you can always venture into one or more of the nearby world-famous parks for even more fun. 407-824-2900, <https://disneyworld.disney.go.com>

● Silver: Pechanga RV Resort, 877-997-8386, www.pechanga.com

● Bronze: Cajun Palms, 337-667-7772, www.cajunpalms.com

RV CASINO RESORT



● Gold: Pechanga RV Resort

Rated 10/10/10 by the Good Sam Club, Pechanga RV Resort is just steps away from Pechanga Resort & Casino, the largest resort/casino in California.

RVers staying at the resort can enjoy the amenities the entire casino/resort has to offer, including 11 restaurants, a spa and a championship golf course. 877-997-8386, www.pechanga.com

● Silver: Seven Feathers RV Resort, 541-839-3599, www.sevenfeathersrvresort.com

● Bronze (tie): Hollywood Casino Tunica, 800-871-0711, www.hollywoodcasinotunica.com

● Bronze (tie): Turning Stone Resort Casino/The Villages RV Park, 800-771-7711, www.turningstone.com

RV CLEANING PRODUCT



● Gold: Meguiar's

A motorhome is a major investment, so it's important to keep it clean and looking good. Meguiar's offers cleaners for components ranging from tires and wheels to upholstery to the exterior. The Boat/RV Rinse Free Wash & Wax is a great way to restore a coach's shine in campgrounds that don't allow conventional washing; just spray it on and wipe clean for a high-gloss finish. 800-347-5700, www.meguiars.com

● Silver: Protect All, 800-521-3032, www.protectall.com

● Bronze: Wash Wax ALL, 800-927-4929, www.washwax.com

RV COVER



● Gold: ADCO

ADCO RV covers are produced in universal and custom configurations in a variety of outdoor fabrics. ADCO's core products are what the company refers to as Designer Series RV Covers,



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available in SFS AquaShed and the new, wind-resistant DuPont Tyvek RV model. ADCO began making the universal-fit RV cover nearly 30 years ago and remains dedicated to providing a quality product with cutting-edge features. 800-541-2326, www.adcoprod.com

● **Silver:** Camco Mfg., 800-334-2004, www.camco.net

● **Bronze (tie):** Calmark Cover Co., 800-838-7236, www.calmarkcovers.com

● **Bronze (tie):** Empire Covers, 888-872-6855, www.empirecovers.com

RV ENGINE OIL



● **Gold: Mobil 1**

Mobil 1 advanced full synthetic motor oils are designed to deliver performance and protection for all driving conditions. Mobil 1 oils help keep engines running like new by combating sludge and deposit buildup, reducing wear and controlling oil breakdown. www.mobiloil.com

● **Silver:** Shell Rotella, www.shell.com

● **Bronze:** AMSOIL, 800-956-5695, www.amsoil.com

RV GENERATOR



● **Gold: Cummins Onan**

Cummins Onan RV generators have been powering the RV industry for more than 50 years. The Cummins Onan RV QG 5500 generator shown above features smooth operation and is the quietest in its class. The QG 5500 generates enough juice to power two air conditioners, with power to spare, according to the company. 800-888-

6626, <http://power.cummins.com/rv>

● **Silver:** Honda, powerequipment.honda.com

● **Bronze (tie):** Generac, 888-436-3722, www.generac.com

● **Bronze (tie):** Kohler, 800-544-2444, www.kohlerpower.com

RV REFRIGERATOR



● **Gold: Norcold**

Norcold refrigerators are designed to handle the demands and rigors of the road. Manufactured in a variety of sizes, these models are made specifically for the RV lifestyle, and feature covered crispers with pop-up lids, full-width food and freezer compartments and full-width shelves. 800-543-1219, www.thetford.com/products/refrigerators

● **Silver:** Dometic, 800-544-4881, www.dometic.com

● **Bronze:** Whirlpool, 866-698-2538, www.whirlpool.com

RV RETAILER



● **Gold: Camping World**

From interior cleaners to exterior waxes, and from RV add-ons to campsite decor, Camping World is the No. 1 destination for RVers. With locations across the country, chances are there's a store near you. The fact that many also include an RV dealership makes Camping World a one-stop RV shopping destination. 888-626-7576, www.campingworld.com

● **Silver:** Wal-Mart, www.walmart.com

● **Bronze:** Local dealer

RV TIRES



● **Gold: Michelin**

The Michelin XRV is an all-position radial tire designed specifically for RVs. This tire has a shallow, stable tread engineered with a cool running compound that generates lower heat for greater durability and improved handling. The wide grooves promote drainage efficiency to combat hydroplaning and help improve traction on wet surfaces. www.michelin.com

● **Silver:** Goodyear, www.goodyear.com

● **Bronze:** Firestone, www.firestone.com

RV TOILET



● **Gold: Thetford**

Each Thetford model, from the finest porcelain to the most economical, has thoughtful ergonomic features designed to assure RVers a comfortable, elegant and trouble-free toilet. They're built to last while on the road, along with water-saving features and ease of use. 800-543-1219, www.thetford.com

● **Silver:** Dometic, 800-544-4881, www.dometic.com

SATELLITE PROVIDER



● **Gold: DirecTV**

DirecTV offers services for RVs that allow subscribers to enjoy satellite pro-

gramming on the road. With specialty mobile equipment you can receive most of the same programming you would at home. That includes all your favorite channels, premiums and basic, and high-definition and DVR services. You even have the option of in-motion service with the proper equipment. 888-777-2454, www.directv.com

● Silver: DISH Network, 888-434-0112, www.dishnetwork.com

SATELLITE HARDWARE



● Gold: Winegard

Bring your favorite shows on the road with you using satellite hardware from Winegard. With antennas of every style — stationary, roof-mounted and portable — and compatibility with all the major players — DirecTV, DISH Network, Shaw Direct and Bell TV — Winegard takes home the gold in this category. 800-288-8094, www.winegard.com

● Silver: King Controls, 952-922-6889, www.kingconnect.com

● Bronze: KVH Industries, 401-847-3327, www.kvh.com

SIT-DOWN RESTAURANT



● Gold: Cracker Barrel

If you're looking for a hot, home-cooked meal without the messy post-meal cleanup, Cracker Barrel has just the thing. Serving breakfast (try the apple and cinnamon oatmeal), lunch (half-pound hamburger, anyone?) and dinner (savory meatloaf or a 10-ounce rib-eye), Cracker Barrel is a favorite stopover for RVers. Be sure to check out the

adjoining Old Country store for an eclectic mix of souvenirs. 800-333-9566, www.crackerbarrel.com

● Silver: Applebee's, 888-592-7753, www.applebees.com

● Bronze: Chili's, www.chilis.com

STATE IN WHICH TO RV



● Gold: Florida

RVing affords the freedom to travel anywhere, but more *MotorHome* readers prefer to RV in the Sunshine State than any other. And why not? In addition to the well-known theme parks and white, sandy beaches, Florida offers adventure in a variety of ecosystems, from swamplands to forests, in addition to boating, swimming and world-class golfing destinations. 888-735-2872, www.visitflorida.com

● Silver: Oregon, 800-547-7842, www.traveloregon.com

● Bronze: Colorado, 800-265-6723, www.colorado.com

TIRE-PRESSURE-MONITORING SYSTEM (TPMS)



● Gold: TireMinder

Minder Research has introduced two new models of its popular TireMinder TPMS, the TM66 and the A1A. Each is designed with a 3.25-inch screen, making it easy to determine where a pressure or temperature issue is occurring at a glance. TireMinder also offers single-tire control, meaning users can control and manipulate the system on a tire-to-tire basis. The TireMinder can monitor up to 22

sensors. 772-463-6522, www.minderresearch.com

● Silver: HawksHead Systems, 888-321-8767, www.tpms.ca

● Bronze: Truck System Technologies, 770-889-9102, www.tstruck.com

TOW BAR



● Gold: Blue Ox

Blue Ox offers a number of tow bars to make the dinghy-towing process easier. The Avail provides an improved turning radius for better cornering. Its nonbinding latch design releases easily under any conditions. The Avail features a no-interference, low-profile handle design, allowing RVers to maneuver around gas station pumps with greater ease, while keeping the dinghy safely away from the motorhome in tight turns. 800-228-9289, www.blueox.com

● Silver: Roadmaster Inc., 800-669-9690, www.roadmasterinc.com

● Bronze: Demco, 800-543-3626, www.demco-products.com

TOW DOLLY



● Gold: Demco Kar Kaddy

Demco pioneered car dollies in the RV market in the early 1980s, and today continues to add to its well-respected legacy of popular car dollies. Dollies such as the Kar Kaddy offer features such as steerable axles, sealed hubs and galvanized or painted frames. 800-543-3626, www.demco-products.com

● Silver: Acme Tow Dolly Co., 336-996-4396, www.cartowdolly.com

● Bronze: Roadmaster Inc., 800-669-9690, www.roadmasterinc.com **M**

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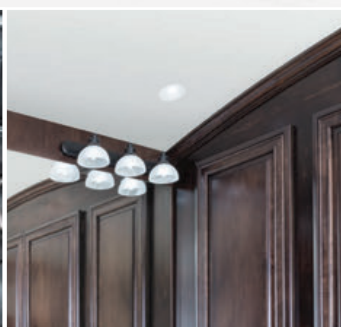
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Seneca 37HJ

Jayco's Super C, built on a Freightliner M2 cab and chassis, is earmarked for diesel-power fans who want something different without sacrificing luxury

By Kevin Livingston

While motorhome ownership has its perks and pleasures, finding the right fit for your lifestyle among the long list of Class A, B and C body styles can be an overwhelming task. Throw in a hybrid of sorts, the Super C, and the choices become even more complex. A Super C has the profile of a traditional cab-and-chassis-based motorhome, but is much bigger and it's connected to underpinnings that rival diesel pushers in performance, drivability and brute strength. Jayco has long been involved in this segment of the market with its Seneca brand and the 2016 version has been refined to give hardcore diesel fans a lot of

food for thought when shopping for a new motorhome. The Seneca 37HJ is rock solid and at a price tag around \$235,000, this motorhome is easily in the luxury zone.

