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On The Cover: Making a stop in the new Winnebago Forza on the way to Los Padres National Forest in Southern California. See test on page 84. Photo by Scott Hirko.



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THE ROAD TO FULL-TIME

No aspect of the RV lifestyle is more mysterious — or more subjective — than full-timing. I believe that even though there are many good books on the subject, and the Internet is full of advice, there's really no complete instruction manual written that can ensure success. Much like life itself, the experience makes us much smarter. Happily, the overwhelming majority of full-timers who I have met over the years confirm that heading out on the road was the best thing they ever did.

Probably the hardest part is deciding whether or not to make the lifestyle change. That's a big step. Then it's a matter of trying to figure out what to do with the house and stuff. That's when the kids usually chime in. I hear many stories from people whose kids discourage them from selling the house. Let's be practical, it could be difficult to buy back into the old neighborhood, depending on how the market is responding to overall economic conditions. Then there's the "where are you going to live if full-timing becomes too difficult or health issues arise?" Just don't tell the kids you're going to move in with them if full-timing is no longer possible. They might get a little grumpy, if they find the remarks less than humorous.

I've talked to many people who question whether leaving friends and relatives, and the familiarity of a neighborhood, makes sense — especially during retirement years. I have a simple answer to that concern: RVers are the nicest and most caring people on earth. You'll undoubtedly make more friends in RV parks than you did in the old neighborhood. Miss the kids and other relatives and friends? The ability to wander is especially rewarding for full-timers who have relatives and friends scattered throughout the country.

That's the beauty of full-timing. You'll meet people from all walks of life, and you can be as social as you want. And moving about — exploring what's around the next bend — quickly fills



up the ol' bucket list. The motorhome crowd is not one to sit still for too long.

As you can surmise by the response from our readers on this subject featured in *P.O. Box* (page 8), there are a lot of opinions on choosing the right motorhome for full-timing. While jokes fly about spending too much time in close quarters, the real issue is finding the right coach. That's where social media can be extremely helpful.

Storage is always a big issue. There must be enough room to bring the necessities and a few items for pleasure. I've often thought about what my wife, Lynne, and I will keep if we decide to go full-time (a subject under constant debate). We lived in an RV for more than a year while transitioning between homes, and although our "stuff" was in storage, there was a certain freedom enjoyed knowing we didn't have to worry about material items on a daily basis. We do know that if we ever hit the road full-time, we're not going to store our belongings. Just keep in mind that physical space is not the only factor when deciding what to take; weight limits must be considered, too.

Finances are always top of mind. It's not cheap to travel extensively, but careful planning can mitigate this concern. Full-timers on budgets tend to stay put in places for longer periods of time, and there's Workamping for those who don't mind putting in a few hours a week to supplement income.

Full-timing is an exciting lifestyle and there are many reasons to hit the road. But I think reader Phil Andreen summed it up best on page 10. ♦

MOTORHOME

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

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

CANADIAN RETURN ADDRESS: GS Media & Events, 4960-2 Walker Road, Windsor, Ontario N9A 6J3. Publication Sales Agreement #40012332.

CUSTOMER SERVICE Call 800-678-1201 (U.S.) or email motorhome@cdfsfulfillment.com

Printed in the United States.

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RV QG 7000



WHICH MOTORHOME DO YOU THINK IS BEST SUITED FOR FULL-TIME LIVING AND WHY?

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

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A MOTORHOME

In response to Roger Hagen's question about which is the best coach for full-timing, I can't tell him which motorhome to buy, but I can help him with what to look for. We have owned six RVs and have learned to consider the following:

If the coach has slideouts, can you get to the bathroom and refrigerator without having to deploy the slides?

Can you walk around and get into bed if the bedroom has a slideout? It's no fun crawling over your mate to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night. Plus, beds tight against the wall make it difficult to change the sheets.

Is the TV in the living room located where you can watch it looking straight ahead? If you have to look to the left or right to watch a one-hour show, your neck gets stiff.

Check the cabinetry and woodwork. Some are just particle board, while others are real wood, which lasts longer, takes more wear and tear and looks much more rich. Also take note of the trim work of the RV — some is pretty shabby.

When it comes to choosing a bench dinette or freestanding table, we have found that as we get older, it's more difficult to slide across dinette bench seats, so we opted for a table with freestanding chairs. Just remember, with this configuration, you lose storage space under the bench seats.

I have often thought that RV manufacturers should consult with homemakers out there to design the interiors. I know I could give them some pointers. Good luck on full-timing and I hope Hagen finds the perfect RV for him.

CINDY AND LARRY JONET | SILVER CLIFF, WIS.

MONACO IS BEST FOR US

We love our 2008 Monaco Diplomat. With its full-wall, streetside slideout and two curbside slideouts, interior living space is plentiful. It has a large, private, amidships bathroom with a full-size shower. The forward mounted flat-panel TV mated with an in-motion satellite receiver helps to keep the family entertained while rolling down the road. The Roadmaster RR8R chassis provides a great ride and cavernous pass-through basement storage. The Cummins 8.9-liter ISL 400-HP diesel engine is the perfect balance of economy and power — it is easy to forget that our diesel-powered VW Jetta is flat towing behind us! Other features

that contribute to this being a well-thought-out, full-timers coach include the generator and battery slide-out trays, a washer/dryer, whole-house water filtration and a dual-ducted heat pump to keep from using up that expensive LP-gas!

CURTIS MILLER | GLEN ST. MARY, FLA.

THERE ISN'T ONE BEST COACH FOR FULL-TIMING

What's the best motorhome for full-timers? The answer is, there isn't one! Much like the car you drive and the candidate you voted for in the last election, there will always be arguments for and against each. I bet that for every manufacturer and model of Class A and C motorhomes (if not some Class B's as well) there is someone out there full-timing in one and enjoying the lifestyle. After all, isn't every one of us a motorhome enthusiast?

I know that when my wife and I first decided we wanted to enjoy the life on the road in our own house on wheels, the choices seemed endless; we wanted someone to pick the best one for our budget. However, we are each unique people, so shouldn't our preferences in RVs be unique?

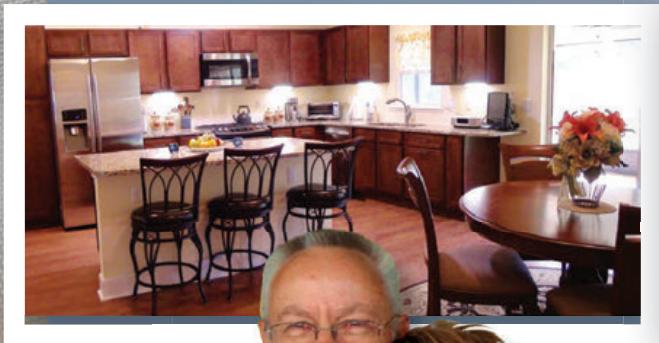
There are endless variables to the question. What's your budget? What comforts are you accustomed to at home? What are your hobbies? Does the cook need a lot of elbow-room? Where are you planning on going (frequently)? Geographically, where are you thinking of setting up your home base? Are you going to be OK with doing your laundry at a self-service facility? How much room do you need for all of your "stuff"? Will you occasionally have company — such as kids, grandkids, etc. — stopping by? And the list goes on.