Some people might have a difficult time wrapping their head around the fact that the Seneca commands such a hefty price tag because of its similarity in appearance to a Class C, which represents a more economical category of motorhomes, but to steal a few words from a popular phrase, "This is not your father's mini motorhome."

What you get here is an elegantly designed interior loaded with higher-end, brand-name equipment and a cabin resting atop the reliable Freight-

liner M2 chassis that's propelled by a capable Cummins ISB 6.7-liter 340-horsepower diesel/Allison 2500MH automatic transmission package. No neck-snapping power here, just an ultradurable combo that works quite well, maintaining seamless shifts as well as a distinctly sweet exhaust note that reminds you it's a real truck.

The sure-footed Freightliner chassis will cut a 55-degree turning radius and it's fitted with the JRide Premium suspension system that helps neutralize roadway bumps and irregularities. The JRide system is comprised of top-tier components like 60 mm Bilstein shocks, full air brakes, front sway bar and a heavy-duty rear air suspension. Bumps and vibrations not handled by the suspension are controlled by the air-ride cockpit seats. Although the macho-truck look provoked initial thoughts that the ride was going to be less than stellar, even with the advanced suspension, a few minutes down the highway and

ABOVE: The Seneca has a truck pedigree but enough smooth lines for a modern look.

then on to uneven curved backcountry roads confirmed that it was ultimately a winning combination, supplying a smooth ride during road transitions and exhibiting very limited body roll.

Once we got the air-suspended driver's seat adjusted properly, which at first tended to feel a little squishy and bouncy, we enjoyed the ride. However, a long-legged co-pilot may find it difficult to truly stretch out for the long haul due to a large dashboard and other cabin area restrictions. When it came to pulling back on the ponies, the air brakes seem to be matched perfectly for the chassis and weight of the motorhome. Braking duties are supported by the standard engine exhaust brake.

To some, the exterior profile may seem a little rough around the edges, portraying a more bold, semi-industrial look, but the surprisingly smooth lines of the cab made for handsome contours, bolstered by the premium-grade full-body paint and shiny Alcoa aluminum wheels. Once inside, the experience gets even better.

The floorplan is not unusual and the elements work nicely in a Class C configuration with a front cabover bed/storage area. The front living room is the focal point featuring a dinette ensemble that continues forward to make the couch, all in the driver's side slideout. Across from this area is an entertainment center with a fireplace and 39-inch LED TV. A straight-line kitchen counter is augmented by a pullout sectional and the four-door refrigerator is tucked in between the galley and center bath suite. From here, the rear is consumed by the bedroom that's enlarged by opposing slides. Carried throughout the interior is an abundant use of storage areas, not just wildly spread out, but placed in all the right spots to convey simplicity and make workable use of otherwise dead space.

Adding to the liberal use of Honey Cherry solid-hardwood cabinetry is a trick pullout pantry hiding between the toilet room and living room on the driver's side that's easily capable of holding foodstuffs of all sizes and even

BELOW: Galley is not overly roomy, but sink covers and the pullout countertop extension help the cook spread out. Entertainment system behind a lift-up door on the patio side is fitted with a 39-inch LED TV.



large enough for tall cereal boxes. The solid-surface countertop and matching decorative backsplash in the galley are illuminated by LED lighting and have a high-end luxury kitchen look and feel. Had it not been for the extendable, pullout cabinet/counter and the sink covers, the workspace would be limited for those heavy cooking days. On the plus side, the kitchen offers more than enough space for all the necessary cooking stowaways. In fact, there's so much storage space in and around the food prep zone that the two large drawers living under the quick-heating, two-burner Fusion induction cooktop could be easily exchanged for a standard-style oven in addition to the only baking source, a mediocre proportioned Frigidaire convection/microwave oven. While the entire living

and galley area is opened up nicely by the slideout, it's also good to know that access to the back and use of the galley can still be accomplished while the motorhome is in travel mode.

It seems like the Jayco designers concentrated on good lounging capability when they placed the dinette and couch in the slideout. Not only is the seating area stately-looking with the contrasting light-colored tile floor, but the ability to kick back in comfort and view the fireplace or TV was clearly a priority. The very front is all Class C, with a classic cutaway portion above the cab ready to be converted into a queen-size bed. Assembling the cabover bed uses a unique approach and when done, it's rated to handle 750 pounds. There are storage compartments on both sides, and if the bed is not needed, the area



Above: TV and fireplace are built into a stylish cabinet next to the entry door. Both are easily visible from most of the wraparound dinette and couch ensemble on the opposing wall, inside the living room slideout.



WHAT'S HOT

Fun-to-drive Freightliner M2 chassis, roomy living room, plenty of storage, bedroom/bathroom suite, fit and finish

WHAT'S NOT

TV quality and disorganized audio/video components and wiring, dump valve arrangement in utility bay, small microwave/convection in lieu of propane oven



is a great catchall for bulky stuff that otherwise could clutter up the free-flowing space in the living room.

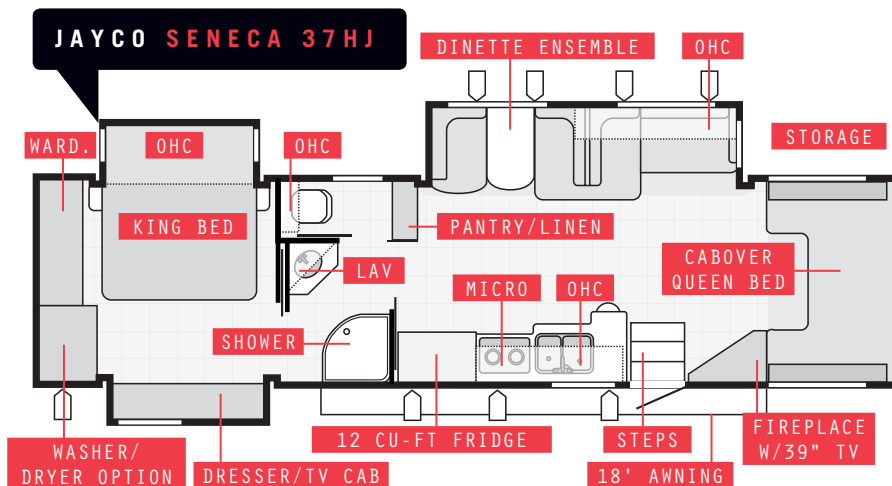
We were impressed with the positioning of the TV and fireplace, situated in the corner adjacent to the entry door because it helped make a comfy home-like setting in the living room. And most of the seated crowd can have a clear, non-neck-kinking TV watching experience. All the usual sound and video goodies are included, such as Blu-ray player with HDMI connections to all TVs. However, in general, we were less impressed with the specific components in the system and how they were arranged. For the cost of the rig, it could have had better quality TVs that can actually respond to their own remotes. It also wouldn't hurt if the audio/video switches and panels could be made more user-friendly with easy-to-follow instructions. The nest of wires, switches and boxes can leave you almost clueless and they were visible from the rear portion of the dinette and couch.

The motorhome can essentially be divided into two or three areas. The center bath can be isolated with the use of pocket doors, which makes the bathroom continuous, but blocked off from the living room and

bedroom. Close just the front pocket door and the bedroom and bathroom are transformed into a large suite, which is practical when occupants are getting ready for the day or a big event. Another sliding door closes off the smaller room with the porcelain toilet, and the shower stall is placed in a garden-style setting on the opposite wall. The entire arrangement works well and the versatility of using the lavatory sink, toilet and shower independently makes for happy occupants.

In the master bedroom is the mother lode of storage cabinets and closets, displaying naturally toned raised-panel doors among the neutral,

but flattering Sterling-branded inner accents, trim, and decor. A shallow slideout on the passenger side is appropriately fitted with a dresser with four healthy-size drawers; an LED TV positioned in the cabinet structure is within perfect eyesight of those lounging on the king-size bed that moves in and out with the third slideout. To any pack rat's delight, the entire rear wall is configured with a monster-size wardrobe closet, containing five large drawers, a heaping top closet, an optional washer-dryer location/connection and an almost walk-in size closet for hanging clothes. If that weren't enough, the additional overhead cabinets and nightstands on either side of the bed can take on more stuff. LED reading lights and 120-volt AC power at the nightstands add to the convenience.