The first thing to consider is your budget! Motorhomes that you could live in full-time come in countless floorplans and sizes. They are priced as low as \$30,000 to \$45,000 (used), up to brand-new custom-built rolling palaces going for \$2 million or more. I recommend potential full-timers do a ton of window shopping, talk to other RVers and search online RV forums for opinions based on experience.

Just deciding to become a full-timer is a great choice. Labeling one as a "best" choice, well, good luck. For us, it was a 40-foot Class A Itasca Horizon diesel-pusher model AD. Let the debate begin!

MARK HUFSTEDLER | ROCHESTER, MINN.

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SHORT AND SWEET

Question: Which motorhome is best suited for full-time living? Answer: Any motorhome with my wife in it.

PHIL ANDREEN | VIA EMAIL

A QUAD SLIDE IS THE WAY TO GO

My response is based on what I consider to be "true" full-timers — those RVers who live full-time in their coaches and travel North America — not those who use the RV in place of a condo or apartment and park for months at a time. True full-timers travel to unknown (to them) areas and constantly face some unusual problems ranging from weather to campsites. Consider these "unusual" features and reasons for my "Best Coach for Full-timing."

Safety and Convenience. A motorhome is more safe and convenient than a towable because you simply do not have to step outside to use it. We can stop in the worst of weather and are ready to live normally within minutes. In case of a storm, we can (and have) moved our motorhome

slightly to point into (or with) the wind direction, without stepping outside. This action, plus the ability to level the RV from inside, prevents lots of rocking from wind gusts and increases safety to some degree. Also, you can just drive away if needed and never step outside.

A quad-slide layout is the best for full-timing since this configuration will allow you to park nearly everywhere, be functional, and take full advantage of at least some of the potential interior space. In 11 years of full-timing, we have parked using every possible combination of slides in and out. While the full-wall slides have gained in popularity, they are fine for those "resort-type" campsites — unobstructed with plenty of space — or if you are going to park the RV for months at a time. But, for some of the off-the-beaten-path, 30-year-old, Mom and Pop campgrounds and many national and state park campgrounds, that full-wall slide is going to be blocked by a cactus, boulder, stump, concrete picnic table, bush, or tree. With a quad-slide, you can work around just

about any obstacle.

A single bathroom, in the middle of the coach, works best for full-timers. A second bath (classic powder room with toilet and sink) is not for convenience, but for functionality. If it was not there, you (and guests) could not get to the rear master bath with the slides in — and yes, slides are in a lot of the time. Plus, the loss of storage space consumed for that second bath is a real loss to true full-timers. We carry everything with us. We do not have a house or multiple storage sheds located somewhere. What we own, we carry. Therefore, we need the storage space with us. Plus, how often do you both have to use the bathroom at exactly the same time, thus requiring two facilities?

We full-time in a 2007 Monaco Dynasty and have no plans to upgrade due to the facts stated above. There are very few, if any, models today that meet our needs. If we had a choice, we would likely buy a new coach as we plan to continue our full-timing lifestyle.

RON JONES | VIA EMAIL

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LOTS OF FACTORS TO CONSIDER

The easy part of this question is a 38-foot Allegro Bay (38TGB) by Tiffin that we have lived in since July 2012. Part two requires a little explaining. Before we bought our first and only motorhome, we looked, kicked tires and asked questions for more than five years.

First consideration: gasoline or diesel? We chose gas because our plan was to winter in a warm climate and summer at our site on Lake Michigan; we would not be touring. Diesel units were considerably more expensive to purchase and maintain to just sit most of the time.

Second consideration: How long and how many slides? We decided 35 to 40 feet with three or four slides would provide adequate living and storage space. We learned that a longer motorhome could limit our campground options. The coach we purchased new has two slides in the main cabin and one in the bedroom. It also has a plethora of hardwood cabinets and closets, critical to full-time RV living.

Third consideration: Do you need

accommodations for guests? Our 38TGB has two sleeper sofas and a hallway bath layout with two pocket doors, which allow for privacy.

And then there are the options. Washer/dryer? No. The large floor-to-ceiling pantry was more beneficial. Double-pane windows? Yes. They provide better insulation and less condensation. Built-in oven? No. The large microwave/convection oven equals two cooking options; a storage drawer replaces the oven. Fresh-water capacity? 110 gallons allows for dry camping. Fixtures? Residential-style kitchen and bath fixtures are durable and attractive. Water heating? Combination electric/gas are flexible. And our final question about options ... Heat and A/C? Combination of air conditioners/heat pumps and gas furnace with heated bays accommodate all camping conditions.

**MIKE AND SANDY KANGAS
MEMONIEE, MICH.**

IS THERE SUCH A THING?

My wife and I have appreciated the arti-

cles in *MotorHome* for several years and I read, with special interest, the comments from other RVers. The question about which motorhome is best suited for full-time living and why, piqued my interest. Is there one out there?

We are full-timers who have traveled the U.S. (including Alaska) and Canada for 13 years doing gospel concerts in churches. We have lived in our 40-foot Newmar Dutch Star with four slides for eight years and have found it to be a quality coach. To make the motorhome more livable for us, we took out a huge reclining chair and had a professional build a desk in its place as well as add more cabinetry in the bathroom.

**RUTH AND CARL ENGSTROM
VIA E-MAIL**

SPEAKING IN GENERALITIES

This is a very general question, so I will try to give a general answer.

One of the biggest factors is storage, which is why we chose a larger coach. Our motorhome has three large storage bays in



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the basement for items we don't use every day, but wish to have with us. Another factor is the livability of the layout. I believe a bath-and-a-half layout works best. Having the master bath in back gives some privacy for the owners. Also, you have to have space for those items you are using daily — cooking utensils and the like — and space for a week's worth of groceries, both dry goods and perishables. A larger coach quite often will have a residential refrigerator that works nicely for this.

Since most manufacturers have floorplans similar to this, many different coaches will work for us. Our present coach is 45 feet long. Unfortunately, because we purchased a used coach, we do not have the exact layout we were originally looking for, but we have made it work for us.