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Specifications

Chassis

Model	Freightliner M2
Engine	6.7-L Cummins ISB
Sae Hp	340 @ 2,600 rpm
Torque	700 lb-ft @ 1,600 rpm
Transmission	Allison 2500MH
Axle Ratio	5.13:1
Front Tires	275/80R22.5
Rear Tires	275/80R22.5
Wheelbase	276"
Brakes	Air drum
Suspension	Rear Air, Front Sway Bar, Bilstein Shocks
Fuel Cap	74 gal
Fuel Economy	9.95 mpg
Warranty:	2 years/unlimited miles

Coach

Ext Length:	38' 11"
Ext Width:	8' 6"
Ext Height:	13' 1" with A/C
Int Height:	6' 11"
Construction	Aluminum frame, bead-foam insulation, laminated fiberglass side walls, crowned fiberglass roof, one-piece fiberglass cap
Freshwater Cap	71.5 gal
Black-Water Cap	30 gal
Gray-Water Cap	40 gal
Water-Heater Cap	On Demand
LP-gas Cap	13 gal
Air Conditioner (2)	15,000 Btu w/Heat Pump
Furnace	35,000 Btu
Refrigerator	12 cu-ft
Inverter/Charger	1,800 watts/100 amps
Battery	(2) 12-volt chassis, (4) 12-volt coach
AC Generator	8 kW
Base MSRP	\$230,169
MSRP As Tested	\$236,051
Warranty	2 Yrs

Wet Weight

(Water and Heater, Fuel, LP-gas Tanks Full; No Supplies or Passengers)

Front Axle	7,920 lbs
Rear Axle	13,760 lbs
Total	21,680 lbs

Chassis Ratings

GAWR, F/R	10,000/18,000 lbs
GVWR/GCWR	28,000/33,000 lbs
ROCCC	6,320 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)



Above: Generous use of cabinets, drawers and a large wardrobe make it easy to store clothing and essentials. Cabover bed is big enough to sleep two people.



Supporting the creature comforts in the Seneca is a long list of standard equipment features and a targeted list of options, including the one that's mandatory, which includes many of the things most owners will want anyway. A few of the items, like the backup and sideview camera/monitor, dual 15,000-Btu air conditioners with heat pumps, 1,800-watt power inverter, electric awning, on-demand water heater and bigger refrigerator are must-have items in a motorhome of this caliber. Other popular standard accessories include the automatic hydraulic leveling jacks, 8-kW Onan Quiet Diesel generator with auto start and a keyless lockset in the entry door. While it was too warm to test the heating system, we can confirm that the dual air conditioning did a good job in hot, sticky weather.

It's obvious that Jayco's attention to detail when building the Seneca contributes highly to the ability of the interior to remain comfortable in just about any weather condition — and relatively rattle-free when on the road. Jayco uses a winning combination of an aluminum-frame structure and vacuum-bonded side walls, roof and floor, with bead-foam insulation rated at R-24 up top, R-9 under your feet and R-8 in the sides. The gelcoat fiberglass exterior walls and roof are smooth, as is the one-piece fiberglass cap. Overall, the fit and finish are clean and precise, and items like dual-pane windows, slideout toppers and the frameless windows (part of the mandatory package) contribute to the build quality.

Outside is a good array of storage compartments that open laterally and an entertainment center with a 39-inch TV and AM/FM/CD/DVD player.

The utility center is complete but the dump-valve arrangement seemed to be a little overcomplicated and could use a better road map. However, we did like the Thetford Sani-Con Turbo macerator system for dumping the holding tanks. The heavy-duty 50-amp power cord is controlled, thankfully, by an electric take-up reel mounted in another compartment. Four house batteries are on a slide-out tray for easy service. Those who want to access the engine compartment can do so by lifting the nose of the cab. Once open, the engine service points are easy to reach. Even if you're not a gearhead, you'll like boasting to your RV park neighbors about how the engine looks with the hood open.

The Jayco Seneca 37HJ has everything any serious diesel motorhome enthusiast could want. A Super C is not for everyone because it's in a category that appeals to people who value the robust drivetrain but would rather not pilot a big Class A — and are OK with semicommercial aesthetics. The cabover makes sleeping more versatile, so having the grandkids over for a while, for example, will have little effect on overall livability.

While some people might think dropping 235 grand on a big Class C is far-fetched, in reality the Seneca is built for the long run and those looking for the proven durability of the Freightliner chassis and drivetrain, not to mention the luxury afforded by the high-quality materials and accessories, will appreciate this motorhome. **M**

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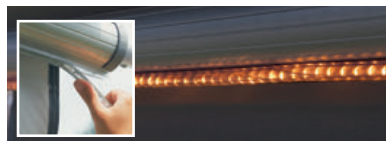


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By E. Don Smith

WEIGH TO GO

Learning the actual wheel weights of your coach will allow more accurate inflation, which leads to improved handling, safety and overall tire life

Every year, we hear about motorhome tire blowouts and the resulting accidents that could be avoided with one simple fix: proper tire inflation. In fact, low tire pressure is the most common cause of tire failures on motorhomes, so it's critical to place "check tire pressure" at the top of your pretrip checklist.

As a tire rolls on the surface of the road, it flexes, which is why you can sometimes see a slight bulge on the bottom sidewall of a stationary tire. When a tire is operated at low pressure, it flexes too much. This constant flexing builds a lot of internal heat in the tire and will ultimately lead to its failure. A properly inflated tire flexes less and therefore generates less heat. In addition to reducing the chance of tire failure, there are many other benefits of proper tire inflation, such as better handling, improved traction, increased fuel economy, longer tire life and improved braking.

When deciding what pressure to run, many owners simply refer to the info plate provided by the manufacturer of their coach, while others may even ask their neighbor or tire dealer what pressure to run. Even if you have the exact model coach as someone else, there are just too many differences in the weight due to your cargo, holding-tank

levels, LP-gas tank and of course the number of passengers and the cargo you are carrying to safely use someone else's tire pressure. In the

absence of good weight data, some owners opt to use the pressure stamped on the tires. While this approach will ensure they are not underinflated, it may result in an overly stiff ride, so the best approach is to take a little time and get your coach correctly weighed.

Determining the correct pressure is not difficult, but it does require a few steps. First, you must get an



CAT Scales are very convenient because they allow the motorhome's front and rear axles to be weighed simultaneously. Many truck stops have CAT Scales as part of their complex. Always be mindful of truckers waiting in line.

accurate “four-corner” weight of your coach. If you have a tag axle, you need to weigh all six tire positions. Some owners opt for using axle weights only as opposed to getting all four corners weighed, but if possible, it is far better to obtain the weight of each tire position. Many motorhomes have heavy areas due to large battery bays, water-tank positioning or even poor planning by the manufacturer, and this is why four-corner weighing is so important. We are looking for the heaviest corner, and that will be used for tire pressure determination across that axle (you should never use different tire pressures across the same axle, even if the coach is heavier on one side). Of course, you have some responsibility when it comes to your rolling weight, so don’t carry things you don’t need. After obtaining your four-corner weight you can also rearrange items in your storage banks in order to minimize heavy corners as much as possible.

If you’re going to the trouble to have your coach weighed, it’s best to plan ahead and weigh it when it is loaded as you normally drive. So if you travel with your tanks full, then you should weigh the coach with them full and pack all of the gear you normally take with you on a trip — and have all passengers hop on board.

When selecting a scale, it is critical to use a certified scale; otherwise, the data you obtain may be wrong. We found a large truck stop that had a certified CAT Scale.

CAT Scale Co. has a large network of scales throughout North America, but there are other companies offering this service as well. In order to obtain a true four-corner weight, you will have to find a scale that has a large apron on each side of the scale. Many truck-stop scales may not offer this extra space, so look around before you commit to a location. This space will allow you to drive the coach off each side so that you can obtain weights for the left front and rear tires, then reposition the coach to obtain the right front and rear weights. The apron must be level to the scale.

A typical truck-stop scale (such as the one we used) consists of at least three different segments or platforms so you can position each of your axles on the scale segment and obtain accurate data for that axle. If you are attending a large motorhome rally, another option is to have your coach weighed there or at other events where a vendor will likely be offering detailed motorhome weighing services using individual wheel scales.

After you obtain your motorhome’s weights, you will then need to refer to the tire manufacturer’s load/inflation table for the exact tire on your coach. These charts often include many similar tires, sizes and load ranges, so make sure you select the correct chart. These charts can be found online or the coach manufacturer may have included one with the owner’s manual when you bought the coach. If your coach is not running on the original tires, that

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old manual may not be relevant any longer.

Now that you have a basic understanding of the process, let's take a step-by-step look at how we weighed our coach and determined the ideal pressure for our setup. This coach is a 2008 Tiffin Phaeton that has a front axle rated at 12,000 pounds and a rear axle rated at 20,000 pounds. The tires on this coach were recently replaced. It currently has Firestone FS591 Plus tires. The size of the tires is 295/75R22.5 in load range G (14 ply). The minimum pressure required for the tires to carry their maximum load is 110 PSI. The CAT Scale we used was found on Interstate 75 in Ringgold, Georgia, at exit 345. The truck stop is called Kangaroo Express, and it has a very large scale area, which was ideal for us to obtain the data we needed. The total cost to weigh the coach three times (all position weight, right side only, then left side only) was a meager \$14.50.



[1] Approaching the scale, you should be able to see the lines or segments on the scale pavement as well as the yellow boundary that indicates the area that is outside the weighing area. This allows you to position the coach with the steer tires and rear tires on different sections of the scale. Notice how this scale has a wide area outside the yellow line (apron) that is level with the scale.



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WEIGH TO GO



2



3



4

[2] Notice how the front axle is positioned on one segment of the scale, while the rear wheels are on a different segment. After getting the coach in position, press the button on the scale (a long-handle broom helps you push the button) to notify the weigh master you are ready for the weight to be taken.

[3] Next, we backed the coach off the scale and repositioned it with only the right (passenger-side) wheels on the scale. Always make sure the front and rear wheels are positioned on different segments of the scale, then press the button again to notify the operator you are ready for the weight to be taken. If you have to get out of the coach, remember your own weight is part of the equation.

[4] Notice that the rear wheels are outside the yellow line, which means they are completely off the scale.

[5] We then backed the coach off the scale again and this time positioned it so that only the left wheels were on the scale.



5



6

[6] Each time you drive the motorhome on to the scale, try to position the wheels so that they are approximately in the same position on the scale each time. This will help ensure that the data you obtain is as accurate as possible.



7

[7] Here is a typical CAT Scale control board that includes some basic instructions for 18-wheelers and a call button to notify the weigh master that you are ready for a weight to be taken.





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245/70R19.5	DUAL	kg.	1550	1580	1660	1750(F)	1790	1850	196		
		lb.	3415	3515	3655	3860(F)	3940	4075	434		
	SINGLE	kg.	1600	1700	1750	1850(F)	1900	1970	208		
		lb.	3640	3740	3860	4080(F)	4190	4335	459		
255/70R22.5	DUAL	kg.	1800	1860	1940	2000	2020	2080			
		lb.	3970	4110	4275	4410	4455	4610			
	SINGLE	kg.	1900	1960	2060	2120	2220	2300			
		lb.	4190	4370	4550	4675	4895	5065			
295/75R22.5	DUAL	kg.	1860	1950	2060	2130	2220	2300(F)	2390	2470	
		lb.	4095	4300	4540	4690	4885	5070(F)	5260	5440	
	SINGLE	kg.	2040	2140	2240	2340	2440	2500(F)	2620	2710	
		lb.	4500	4725	4940	5155	5370	5510(F)	5780	5980	
295/75R22.5 F5591 ONLY	DUAL	kg.	1860	1950	2060	2130	2220	2300(F)	2390	2470	
		lb.	4095	4300	4540	4690	4885	5070(F)	5260	5440	
	SINGLE	kg.	2040	2140	2240	2340	2440	2500(F)	2620	2710	
		lb.	4500	4725	4940	5155	5370	5510(F)	5780	5980	

10



11

[8] After all the weights are taken, you can obtain a certified printout from the weigh master. That is the data we will use to determine the proper pressure for the tires.

[9] Since the right rear of this coach is heavier due to the location of the battery bank, we will use this side to determine the ideal pressure for the rear axle. At the time of our weighing, we had a full load of cargo but the holding tanks were empty and yours truly was outside the coach taking photographs, so we will allow for this in our determination of the ideal pressure. Remember it is acceptable to set your pressure above the chart suggestion, as long as you don't exceed the pressure stamped on the tire.

[10] To determine the front tire pressure, we can see that for the weight of 5,155 pounds (closest to our actual right front weight, but not below) on a single tire, the suggested pressure is 85 PSI. As we mentioned earlier, the passengers were not in the coach so we will use 95 PSI as our minimum front pressure. This will allow us some weight capacity to spare if we happen to have the water tanks full, extra cargo or passengers aboard. At 95 PSI, each front single tire is rated to carry 5,510 pounds or 11,020 pounds total, which is well below the axle rating of 12,000 pounds. That means we still have some room for pressure increases if loading conditions change.

[9] Looking at the right side weight again, we see the right rear weighs 9,340 pounds. Divide that by two because there are two tires and the weight per tire is 4,670 pounds. We use the same chart as above, except this time we refer to the line that says DUAL because these are dual rear tires. For the weight of 4,670 pounds (closest to our actual, but not below) we see the suggested pressure is 85 PSI. As mentioned above, we want to allow some extra cargo carrying capacity for times when our holding tanks are full so we moved up the chart to 95 PSI, which gives us 5,070 pounds of capacity per tire. This brings the total tire carrying capacity to just over 20,000 pounds, and since the axle is rated at 20,000 pounds this means 95 PSI brings us to our axle weight limit.

[11] Once you determine the ideal pressure for your tires, use a high-quality gauge such as this digital one from Snap-On to set the pressure. Remember, this pressure needs to be set and checked only when the tires are cold. We suggest you check the pressure in each tire every day you plan to drive the coach. This is the only way to be sure the pressure is correct and it could save you a blowout or accident due to low tire pressure. **M**

➔ TIRE PRESSURE DO'S AND DON'T'S

- DON'T** load an axle over the published maximum weight allowed even if you have installed higher load-range tires.
- DO** check the tire pressure when it is cold. Even if the motorhome has not been driven, the tires can be warmed substantially by sunlight, so be careful as you inflate your tires to the proper pressure.
- DON'T** inflate a tire to a pressure higher than the pressure stamped on the wheel on your coach.
- DO** set the tire pressure based on the highest weight position of that axle.
- DON'T** set different pressures on each side of the same axle. If you have 5,000 pounds on the right front and 5,500 pounds on the left front position, for example, consult the manufacturer's load/inflation table to determine the correct tire pressure for 5,500 pounds (or slightly higher) and run that on both sides of that axle.
- DO** contact your coach manufacturer if you have a position that is overweight for your tires. It may be possible to install higher load-range tires to rectify the problem. If your rig's axle is overloaded, however, higher load-range tires will not be a safe solution.

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AT HOME ON THE ROAD

Going full time to a life of RV adventures



Nearly nine years ago, my husband, Mark, and I ran away from home to live in an RV full time. This has turned out to be the most exciting and fulfilling chapter in our lives, and we plan to continue living this way as long as we can. Why did we do such a crazy thing? We were tired of the confines of our conventional lifestyle, and yearned to expand our horizons, see new places and meet new people. In the end, the adventures and happiness we have found on the road have far exceeded our wildest dreams.

If you have kicked around the idea of going full time and are wondering how to learn more, there are loads of resources on the Internet. However, you'll learn far more by talking in person with people who are already doing it. Most campground hosts, RV park workers and many state and national park volunteers are full-time or seasonal RVers. An hour's conversation — with its natural, instantaneous back-and-forth — will give you richer lessons than reading possibly can.

One of the most frequent questions

we hear from future full-timers is, "Can we afford to do it?" The answer lies entirely in how you choose to live. There are full-timers happily living on peanuts in a small motorhome and full-timers in million-dollar motor coaches sampling five-star restaurants across the country. In general, most people spend what they have. For the budget-conscious, the desire to go is far more important than any lifestyle sacrifices that might be necessary to pull it off.

When we started, we were younger than average, at 47 (me) and 53 (Mark).

We left our workaday lives at the peak of our wage-earning years, choosing to live on our savings and investments far earlier than any financial advisor would ever recommend. Since we began our travels, our friends back home have built up much more sizable nest eggs and retirement packages. However, we wouldn't trade the life experiences we've had on the road for all the money in the world.

Budgeting to live in an RV full time is the same as budgeting to live in a stick-built home. A glance at your current expenditures will give you insight into what you'll spend living in your motorhome. Food, clothing and cellphone expenses will be similar, while homeowner's insurance will be replaced with RV insurance and extended warranty costs. Property taxes, HOA fees and utilities will go away, but overnight camping fees will come into play. One beauty of RVing full time is that your fuel bill becomes

Top: RVers find peace and tranquility at Narrows Too RV Resort after sightseeing in Maine's Acadia National Park. Below: A rugged EarthRoamer motorhome braves the wilds of Big Bend National Park in Texas.



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From right: What's cooking? Campground barbecues are a favorite for us. Traveling musicians strum away the hours by the side of their Winnebago motorhome in Arizona. Below: Stunning vistas like Sierra del Carmen in Texas are part of everyday life for full-time RVers.



a variable cost. When the price of fuel skyrockets, you can opt to stay put and not travel too far, as many full-timers did in 2008 when fuel nearly doubled in a year. When fuel is cheap, as it is of this writing, many full-timers choose to explore Alaska and other far-flung regions of North America.