TED MYERS | VIA EMAIL

FORD BUILDS THE BEST CHASSIS

I believe the best all-around motorhome chassis is the Ford F53 with a V-10 gasoline engine. It is a strong and well-proven chassis; gasoline is more prevalent than

diesel and generally costs less; routine maintenance can be performed by a large network of Ford dealers; and replacement parts are readily available.

As for a coachbuilder, I cannot recommend a specific brand, but choose one that emphasizes durable materials. Paint is better than decals; aluminum framing is stronger and lighter than wood; fiberglass roofs are tougher than rubber membranes; painted and zinc steel fasteners will rust, but stainless steel fasteners won't; avoid cheap plastics as much as possible; vinyl flooring will outlast carpeting and is easier to clean; vinyl or leather upholstery will outlast cloth, etc.

**EDWARD PHILLIPS
GREERS FERRY, ARK.**

THE BEST IS THE ONE THAT'S PAID OFF

Being as though we are soon heading out on the road, we are contemplating the question about which rig is best for full-timing. It is such a personal question, but for us it would be a 3- or 4-year-old unit with slides and a floorplan we like. Most

important would be one we could afford with no payments!

**DAN AND WANDA FRITZSCHE
KALKASKA, MICH.**

ANOTHER VOTE FOR MONACO

My wife and I dreamed of retiring early and living in a motorhome while we traveled around our beautiful country. In 2008, we started going to RV shows, reading magazines and investigating online. After much consideration, we had five main criteria that drove our decision.

First, we wanted a diesel pusher — we've heard that front gas engines can be a bit noisy. Second, we wanted a bath-and-a-half; we like the convenience and the ability to close off the bedroom and still have access to a bathroom when we are entertaining or have traveling company. Third, we wanted a washer and a dryer — not the all-in-one type. We like being able to do a load whenever we want to. Fourth, we didn't want to have to crane our necks every time we watched TV. And finally, the motorhome had to have plenty

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of storage space.

After three years of investigation, in October 2011 we bought a 2011 Monaco Diplomat 43 DFT. It had everything we wanted and more. It is a 43-foot, 4-inch tag axle, so it has lots of room, lots of windows, two sinks in the master bath and a TV outside, so when my wife doesn't want to watch football, I go outside and watch it on a 40-inch LCD.

The Diplomat also has a king-size Sleep Number bed that we love. We get the best sleep we've ever had, even better than the \$4,000 Tempurpedic that we had in our bricks and sticks house.

Last June, we both retired early, sold our house, bought a lot in the beautiful Hilton Head Island Motorcoach Resort to use as our home base and we couldn't be happier.

ROB AND LORRIE BURKHARD
HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C.

VALLEY OF FIRE IS A DON'T MISS

I just finished reading Mary Zalmanek's article, "Las Vegas: Beyond the Glitz and Glamour," on things to do in Las Vegas instead of gambling. My feelings exactly.

One area Zalmanek failed to visit, that she should see next time she heads that way, is Valley of Fire State Park, not far from Hoover Dam. Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area is interesting; Valley of Fire is spectacular. If you like scenery, it is a "don't miss."

DEAN MILLER | KILGORE, TEXAS

BORDER CROSSING QUESTIONS

I have a suggestion for an informative article for your magazine, if you haven't covered it already. It is a selfish request for information for a trip my wife and I are planning for next year. The potential information, however, would be invaluable for many other RVers as they plan trips of their own.

The trip we are planning is from Southern California to Glacier National Park in Montana and then on to Lake Louise in Banff National Park in Alberta, Canada. Some of the questions we have are as follows:

1. What to expect when crossing the border into Canada and back to the U.S.?
2. What driving and personal laws, if any, are different in Canada?

3. Is a regular U.S. driver's license all that is required for operating an RV in Canada?

4. Are there any restrictions or special laws regarding the towing of a dinghy vehicle (toad)?

5. Is there any kind of supplemental medical or liability vehicle insurance required or available? I assume your personal insurance company would need to be notified.

6. Are U.S. credit cards and debit cards accepted or is cash required/recommended?

7. Can fuel stations that support large RVs and toads be expected to be readily available?

8. Are RV parks plentiful and available? Are advance reservations recommended and where can a listing be found?

9. Are there GPS maps available for Canada and are GPS units reliable in Canada or are good maps recommended?

10. Are very steep grades to be expected and what degree of incline?

11. Are repair stations readily available for RVs and do Good Sam and AAA support towing in Canada?

I know this would require extensive research and time, however many of the questions relate to many out-of-state trips and would also work for Alaska adventures. Perhaps input from other RVers who have crossed the border could be solicited? I'm sure many would be willing to share their knowledge and experiences. Going to another country with an RV can be a bit intimidating.

DOUGLAS FLANNERY | VIA EMAIL

Thanks for the suggestion, Douglas. Check out the sidebar to "Fabulous Fundy Coast" on page 70 for some basics on Canadian border crossing. We would also like to hear from other readers about their experiences traveling via motorhome to Canada. — Editors

QUESTION:

Have you crossed the border in your motorhome, and, if so, do you have any tips for other RVers?