There are many ways to save money on overnight camping costs. Staying at one RV park for a month or a season will cut the nightly rate dramatically. Many full-timers prefer to visit a handful of choice spots each year, lingering for many weeks in each one to get to know the area in depth and to save some money. Membership programs can also cut costs. Good Sam Club members save 10 percent at Good Sam Parks and Campgrounds. Passport America and Happy Camper are inexpensive to join and offer 50 percent discounts on camping fees at member parks. Thousand Trails and Coast to Coast Resorts offer "investment" programs where significant membership costs yield overnight camping fees of \$0 to \$10 or so. And Escapees members can purchase or lease a "home base" site in a member park or enjoy discounts up to 50 percent in affiliate parks or stay on members' property for free. Lastly, equipping your motorhome

with solar power makes it possible to camp without hookups on America's beautiful public lands, where you can enjoy multimillion-dollar views out your window without paying a dime.

One of the best things about the full-time RV lifestyle is that, for those who need to earn a living, it is very easy to find work on the road. The well-established RV work camping community is built around RV travelers who wish to work part- or full time. There are thousands of jobs available at campgrounds and RV parks across the country, and several websites, such as www.workamper.com, list job openings. Workamper.com is also home to "Workamper News," a bimonthly publication filled with articles and job listings. The work itself is varied, ranging from hosting in campgrounds, to providing buildings and grounds services, to working at campground stores, gift shops or state and national park entrance gates.

Many private, seasonal attractions and commercial enterprises hire RVers for both part- and full-time labor. Amazon has set a very high standard and a marvelous precedent with its Camperforce program, where RVers work at Amazon's warehouses for the four months leading up to the end-of-year holidays.



☺ Loving Life on the Road

The most wonderful things about the full-time RV lifestyle are that you can take your time to enjoy the sights at your leisure and there is always a new view out the window!



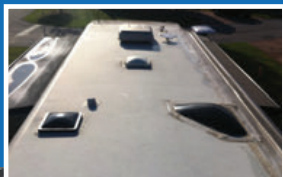
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Event Name	Dates	Venue
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South Carolina RV & Camping Show - Greenville	January 8-10	TD Convention Center
Mid-America RV Show	January 14-17	Bartle Hall at Kansas City Convention Center
Washington Camping RV Expo	January 15-17	Dulles Expo Center
New Jersey RV & Camping Show - Edison	January 15-17	New Jersey Convention & Expo Center
Minneapolis/St. Paul RV, Vacation & Camping Show	February 11-14	Minneapolis Convention Center
Richmond Camping RV Expo	February 12-14	Richmond Raceway Complex
Atlantic City RV & Camping Show	February 12-14	Atlantic City Convention Center
Harrisburg RV & Camping Show	February 25-28	PA Farm Show Complex & Expo Center
Colorado RV, Sports, Boat & Travel Show	February 25-28	National Western Complex
Greater Atlanta RV Show	March 4-6	Georgia World Congress Center
Rhode Island RV & Camping Show & Sale	March 4-6	Rhode Island Convention Center
Virginia RV Show	March 11-13	Hampton Roads Convention Center



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Above: RVing full time is an ideal lifestyle for developing personal passions like painting, photography and music. Below: Life on the road is an exciting journey down winding lanes leading to new adventures on the horizon!

Sometimes the compensation in these workamping positions includes an RV site with full hookups. At many government-owned campgrounds the RV site is the only compensation. For full-timers who need a certain level of cash flow, it is worthwhile to do some math to make sure that the hours worked and the pay package make for an acceptable hourly wage. For those who don't really need the money but who want to give back to the community, volunteering in exchange for an RV site at a beautiful state or national park can be fulfilling and can also provide a structured itinerary and create a social network of colleagues.

Of course, living on the road has its own crazy logistics. You must have a physical address somewhere, known legally as a "domicile," for filing taxes and voting. Any state is fine, but there are three — South Dakota, Texas and Florida — that

most full-time RVers prefer for financial reasons. Besides having no income tax, the sales tax rates on vehicle purchases are also low in these states, as are the vehicle registration and insurance rates. It is fairly easy to establish residency too; consequently lots of mail-forwarding companies have set up shop to help people become residents, register their vehicles, get insurance, obtain a driver's license, register to vote and receive their mail.

Once you are on the road, your mail is collected at the mail-forwarding service company and is sent to you periodically. It can be sent to any U.S. post office addressed to your name at



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AT HOME ON THE ROAD

"General Delivery," and it will hold your mail for up to 30 days, free of charge. Or it can be sent directly to an RV park.

Internet access is equally easy on the road. Verizon and other cellphone providers offer data plans with Wi-Fi hotspot devices and smartphones. These hotspots access the Internet through cellphone towers and make it available, with password protection, to nearby devices via Wi-Fi. In a pinch, fast food restaurants, coffee bistros, bars, restaurants and even home improvement stores offer free Wi-Fi to guests. Be sure to purchase something if you plan to use the Wi-Fi services.

Perhaps the biggest thrill in hitting the road is choosing a rolling home. It is really tempting, when giving up the security and comfort of hearth and home, to go out and buy the biggest and fanciest motorhome you can afford. After all, it is going to be your house! However, almost all full-time RVers upgrade their rig at some point in their lives on the road, so whatever you buy will likely not be your last motorhome. Rather than making a huge outlay on an RV at the beginning of your full-time adventures, it may be far more sensible — albeit less glamorous — to start in whatever rig you currently own, no matter how small, or to buy something modest as a "starter home."

The motto we kept in mind while searching for our full-time RV was, "Go cheap, go small, go NOW." Even if you are a seasoned RVer, you may have different needs in a full-time motorhome, and you may not know what those needs are until you have lived on the road for a while. The really fun thing about holding off on The Big Motorhome Investment until after you are actually full-timing is that you can visit RV dealerships and do factory tours all over the country. We continue to visit RV dealerships on a regular basis, and we have done quite a few factory tours over the years. We learn a little more each time.

From below: Workamper Linda Broeske has fun on the job at Arizona's Lost Dutchman State Park. The authors take time out from sightseeing with friends at Death Valley National Park to make a little music together in the desert.



Of course, downsizing all the way to a 25-foot Class C is much harder than downsizing to a 45-foot diesel pusher. Yet many full-timers find the whole downsizing process to be surprisingly uplifting. There is something truly liberating about parting with all that stuff. Sometimes, however, sorting through your accumulated belongings can be an emotional roller coaster ride. Deciding on the fate of your most precious belongings can bring surges of memories and be a bit stressful. For us, it helped to bear in mind that we could always return to a conventional lifestyle. Even if the return was very costly, we would go back to our old housebound lives much richer for our experiences.

But what to do with all that stuff? Some people hire an auctioneer to come in and get rid of it all in a single day. Others hold yard sales,

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SAVE \$633

26" x 16 DRAWER ROLLER CABINET

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AT HOME ON THE ROAD

make multiple trips to Goodwill, use Craigslist and give their most prized items away to family and friends. One of the unexpected joys for us when we visit old friends and family is seeing our most precious goodies being enjoyed in their homes. Of course, each friend has happily promised that we can have the items back if we ever move into a house again.

Another tricky issue is what to do with the house. The housing market ebbs and flows, and your urge to go full time may or may not coincide with a seller's market. We were able to sell our house in a weekend, but by the time we were ready to drive off to our new life in an RV, our buyer had backed out of the deal. We knew it would be easier to find a tenant than a buyer in the remaining days before we moved into our RV, and within a week we were landlords. We have had five sets of tenants since we left, and with each return trip to our house, it has taken us just a week to bring back its shine and make it better than when we lived there ourselves. Leasing has also been favorable financially, as the housing market has nerve-wrackingly soared and plummeted during our years on the road, while rents have steadily risen.

Losing touch with family is another concern for many would-be full-timers. We have found that our visits with our grandkids are more meaningful now than when we lived in a house just 50 miles away. We park our RV nearby and can easily be with them at any time of day for several weeks at a time. Many full-timers with far-flung children love having the ability to roam from one child's household to another, and we count ourselves among them.

Developing a travel pattern and structure takes time, and it took us several years to figure out how we like to travel and to trust our inner instincts and each other's choices. Some full-timers like to have a home base for a few months a year, others prefer to travel primarily between two regions (North and South) or two specific RV parks, and still others, like ourselves, are in perpetual motion.

Finding hobbies and interests beyond sightseeing is very important too, as it can be exhausting to be a full-time tourist, and eventually all the sights blur together. We have found that photography and travel writing are the ideal complement to our lifestyle, and it has been rewarding to see our skills improve over time.

The bottom line is that life is extraordinarily short and the years will pass whether you pursue your full-timing dreams or not. When we look at photos of ourselves during our first year on the road, the kids we see in those images are not the same people that we are today. The graying hair and wrinkles would have appeared whether we stayed home and padded our retirement or took the plunge and began a life of adventure on the road. However, it's the wide-eyed inexperience of those earlier versions of ourselves that is the most surprising.