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

CONTACT **MOTORHOME**

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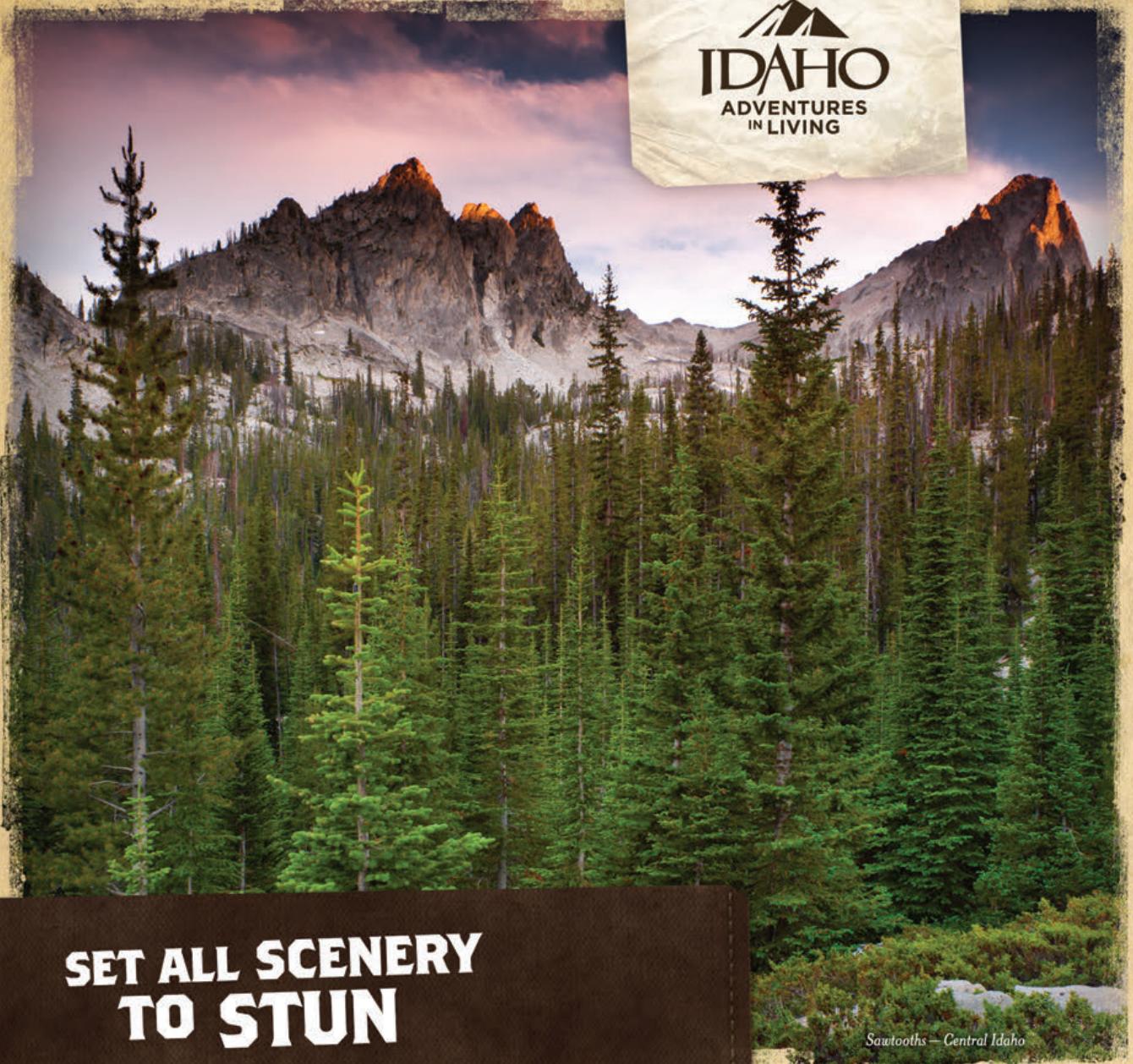
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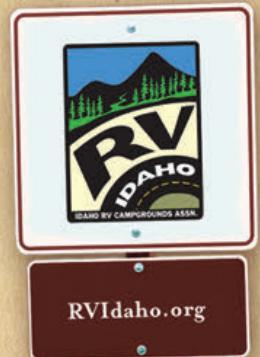
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escapes

edited by EILEEN HUBBARD

ROAD FOODIE | WHEELS & GEAR | NOTEWORTHY | CROSSROADS

PLAY BY THE SEA

SPRINGTIME FUN AT BULLARDS BEACH STATE PARK, OREGON

Sample Oregon's coastal life in one setting

— Bullards Beach State Park. Just 2 miles north of Bandon off U.S. Highway 101, this jewel offers wooded campsites, 4½ miles of sandy beaches, the historic Coquille River Lighthouse and a smorgasbord of outdoor activities. Walk or bike on paths along a 2-mile scenic road from the campground to the seashore past boat-launch facilities, a horse camp with 10 miles of trails and day-use picnic shelters. At road's end, visit Coquille River's guardian lighthouse. Guiding seafarers over a treacherous bar from 1896 to 1939 and renovated in 1979, it now stands

proudly as an interpretive center offering visitors a taste of its salty past. Climb the spiral staircase to the light tower and soak in endless ocean views and Bandon's quaint city seascape. Tee off at nearby Bandon Dunes Golf Resort or Bandon Crossings, just a short drive to the south. Stroll through Old Town boutiques, indulge in fresh fish at wharf-side seafood shacks, savor hot coffee and toast the sunset. Back at camp, relax and share the day's adventures over a crackling fire. For more information, call 800-452-5687 or visit www.oregonstateparks.org
— Rosanne Wagstaff



PHOTO: GREG WAGSTAFF

ON A ROLL

When cinnamon, sugar and butter come together in a breakfast pastry, it's heavenly. And when I'm traveling in my motorhome, it's always worth a few extra miles to find the perfect cinnamon roll.

The origin of cinnamon rolls (aka sticky rolls, sticky buns, or honey buns) isn't clear. American Institute of Baking researchers trace early cinnamon rolls to ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. British, Dutch and German bakers may also have influenced this sweet treat. Some insist the cinnamon roll or "kanelbulle" was born in Sweden where, every Oct. 4, they celebrate National Cinnamon Bun Day.

Breakfast cinnamon rolls are popular throughout the United States, but they're an institution in Philadelphia, Pa. This city's version of cinnamon rolls, which contain honey, sugar, cinnamon and raisins, dates back to the 18th century.

Today, cinnamon rolls are found the world over. They vary from sweet and sticky to the lighter Swedish pastry. Confectioner's sugar is widely used to make a glaze, and some cinnamon rolls contain pecans, walnuts or almonds, or raisins, black currants or other glazed fruits. There are also dairy-free and gluten-free varieties.

Cinnamon rolls or buns are full of sugar and fat and are pretty hefty in calories. If you need a healthy reason to eat them, cinnamon has long been prized for its health benefits. Medieval physicians used cinnamon to treat coughing, hoarseness and sore throats. Researchers at the National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health suggest that cinnamon may lower blood sugar and blood cholesterol, fight fungal and bacterial infections, and even help prevent Alzheimer's.

Great cinnamon rolls are always worth a stop. If you're in the Yukon between Whitehorse and Dawson City, check out **Braeburn Lodge**. The lodge is famous for dinner-plate-size cinnamon rolls baked by Steve the Bun Master.

North of Vancouver, British Columbia, at the end of Canada's Sunshine Coast and iconic Highway 101, **Nancy's Bakery** in the village of Lund is famous for its big almond cinnamon rolls. They're loaded with cinnamon and crunchy nuts and they're soft inside and crusty, sugary outside.

In Coupeville, Wash., my all-time favorite cinnamon roll is baked at the waterside café, **Mosquito Fleet Chili**. Not only does the restaurant make a mean bowl of spicy red, its cinnamon rolls are masterpieces — extra-thin layers of soft/crisp dough loaded with cinnamon, sugar and butter. For the recipe, check out www.realfoodtraveler.com/2011/12/best-cinnamon-rolls-on-the-planet. I make this cinnamon roll on Christmas morning.

Another great cinnamon roll can be found in Cody, Wyo., at **Rocky Mountain MoJoe**, a little coffee shop and bakery on the outskirts of downtown. This scratch bakery bakes up buttery cinnamon rolls that are moist and soft with just the right balance

of cinnamon. You'll also want to pick up their cinnamon monkey bread and some of their freshly baked cookies, including peanut butter and their oatmeal, which has just a hint of cinnamon.