We have grown as people immeasurably since we began our travels, and we continue to do so with every day that passes. Not only do we know our country's history and geography far better than we did, and made countless new friends in every direction, we have fulfilled our innermost dreams and learned how to be adventurers.

If going full time is a fantasy on your horizon, have faith, jump in with both feet, and go for it! **M**

For More Information

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www.coastresorts.com/index.cfm

Good Sam Club Membership
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Passport America Campground Membership Program
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www.escapees.com and www.rvillage.com

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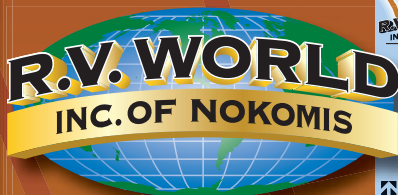
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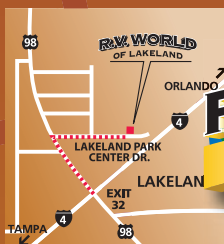
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Do you suspect your source water pressure is too low or too high? The most commonly accepted range is from 40 to 50 psi. I made a tester to check water pressure at the supply faucet before connecting my hose. I began with a 1-foot stubby water hose that came with a filter purchased at Camping World. I went to Home Depot and bought a 0-200 psi water-pressure gauge (commonly used with well-water systems) and an adapter fitting for connecting the pressure gauge to the hose. Assembly is easy; however, I recommend using PTFE tape on the gauge threads so the adapter fitting won't leak. The hose ends are connected without tools, using standard hose washers to prevent leaks. During storage, the female end is protected with a hose plug to keep out debris. To use, connect the hose to the water supply faucet and turn on the water. The gauge reading indicates the source pressure. If it is below 40 psi, notify the park manager. You may have to fill your water tank and use your onboard water pump. If the pressure is well above 60 psi, you should install a 45-50 psi inline water-pressure regulator at the faucet. Pressure regulators and hose plugs are also available at Camping World.

Edward Phillips | Greers Ferry, Arkansas



Glass Saver

My husband, Chuck, and I have read *MotorHome* for two years in preparation for buying our first RV, a new 25-foot Class B-plus motorhome. A recurring concern we read about was rattling and sometimes broken drinking glasses during transit. Knowing my husband would have no patience for the rattles and I would have no patience for broken glasses, I devised this easy solution.

Utilizing a 750-ml cardboard wine bottle case I picked up free at the liquor store, I cut the cardboard box down to 3 inches in height. I then cut the dividers down to 4½ inches, which is just above the top of most of the tallest glasses.

To make the tray sturdier, more durable, and attractive, I covered the box with decorative contact paper. This quick-and-easy project eliminated rattling glasses, resulting in safe and happy travels!

Debbie Robinson | Manasquan, New Jersey



No More Headaches

We bought our first motorhome in December 2014. We love everything about it, except one small problem. Above the couch are two cabinets that open upward, but there aren't any hinges to hold the cabinet doors up. After being hit in the head a few times, I found hinges at Home Depot. They are inexpensive folding-leg hinges and are easy to install. Now, no more doors hit my head!

Gerald Brown | Summerton, South Carolina



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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The Bluetooth Advantage

Bazooka Tubbie wireless weatherproof speakers provide high-quality sound just about anywhere

By Kevin Livingston



AUDIO

Cost: \$400-\$570

Time: 1-2 hours

Difficulty: 2/10

In this day and age of everything convenient, capable of multitasking and ready to go at a moment's notice, it's no surprise that the way we listen to music has also evolved. Of course, Bluetooth technology is the key and there are a lot of speakers marketed that

are compatible with just about any device that can store music files. But they are definitely not all created equal, especially to people who are serious about music reproduction.

Longtime automotive aftermarket audio manufacturer Southern Audio Services, known for its popular Bazooka line, seized the opportunity to jump on the portable Bluetooth bandwagon to produce what is quite possibly one of the most versatile high-end, amplified Bluetooth speakers destined to appeal to audiophiles. The new Bazooka MT6100BTA 6½-inch Tubbie marine speaker system is housed in a pair of very rugged plastic, waterproof, semicylindrical-shaped housings, which are powered by a healthy built-in 100-watt amplifier and packed with features. Besides the obvious Bluetooth capabilities, like ease of pairing or unpairing a device for function and control, the Tubbie also has a Hands Free mode for taking cellphone calls and can be mounted on an optional Power Rail. Also included, to increase convenience and portability, is a unique quick-connect mounting system and two pedestals, which can be screwed into the underside of a cabinet — or any other logical location — and provide 360 degrees of rotation. The mounting system allows the speakers to be moved to different locations with virtually no hassle. Bazooka Tubbies come complete with the cabling to connect the two speakers and hook up to

12-volt DC power, via a standard cigarette lighter plug.

These speakers were actually designed to be used on an ATV, but we found them to be very adaptable for RV use. Part of the versatility comes from the optional Power Rail kit, which can be mounted permanently or temporarily. The rail is plugged into 12-volt DC power and the speakers are attached to the mounting system using the quick-connect clamps; power for the amplifier is provided by the rail. The rail can be placed on a table under the awning or mounted in a storage compartment and after disconnecting the speakers from their pedestals, the speakers can be connected to the rail. Since the speakers are completely sealed from the elements, we found them perfect for outdoor use. Although our intention was to use them outside, we found a convenient location above an inside cabinet, which allowed the speakers to be pointed in an optimum direction.

Sound quality is very good and the 100-watt amplifier boosts the volume to levels higher than necessary for easy listening. If your neighbors don't mind, it's easy to crank up the volume to liven up any party. Inside, they bathe the area with clear sound that is much better than many factory-installed stereo systems. And these speakers are really durable, so you don't have to be worry about them getting damaged by rough handling.

Bazooka's Tubbies are not inexpensive, but are very well-built and they enjoy a tremendous reputation for quality. A pair of MT6100BTA 6½-inch speakers retails for around \$400; the Power Rail is \$170. **M**

Southern Audio Services, www.bazooka.com

[A] Tubbie speaker was easily mounted on the top of cabinet using the unique pedestal. Quick-release system adds versatility to mounting locations. **[B]** Power from a 12-volt DC source is routed to the speakers through the mounting pedestal. Standard-type plug can be used if convenient, or the system can be hard-wired into a 12-volt DC source. **[C]** Power Rail system can be mounted in an exterior compartment.



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Remco Reimbursement



When the lube-pump alarm kept sounding off, even after he made the recommended repairs, a reader turned to Hot Line for help. He wrote:

“ In March 2012, I purchased a Remco lube pump and Blue Ox baseplate to flat tow my 2010 Chrysler Town & Country. Everything worked fine on my initial trip, but on the return trip and every trip since, the alarm has gone off, even though there’s no problem with the lubrication system.

I did everything to fix the problem that Remco’s technicians told me to do, including changing all the parts and having the wiring checked by an electrician and an RV tech. I asked Remco if the company would compensate me for the money I spent trying to fix the problem. I haven’t heard back and have since bought a dolly for towing the minivan.

Can Hot Line help me get some type of reimbursement from Remco?

Ronald Kimball | Nalcrest, Florida

After Hot Line contacted Remco Industries on Kimball’s behalf, we received a favorable response from the company’s sales and technical support division. It read:

Remco Industries received the information your publication provided in regard to the claim by Ronald Kimball. After reviewing the claim, our management staff decided to issue a check to Kimball in the amount of \$1,500. We contacted Kimball about this sum, and he agreed that it is fair. We appreciate Hot Line bringing this issue to our attention.

**Drew Cohoon, Remco Industries
Alexandria, Minnesota**

Counter Culture

Experiencing a post-purchase problem with his new motorhome, a reader asked Hot Line to help him get more attention from the manufacturer. He wrote:

“ When we bought our new Holiday Rambler 32 SE Vacationer in August 2014 from RV World of Nokomis, we didn’t notice a defect in the sink

countertop during the walkaround inspection. I can only say it was missed due to the dim light condition within the coach at the time. When we brought the unit home, my wife noticed the defect. It looks like a split or cut in the surface of the countertop material. In addition, there’s a delamination of the material around the sink. On the following day, I sent photos to the dealer. RV World filed a warranty claim, to no avail.

I received a quote from the factory, and the cost to have the countertop replaced is \$1,400. What I am asking is for someone at the factory to take the time to review the problems with an open mind. We are willing to travel from Port Charlotte, Florida, at our expense to the factory with the intent to have the problem reviewed, which would hopefully result in the replacement of the top at the cost of the factory. If not, at the least negotiate a

fair cost to replace it.

RV World has agreed to pay half the cost of the new countertop and labor. This, I find honorable, but I would like to see Holiday Rambler step up and split the cost three ways.

Ray Kelly | Port Charlotte, Florida

Hot Line contacted Allied Recreation Group, the parent company of Holiday Rambler, on Kelly’s behalf. A company representative as well as the complainant responded as follows:

Thank you for your letter regarding Mr. Ray Kelly. It is always our goal to have satisfied customers, and it is disheartening to hear of the concerns Kelly has reported. We appreciate the opportunity to assist our customer. I have been in contact with Kelly and have reached an amicable resolution.