My latest cinnamon roll discovery is **Heavenly Biscuit** in Fort Myers Beach, Fla. This tiny shop specializes in breakfast sandwiches on pillow-soft biscuits. Heavenly Biscuit also uses its biscuit dough to make cinnamon rolls loaded with a super crunchy sugary-cinnamon-butter combo that had us returning every morning for a fix.



In Lund, British Columbia, Nancy's Bakery serves up several varieties of cinnamon rolls, including almond, raisin and raspberry. The secret to Mosquito Fleet Chili's cinnamon roll is the thin layers of dough that sandwich plenty of butter and cinnamon-sugar.



From top: Whidbey Island, Wash., boasts terrific water views and is home to Mosquito Fleet Chili restaurant, where you'll find one of the best cinnamon rolls on the planet. Heavenly Biscuit in Fort Myers Beach, Fla., is so popular that customers often line up at the door of the tiny shop. Heavenly Biscuit uses super-soft dough for its cinnamon rolls. Rocky Mountain MoJoe loads up its rolls with plenty of icing. Rocky Mountain MoJoe bakes everything fresh and from scratch, including cinnamon rolls and cinnamon monkey bread.

PHOTOS: ANNE WEAVER AND BOBBIE HASSELBRING

What's your favorite cinnamon roll haunt? Let Bobbie know by sending an email (with "Road Foodie Cinnamon Roll" in the subject line) to hasselbring@bctonline.com



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The 2Way Air central inflation system by Rock Smasher Engineering allows simultaneous inflation/deflation of all tires on the motorhome and/or dinghy vehicle via a patent-pending manifold and valve system. The core components consist of 3/8-inch polyurethane manifold tubing, which is routed to one custom-designed brass Schrader inflation valve at each corner of the vehicle. To inflate the tires, simply attach the quick-connect 1/4-inch whips to the valve stems and brass inflation valves and inflate all tires at once

using the manifold's central inflation point; they can be deflated via the system's ball-valve assembly. Universal in application and modular in design, the 2Way Air system uses all push-to-connect fittings and is available in master kits for four, six or eight tires. Many options are available. MSRP: \$199.95-\$399.95.

2Way Air, 702-981-6081, www.2wayair.com



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The outdoor garden/security lamp by the Jirah Co. makes it easy for friends and family to find your home-away-from-home, while enhancing the security of your site. Proudly display the flag of your military service, favorite sports team,

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Featuring convenient remote control, the lamp plugs into any 120-volt AC outlet and uses a standard household light bulb (40 watts max). It

measures 48 inches tall and can be easily disassembled for compact storage. Made in the United States (flag and light bulb not included). MSRP: \$89 plus shipping.

Jirah Co., 909-297-1926, www.jirahled.com

STEP RIGHT UP

Like your home, an RV needs frequent maintenance that may require a ladder for chores such as cleaning the roof, awning or exterior walls. But unlike your home, there isn't a garage to store it in. The Extend-A-Step telescoping ladder can be extended to 12.5 feet and supports up to 330 pounds, according to the company, yet is only 30 inches tall in the stored position. Made from aircraft-quality aluminum, the original Extend-A-Step weighs just 26.5 pounds and features an integrated carrying handle, non-slip end caps and a heavy-duty closure strap. MSRP: \$149.99.

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CAMPING WORLD HONORS VETS WITH FLAGS



Camping World Inc. and Good Sam

Enterprises LLC announced a new project to install massive American flags at various Camping World supercenters across the country to honor veterans. The flags measure 30-by-60 feet or 40-by-80 feet, depending on zoning regulations, and the poles are 130 feet tall. In many cases, these will be the largest flying American flags in the surrounding area.

“Our company places extreme pride and value on our country and its veterans. A large percentage of our employees, and also customers, are veterans, and we want to honor them, their dedication to our country and to our local communities,” said Marcus Lemonis, chairman and CEO

of Camping World and Good Sam. “By making this proud statement, our goal is to bring local communities together in celebration of everything that has been accomplished by veterans for our country.”

Camping World welcomes veterans and the local community to attend the formal flag-raising ceremonies at supercenters that install the flags.

Camping World SuperCenters in Tucson, Ariz.; New Braunfels, Texas; Jacksonville, Fla.; Redding, Calif.; and Lubbock, Texas, are among the first locations to display these large American flags. Upcoming locations that are slated to raise these flags include Mesa, Ariz.; Coburg, Ore.; Ocala, Fla.; Valencia, Calif.; Meridian, Idaho; and Lake Park, Ga., with more to follow.

TMC USING LIPPERT'S LINC REMOTE TECHNOLOGY



According to a press release from Lippert

Components Inc., Thor Motor Coach (TMC) is using Lippert's Linc Remote System technology for its Rapid Camp wireless control system on several of its Class A and Class C motorhome brands. TMC's Rapid Camp allows users to control the patio awning, slideout rooms, exterior patio light, leveling jacks and generator from within 50 feet of the motorhome, as well as monitor the progress of each function.

“We recently launched the Rapid Camp wireless system on several brands,” said Jon Krider, TMC's Director of Marketing. “It definitely simplifies using the

coach for our customers. Lippert's Linc Remote System technology provides customers with easy access to their most-used features and allows them to be outside of the coach while operating jacks and slide rooms.” He added, “For instance, if a rain storm rolled in and they were visiting a neighboring coach, they could simply retract the awning using the Rapid Camp without getting wet!”

Rapid Camp is now available on the Hurricane, Windsport, Miramar, Challenger and Outlaw Class A, as well as the Outlaw and F-550 Super C motorhomes.

News Briefs

Winnebago Industries Inc. has been recognized by Statistical Surveys Inc., a retail reporting service in Grand Rapids, Mich., for having the top-selling motorhome brand for 2013. “We are very proud of the continued success of Winnebago in the marketplace and we continue to develop innovative, quality products to promote this iconic American brand,” said Winnebago Vice President of Sales and Product Management Scott Degnan. “We have launched a great motorhome lineup this year, with several brand new, innovative products just entering the marketplace. We believe our new Trend, Viva!, Forza, Solei, and Travato now entering the market will bring us additional incremental growth in the coming year.”

UltraRVproducts.com, an Olympia, Wash.-based parts-distribution company, has a new online resource for Workhorse RV and commercial chassis owners. According to a press release, the company offers a complete line of Workhorse parts, as well as hard-to-find chassis and technical service manuals — including engine, brake, chassis and electrical wiring diagrams. For especially hard-to-find parts, customers can send their coach's VIN number and description of what is needed, and www.UltraRVproducts.com will source the part.

Coach-Net recently launched a new product, called Finish Protect, which is an interior and exterior surface protection package for new and used RVs. Finish Protect provides seven-year coverage for a wide variety of damage, including rips, punctures and tears. “We are continuing to enhance our comprehensive line of Protect Suite products, as part of our commitment to delivering industry-leading, peace-of-mind solutions that meet the needs of RV owners,” said Dan Lopez, vice president of Coach-Net Sales.

Winnebago Industries Inc. has agreed to become the North American supplier of motorized rental units for Apollo Motorhome Holidays in the United States. According to Apollo, an international rental provider, it is the largest privately owned leisure vehicle operator in the world with a fleet of 4,000 vehicles and 23 branches across Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the U.S.

RV SHOWS

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ALASKA'S FIRST AUTOMOBILES

If The Last Frontier is on your travel

docket, plan a stop in Fairbanks to see a new exhibit at the Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum showcasing the history of the automobile in Alaska. Running June 1, 2014-March 30, 2015, the exhibit "Extreme Motoring: Alaska's First Automobiles and Their Dauntless Drivers" brings to life the exhilarating days following Alaska's gold rush.

Extreme Motoring will feature a collection of original automobiles, as well as several rare cars, identical to the first to arrive in the territory, and Alaska's first horse-



Alaska automotive pioneer Robert Sheldon put skis and chains on the tires of his Ford Model T for winter travel.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF FRANCES ERICKSON

less carriage. The exhibit will also tell the stories of Alaska's first motorists and the challenges they faced before there were any highways, bridges, or snow plows.

Opened in 2009, Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum has a permanent collection of more than 85 vehicles and is also home to a large display of historic fashions.

For more information, call 907-458-6112, or visit www.fountainheadmuseum.com



A steam-powered White was the third car to drive the streets of Fairbanks.

A SEMPER FI EXPERIENCE

Much more than a dusty repository of

historical archives, the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Virginia brings to life the history of this unique branch of our American military. Modern, sleek, and technically advanced displays fill the 120,000-square-foot facility, which is strikingly designed in the image of the famous World War II flag raising on Iwo Jima. Full-size and lifelike vignettes depict 200 years of Marine Corps operations from the Revolutionary War to the war on terror. Everything from the music and pageantry of the Corps to sobering moments of valor and loss are illustrated. Learn why and how the Marines are the "first to fight," as interactive and immersive exhibits put you into the action. Hear first-hand accounts of the battle for Iwo Jima



from Iwo veteran and museum docent Frank Mathews who, although wounded several times, survived his month in combat in this historic battle. Enjoy lunch in the Tun Tavern themed restaurant, an ode to the Philadelphia Ale house where the Marine Corps was first formed in the 1700s. The museum is located on 135 acres in Triangle, Va., off Interstate 95 and adjacent to the Marine Corps base at Quantico. Admission to the museum (open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) is free, and parking is plentiful with ample room for motorhomes. Camping can be found nearby at Prince William Forest Park and a number of private campgrounds in the area.

For more information, call 877-635-1775, or visit www.usmcmuseum.com — A.M. Murphy ♦

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TRANQUIL MARSHES, UNSPOILED BEACHES AND SECLUDED CAMPSITES AWAIT ALONG THE SUNSHINE STATE'S FORGOTTEN COAST

Nestled inconspicuously between Florida's vibrant capital city of Tallahassee and the tourist mecca of Destin, the relaxed section of coast that surrounds St. Joseph Peninsula is known as Florida's "forgotten coast." Far from being a criticism, the apt moniker is an indicator of the region's unspoiled natural beauty and undeveloped expanses of beach. Located south of Port St. Joe on Highway 98 and State Route 30, St. Joseph Peninsula extends out into the sparkling Gulf of Mexico and parallels the coast, thus creating an oasis of bay waters on one side and warm Gulf waters on the other.

Cruising down the forgotten coast in our motorhome, my husband and I watched the sun sink down below the horizon and resigned ourselves to the



Top: St. Joseph Peninsula State Park has 95 RV sites with water and 30-amp electrical service. Above: Access to the park's wilderness preserve interior requires a permit, which can be obtained at the ranger station.

PHOTOS: A.M. MURPHY



Clockwise from above: St. Joseph Peninsula is home to miles of white-sand beaches and some of the highest sand dunes in the country. The monument in the Constitution Convention Museum State Park bears the names of the delegates of the state's 1838 constitution convention. St. Joseph Peninsula State Park's coastal boardwalk provides access to the park's two campgrounds.



PHOTO: GULF COUNTY FLORIDA TOURISM

prospect of yet another late night arrival at our campsite. We always have the best of intentions to arrive at a respectable hour, set up camp and thus avoid vexing our site neighbors. Alas, whether it is due to a rainstorm or a roadway back up, we seem to always arrive in the dark of night and get assigned to the tightest and most awkward spot in any campground.

As we pulled onto the peninsula access road it was a breezy warm night with a sky full of stars. The empty paved road continued for several miles and only the shadows of sand dunes and occasional glimpses of dark calm waters could be seen on either side of us. On our right side, the tranquil waters of St. Joseph Bay

and on our left the breezy, salty waters of the Gulf. I was struck by the stillness and feeling of tranquility that came over me as we seemed to leave the world behind.

The peninsula began to widen and we pulled into the campground area of the T.H Stone Memorial St. Joseph Peninsula State Park. In the 1800s, the Stone family owned the land that is now the state park facility, as well as most of the land surrounding the bay area. In the early 1900s, the Stones sold the peninsula to the government for military use. The location was opened to the public as a state park in 1967. The 95-site RV camping facility is divided into two sections, Gulf Breeze and Shady Pines. The Gulf Breeze

section is perfect for sunshine lovers and warm breezes while Shady Pines accurately describes a heavily treed and blissfully shaded section of sites. The camping areas are equally beautiful and each is just steps from the warm Gulf waters.

We located our site and, having somewhat mastered the technique of silently connecting to power and water in stealthy movements and hushed voices, we avoided the prospect of facing grumpy neighbors in the morning. With our windows open to catch the breeze, we went to sleep that night to the soft rustle of the trees and the rhythmic ebb and flow of the tide.

We arose early the next morning and

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St. Joseph Peninsula State Park is one of the stops listed on the Florida Birding Trail.

walked the mere 200 feet to the beach. We were greeted by a wide, white, sugar sand shore that continued undisturbed in both directions as far as we could see. Our sole companions were a couple of fishermen casting for flounder and red drum,

and a handful of hungry sandpipers picking through remnants of the waning tide. As we walked, we marveled at the size and depth of the coastal dunes and later learned that they are indeed the tallest sand dunes found east of the Mississippi.