**John Hurd, Owner Relations Manager,
Allied Recreation Group, Coburg, Oregon**

“ I am pleased to report that RV World, at the direction of John Hurd of Holiday Rambler, installed a new countertop last week and it looks great. The manufacturer paid for the work.

I am not sure what orchestrated between Hot Line and Holiday Rambler to bring this experience to a happy ending, but I am very grateful. I want to credit Ed Davidson, owner of RV World, for his offer to meet me halfway with the replacement cost. And I want to credit John Hurd of Holiday Rambler as well. He was very apologetic and supportive, and made sure that I was fully satisfied with the final result.

R.K. 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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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

By Ken Freund

Seeking Advice on Rodent Damage

Q I am seeking advice regarding controlling rodent damage on wiring on the engine in our 2014 Allegro Open Road 32A. We winter in Nokomis, Florida, and our home is in Meadville, Pennsylvania. The unit has been stored the last two winters at Royal Coachman Resort where we live in Nokomis, Florida. In the summers I store the unit in a locked storage yard.

Last summer I stored the unit in April. When I got it out of storage in July, the CHECK-ENGINE light was on. After being unable to find a local Ford dealer that would work on a Class A motorhome I finally drove it back to Florida in October (I was told by a Ford Service Manager I could do this) and had it diagnosed and repaired. This repair cost us \$411.05. They had to replace the wiring harness on top of the engine. We submitted this to Progressive Insurance and were turned down because we did not inspect for damage every two weeks.

When we returned to Meadville I stored it in the yard until the last week of August when I took it out to prepare for a trip. I had put numerous bags of mothballs in the engine compartment and covered the air intake so nothing could get in the air cleaner. Driving it back to the condos, I noticed that the CHECK-ENGINE light was on again. This time I hooked up a ScanGauge I had for my previous RV and found two codes, P0355 Ford and P1289 Ford. I spoke to my local mechanic and he offered to look at it. When we finally figured out how to remove the doghouse he found a wire to Ignition Coil 5 had been gnawed through so he was able to repair that with a splice. We couldn't clear the P1289 code so we looked further and found a sensor wire assembly was totally destroyed. He was able to order that in and after replacement the code was cleared. His bill was \$477.39 of which \$337.50 was labor and \$112.87 was parts and supplies. I am now preparing to store the

unit for the winter and am really worried about how I can protect against this damage being repeated.

Two remedies I have been told about are: 1) Park the unit on a layer of shingles with the rough side up. Supposedly mice and other rodents won't walk on this surface to crawl up the tires. 2) Create a mixture of ammonia and cayenne pepper and spray the top of the engine. The ammonia evaporates and the cayenne pepper acts as a repellent. Both of these seem to be a possibility but I am open to other suggestions. The unit is stored outside (covered) because I am unable to find a storage facility with the 14-foot doors I need to get into. And, even if I could find one it would have to be rodent-proof. Please help me with a surefire way to prevent this damage. I really do not want to pay \$400 every summer to fix this.

Kerry Gonnam | Meadville, Pennsylvania

A I'm sorry to hear how you have had such problems with rodents; your engine wiring must be tasty to them. Rodents are sneaky and unpredictable and there are no "surefire" ways to keep them away, but there are many ways that work sometimes. I've never heard of the shingle trick, but it's cheap and easy so why not try it? Same with the peppers. Also try putting mouse bait and traps up on the engine, but make sure you remove them before removing the coach from storage. Though we haven't tried it, there is also a product called Fresh Cab (www.earthkind.com) that is nontoxic and is guaranteed to keep mice and rats away from the RV. I'd like to hear from readers about their favorite tips.



Engine Shutdown on E-450 Chassis

Q We have a 2006 Coachmen Class C on a 2005 Ford E-450 chassis and recently had a harrowing experience. On two occasions, one driving at 60 mph, another at 40 mph, the battery light came on followed by total engine shutdown. I was able to put the

transmission in NEUTRAL and coast to a stop and restart the engine. The engine battery is a year old and is in good working condition. The serpentine belt is in great condition, the alternator appears to be operating normally and it is charging the chassis and coach batteries. During troubleshooting, I discovered an anomaly that seems to cause the engine failure. This coach

has two 12-volt DC outlets in the dash that provide power from the chassis. I have a rearview camera, GPS and often charge our cellphone between the two outlets. I believe they are on different fuses. The situation occurs when both outlets are being used, especially the bottom one. Any idea what could cause the engine to shut down?

John Lowe | San Marcos, California

A A loose or intermittent connection almost anywhere in the wiring or electrical components (such as fuel pump or ignition) which control engine operation could cause this. When the engine stalls, the battery light comes on, but that does not necessarily mean that the battery (or charging system) is at fault. The fact that when you went to restart the engine, it cranked over normally indicates that it was not caused by a battery/charging issue. It is also unlikely (although possible) that those charging outlets are somehow shutting down the engine. The camera, GPS and phone charger only draw a few watts, and even if there was a dead short in one of them, it shouldn't stop the engine. However, since it is so easy to check and verify, it's not a bad idea to do this before going on to other areas. While driving on an empty, flat, straight road, have a passenger fiddle around with the outlets, twisting and wiggling them and pulling out the plugs and reinstalling them. If you can get the engine to stall by doing this, take it to an auto electric specialist and show them what you did.

If this doesn't find the source of the problem, you may be in for a difficult time, tracking down an intermittent failure. I would remove the engine cover (doghouse) and test-drive the coach while a technician wiggles and moves every electrical connection having to do with engine controls, ignition and fuel. Connect a fuel pressure test gauge and drive around with it; have the assistant monitor it. Also test-drive the coach with an OBDII scan tool and tester connected and check for codes and other problems.

Lithium-Ion Batteries

Q Our current coach is a 2012 Itasca 37F with a Ford V-10 engine. I read your reply to the July 2015 "Battery Replacement" letter and remembered reading elsewhere that some new coaches now have lithium-ion batteries. This made me wonder if I could switch out my three 12-volt lead-acid batteries. Would the

alternator, genset, converter, inverter and wiring work with the newer lithium-ion batteries? If I could move the chassis battery up front under the hood, it would be a shorter distance for current to travel to the starter and leave me more room under the midentry step for four 6-volt house batteries. What are the possibilities?

Bud Peavey | Livingston, Texas

A Lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries have a number of advantages, but they also need special care and feeding, don't like cold temperatures, have some safety concerns, and cost a lot more initially. The original lithium-ion chemistry was lithium-cobalt-oxide (LiCoO₂), which is susceptible to thermal runaway if overcharged. This can result in the battery catching fire, which is why some lithium systems have an energy management system that can shut off current to the battery if needed. Some Li-ion battery makers include this feature in the battery, while others offer it as an option. Fortunately there is a newer chemistry, Lithium Iron Phosphate (LiFePO₄ or LFP) that is considered nonexplosive. LFP batteries can be rapid charged to 100 percent capacity; lead-acid cells require an absorption mode to add the final 20 percent charge. This factor can reduce genet run time for battery charging considerably.

Li-ion batteries including LFPs can be regularly discharged to 20 percent of their rated capacity, unlike lead-acid batteries, which should not be discharged below about 50 percent of capacity. Lab tests indicate that a Li-ion (LiFePO₄) battery can be discharged and charged through 2,000 to 5,000 cycles, while deep cycle lead-acid batteries typically last for only 500 to 1,000 cycles.

As Li-ion batteries discharge, their voltage remains essentially unchanged, unlike lead-acid batteries that have a steady voltage drop off as they discharge. When Li-ion batteries near full discharge, their voltage drops suddenly, and fully discharging an Li-ion battery can ruin it. Therefore, an

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While every effort is made to maintain accuracy and completeness, last-minute changes may occasionally result in omissions or errors.

energy management system designed for these batteries is needed to prevent full discharge.

This also means that battery monitor panels and auto-start gensets, which rely on battery bank voltage, won't work properly when monitoring an Li-ion battery system. Most inverter and charger manufacturers also don't design their products to work with Li-ion batteries. They are not a mature technology like lead-acid batteries are, and it really helps if you are an electronics hobbyist or professional to design, install and maintain an Li-ion system.

For full-timers who dry camp and live off the grid with a wind turbine and/or solar panel installation, lithium batteries make sense. However, for part-time RVers who usually plug in, with just an occasional dry camp, the cost probably doesn't pencil out. There is a good blog about these batteries online at www.technomadia.com/category/technology/lithium-ion. Also check out www.amsolar.com/home/amr/page_21.



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Fuel Line Losing Pressure

Q We have a 1997 Class C Winnebago Minnie model 329RQ on a Ford chassis with a V-10 engine. The engine starts as soon as I turn the ignition key, but if it sets for three days or more, it takes some extra cranking before the engine starts. On our last road trip, the dash air would shut down when going up a hill. I took it to a Ford dealer and they replaced the vacuum reservoir and check valve to repair the air conditioning. They performed an IDS diagnostic, EEC, CMDTC and PID monitor and relative compression tests and results were that the engine is performing normally. Searching the Internet, one blog said to turn the ignition key to ON for about 5 to 8 seconds and then start the engine. I tried that and it started like it should. Apparently the fuel line loses pressure when setting. Any idea what would cause the fuel line to lose pressure?

George Gabriel | Pearland, Texas

A The fuel system has an electric fuel pump inside the gas tank. It contains a check valve that prevents pressure from bleeding back into the tank. At the other end of the system, the engine has a fuel rail that supplies gasoline under pressure to the fuel injectors. If the check valve or any of the injectors leak down, or if a hose or fitting leaks, pressure will be lost while sitting. It's likely that a faulty injector would have shown up on the tests. The fuel system should be carefully checked for external fuel leaks for obvious safety reasons. If there are no leaks, and the injectors are good, it's the check valve. Turning on the ignition briefly energizes the fuel pump, and is a harmless "workaround" that you can use until you get around to dropping the tank and changing the pump, if necessary. These pumps have a reputation of being problematic.

Pressure Relief Valve

Q We have a 31-foot 2014 Jayco Greyhawk motorhome that we use to pull our 4,900-pound Jeep. We



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With more power, bigger pads and a larger orbit, Shurhold Industries introduces the Dual Action Polisher Pro. It works using a similar motion as its predecessor, but can cut through oxidation faster with its greater pad and orbit size. The Pro features an extra-large 21 mm random orbit, so users get a swirl-free shine. The machine is well-balanced and powerful enough for an expert detailer, but easy enough for a novice to use. It has a 900-watt motor and weighs only 6 pounds. Now, users can work faster and more efficiently than ever before. The Pro features a 6-inch quick-change backing plate, two ergonomic gripping styles and EZ change carbon brush ports. The variable-speed dial is easily controlled using your thumb. A locking button helps users to keep a steady pace without accidentally turning it off. MSRP is \$315.

Shurhold, 800-962-6241, www.shurhold.com

have had many functional problems that have been addressed and fixed. We still have a couple problems that Jayco is addressing but not completely to my satisfaction. The pressure relief (PR) valve on the LP-gas tank activates any time the temperature reaches 90 degrees when we are on the road. It happened about five times last summer on a monthlong trip to Bend, Oregon, and then down to Silverton, Colorado. Jayco sent a replacement PR valve to Bend thinking it was a bad valve. On our way from Bend to Silverton it activated a couple times more. An infrared thermometer showed the tank to be 130 degrees. Also the carpet on the passenger's side floor was 130 to 150 degrees.

Last fall Jayco had Camping World install a heat shield between the front of the tank and the engine and between the tank and the frame. On our first trip out this June it activated again. Now they tell me this is how the PR is supposed to work and they have two or three others that also have the same problem. I know that's how a PR works, but that is to keep it from blowing up. This should not be happening every time the air temp reaches 90. Once we had just pulled into a gas station and it released. It wouldn't have taken much of a spark to set off a good blowtorch of a fire while sitting still. They have not closed the case and I should let them know if I have more problems. I told them I was not happy with this wait-and-see theory.

Their plan to reduce the heat on the passenger floor is to put down a reflective piece on the floor and cover that with some insulation then put the carpet over that. Can you tell me if you have heard of other coaches with this problem? I'm not asking if I should be concerned, I already am. What would be the NTSB's take on this problem, if any?

Keith Gundy | Highlands Ranch, Colorado

A This certainly is a matter of serious concern and the motorhome should not be used until the problem is resolved. Propane expands with increasing heat, which causes the pressure to rise considerably. Heat from the radiator, engine block components or exhaust system will find its way to the propane tank. Propane pressure temperatures charts show that 150 degrees Fahrenheit on the tank will cause the internal pressure to exceed 312.5 psi, which will cause the pressure relief valve to open.

From a troubleshooting standpoint, since you have already replaced the pressure relief valve and it is UL-listed, you have ruled out the likelihood of a low pressure setting on the pressure relief valve. Ask yourself these questions: Is the motorhome exhaust system stock? Are the heat

shields in place? If so, then you need to contact Jayco. If modifications have been made to the exhaust system, you should contact the aftermarket suppliers for a solution.

Scooter Lift

Q I am still 6 to 18 months away from buying my first motorhome, but am doing my due diligence. A

good friend of mine has a Winnebago Navion and tows a dinghy, noting that even with a small motorhome, parking can be an issue. I prefer not to tow a dinghy, but understand the mobility issue.

I would like your advice. If I had a motor scooter (50 cc) that I could hang on the back of the motorhome, it would allow me to go to parks, grocery stores, etc., (continued on page 81)



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(continued from page 77) without driving the motorhome. I have been scouring ads for a lift that could raise the scooter off the ground to the back of the motorhome, as I am pretty sure I could not lift a 200-pound scooter. Since I have not seen an ad for something like this (or even a scooter rack that would attach to the back of the motorhome), I think I am missing a very important point in my thinking.

Michael Theis | Via email

A There are many companies making lifts and carriers designed to go on the back of motorhomes. For example, Hydralift (www.hydralift-usa.com) and Overbilt Lifts (www.overbilt-lifts.com) offer power lifts designed to carry motorcycles or scooters. However, you might become a little less enthusiastic when you find that the power lifts cost more than the scooter. You may find that the type of motorcycle carriers that have a rail for the tires and a ramp to push the bike or scooter up onto the rack will be suitable. These ramp-style carriers can also be considerably lighter in weight than the automatic lifts because they don't include the powered lift mechanism. This is especially important to keep in mind when looking at a smaller motorhome with lower rear-axle and overall payload capacities. Most of these mount into the trailer hitch receiver, and are readily found at motorcycle shops, on eBay, and used on Craigslist. If you do go with a lift, just make sure that the combined weight of the scooter and lift added to the rear of the motorhome doesn't exceed the motorhome's rear gross axle weight rating (GAWR). **M**

Have a Tech Question?

Contact our experts:

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



The Art of Alchemy

Meet a Northern California man who transforms nature's refuse into remarkable works of art

By Alan Rider

Here is one of my most fundamental beliefs: Each of us is born creative. Simply put, everyone on this planet — whether they recognize it or not — was born with the capacity for imagination and original ideas.

Those two components of creativity reached their zenith in the quasi-mystical discipline of alchemy, the pursuit of methods to transform ordinary objects into treasure. Or as the dictionary defines it, “A seemingly magical process of transformation, creation or combination.”

Which, it just occurred to me, is also as good an explanation of the work of my friend Gary Pollard (530-468-5707, garypollardwoodturner.com) as I've ever heard.

You see, this unassuming alchemist's art consists of turning the most unremarkable of natural materials — wooden burls, walnut shells, pine needles and more — into objects of exceptional beauty. While there are surely other people who can weave a basket or carve a block of wood into a bowl, this former pharmacist brings to his work a measure of inspired creativity that sets his one-of-a-kind works apart.

Part of the attraction of Gary's pieces is the unexpected way he combines his materials. Like burl-wood plates decorated with thin slices of black walnut shells that form the most delicate filigree one can imagine. Or pine-needle vessels

built around a stout tree branch in flowing asymmetrical forms that look very much like a cornucopia that's escaped from a surrealist Salvador Dalí painting.

And yet this exceedingly humble and soft-spoken man refers to himself as merely a woodturner. Which as far as I'm concerned is like Michelangelo calling himself a guy who likes to chip away at blocks of marble. It doesn't even begin to tell the whole story.

In fact, Gary brings a lifetime of artistic sensibility that makes each new project about more than just workmanlike competence. He says he can look at a wooden burl, for example, and see the finished piece in his mind's eye.

It's a creative ability that I admire greatly. One that brings to mind Michelangelo's famous quote, “Every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the

task of the sculptor to discover it.”

Ask Gary about his own creative process and, like Michelangelo, this one-time art major is quick to give credit to a higher power that guides his hands. It's a feeling I think a lot of folks from all walks of life who are in touch with their creativity can relate to, whether we're throwing a pot, painting a landscape or writing a magazine column.

What is perhaps most surprising are the simple tools he uses to unlock the beauty in nature's castoffs. A band saw, lathe and assorted power tools crowd the inside of his workshop, located in the pastoral Scotts Valley, California, just west of the town of Fort Jones. Just outside is what he calls a “lifetime supply” of raw materials including a knee-deep pile of burls that would make most any woodworker drool.

Ultimately, everyone knows that tools and raw materials are only as good as the person working them. Which means the transformative force here is Gary himself. Without his skill and creativity, all the sculptures waiting within those lifeless wooden blanks might never be revealed.

As I drove away from Gary's home and workshop, it struck me that we motorhome travelers have our own form of alchemy. In our case, however, it's our own lives that are transformed by the people we meet along The Road Ahead. **M**

“ Alchemy: A seemingly magical process of transformation, creation or combination. ”

Turning Wood Into Gold ☞

Northern California artist Gary Pollard takes simple, natural materials, like wood burls, pine needles and walnut shells, and turns them into decorative and functional treasures.



Photos: Alan Rider

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