The dunes and the sea oat vegetation that covers them are vigilantly protected, as their presence guards against storm intrusion and supports preservation of the beach area. The sea oat plants that grow in and among the dunes create a mesh-like root system that prevents erosion. The dunes are also home to an adorable endangered species, the St. Andrews Beach mouse. This tiny creature is only known to survive in and among the dunes of St. Joseph Peninsula. To protect its dunes, vegetation and wildlife, the state park has developed a boardwalk system.

The boardwalk spans over and around the dunes, crosses marshes, skirts estuaries teeming with life and connects the two camping sections. The boardwalk is a great place to watch birds and migrating butterflies. We walked leisurely past a couple of intent birdwatchers with binoculars and identification books in hand. The park provides a handy checklist of almost 250 birds that live on, or migrate through, the peninsula. Herons, loons, owls, kingfishers, flycatchers and

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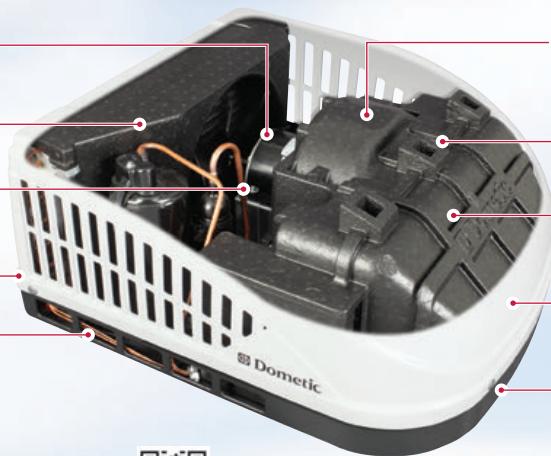
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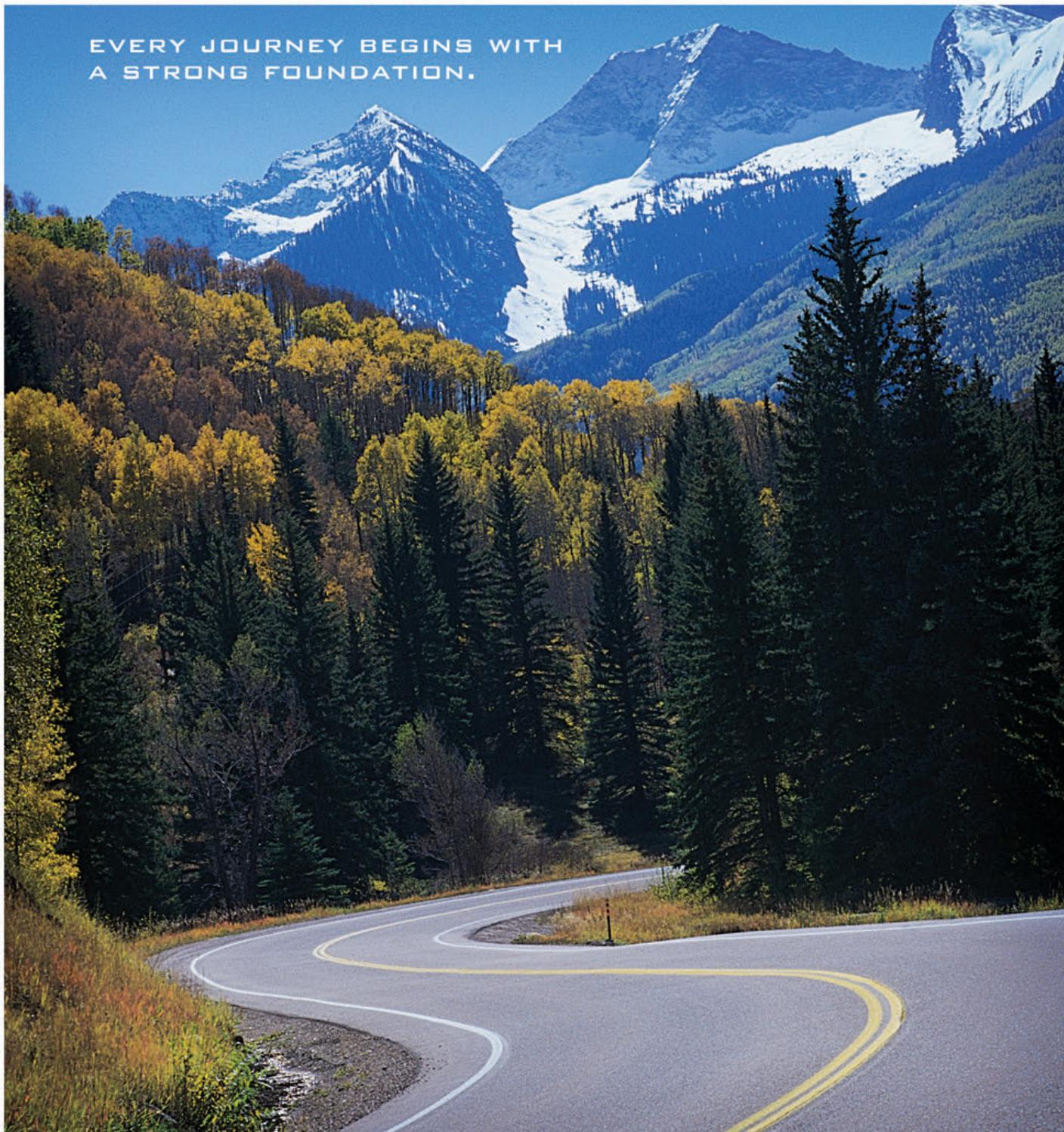
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Kayaking is a fun way to explore the waters and marshes of St. Joseph Bay.

1800s it was known as St. Joseph and the area was the center of Florida's fledgling government, serving as the territorial capital and home to the first constitutional convention. Delegates from across Florida wrangled, debated and finally petitioned Congress for admission to the Union as the 27th state. Eventually, the capital was moved to Tallahassee, and now debates in the St. Joe area center around predicting what kind of scallop season the fishermen will have this year.

Fishermen on the peninsula have no shortage of options for maritime prey including blue crab, flounder, trout, mullet and even shark; however, the catch of choice in the area is the bay scallop. The area is well known among anglers for its bay scallop season, which draws coastal fishermen and their nets, buckets and boats to the marinas all around the bay area. Generally spanning July through

September, this productive season produces the scallops that are the local dish of preference and declared to be especially succulent and delicious. We missed scallop season, so our attention was focused on another fascinating creature of the sea, the dolphin. During several warm dips in the Gulf waters, we were greeted by schools of dolphins swimming just past us and enjoying their own diversion of flips and frolicking. Like a ritual, the dolphins would pass by twice a day, arching and gliding on the water's surface and occasionally flipping into the air, either for our amusement or their own. However, they were not the only creatures on the peninsula with a daily ritual.

Each evening at sunset we witnessed campers gather on the beach in quiet ceremony — some with refreshments in hand to make a toast — watching the slowly retreating sun. Oranges and pinks danced and bobbed on the water's gleaming surface as the campers soaked in the moment and quietly reflected. As the giant glowing orb finally dipped below the horizon, a small cheer would go up through the gathering. Each person knew privately what he or she was cheering for; the beauty and wonder of the moment, friendships forged or renewed, or maybe just another great day of camping. Then quietly, couples and friends drifted back to the homey comfort of their motorhomes for another night of peaceful sleep under St. Joseph Peninsula's starry skies. ♦

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A.M. Murphy has been an avid camper since childhood. She lives and writes in the Great Smoky Mountains and loves motorhome traveling with her husband.



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ALL IN THE FAMILY

MULTIGENERATIONAL CAMPGROUNDS HELP KEEP TRADITIONS ALIVE

by JEFF CRIDER

All of us have felt the draw of a campground, whether it's the meals around a campfire with family and friends or simply the experience of enjoying the sites and sounds of nature. The allure of a campground can be even more powerful for children who grow up working in a family-owned campground. Even when they leave for college or to set out to carve their niche in the world, many of them come back to join their parents and other siblings in the campground business. As a result, many of America's privately owned and operated campgrounds have been run by the same families for generations.

"Owning a campground, running a campground and growing up on a campground is more of a lifestyle than a job," said Emily Truell, 26, a third-generation co-owner and operator of **Lake Arrowhead Campground** in Montello, Wis., which she runs with her parents and two siblings.

Lake Arrowhead Campground was founded in 1971 by Truell's grandparents, Arnold and Bea Malsack, but it has



Clockwise from top right: The Baker family of Bakers Acres. Lake Arrowhead Campground's third-generation owners: Emily Truell, Jessica Malsack and Adam Malsack. Cherry Hill's Gurevich family: Mike, Norman, Sig and Gerry. The Cable family of Austin Lake RV Park.



stayed in the family even though Malsack's children and grandchildren had opportunities to pursue different careers.

"We all have different interests," Truell said. "We all have advanced degrees."

Truell, for example, has a bachelor's degree in therapeutic recreation, while her sister, Jessica, has a bachelor's in anthropology. Their 34-year-old brother, Adam Malsack, has a master's degree in electrical engineering. But he's now working as the park's general manager.

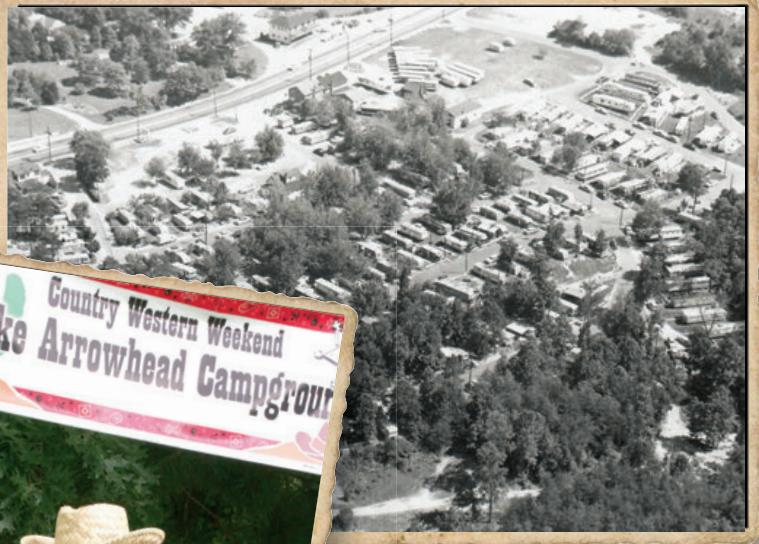
"We were never forced to stay in the campground," Truell said. "But we all loved it and ended up back here because that's what we wanted to do."

Adam Malsack said he and his family have developed close ties with many of their guests, which feeds their passion in trying to provide the best camping experience they can. "Many of our customers have known all three generations of owners and feel a certain bond to us and our family," he said. "They've seen us buy our first car. They've attended our weddings. Some of our closest friends are lifetime campers who themselves are second- or third-generation campers in our park."

Children who grow up working at their family's campground sometimes find themselves drawn back to the business as adults



Left to right: "Reds" and Anne Baker at the grand opening cake cutting for Bakers Acres. Lake Arrowhead Campground's second-generation owner Phil Malsack posing at the park's country western photo booth. An aerial view of Cherry Hill as it appeared in 1960. Below: A 1980s newspaper article featuring the Gurevich family of Cherry Hill.



even when family members have to work other jobs to keep the campground going.

Sixty-eight-year-old William Cable offers an interesting case in point. He grew up working at **Austin Lake RV Park & Campground** in Toronto, Ohio, which his parents and grandfather built in 1944. But while the park was in a scenic location, the business was not self-sustaining and his dad worked as a heavy equipment operator throughout most of his adult life while the family made improvements to the campground.

Cable initially wasn't convinced he wanted to follow in his father's footsteps. In fact, after graduating from high school, he left the family

campground to pursue a degree in journalism at Ohio University. He subsequently fell in love with a Rotary exchange student from South Africa, who he followed back to her native country.

"She told me she wouldn't marry me unless I visited her country," Cable said, adding, "I went to South Africa thinking I would never be coming back."

The romance didn't last, however, and while motorcycling across South Africa, Cable realized just how lucky he was to be part of a family that owned its own campground in one of the most scenic areas of Ohio. "Four months later, I was homeward bound with an attitude adjustment," Cable said. "I have not left the valley since then."

Upon his return to Ohio, Cable took several more classes and met his future wife, Marsha. They both became middle school teachers, while also working full-time with Cable's parents at Austin Lake RV Park & Campground.

"The campground would not support us as full-time employees at that time," Cable said. "This was 1970. Even my dad still worked full-time to survive."

But since they had their teaching salaries to sustain

Family business set for move to Beltsville
By DERALD EVERHART

After five years of planning and more than 40 years at the same Coleridge Park location, two generations of Gurevichs soon will pull up stakes on the family business and head west to a new campground. The family plans to break ground the first week of June on a new 400-site campground on Cherry Hill Road less than three miles from their Cherry Hill Campsite campground. Road less than three miles from Cherry Hill Campsite, the new property will be the first time the family business has left the 27-acre property along Route 1 on which Jacob and Rose Gurevich first raised chickens there in the 1930s and later opened a general store with gasoline pumps. The new 400-site project, which is scheduled to open by February 1989, is expected to cost \$10 million, according to Gerry Gurevich, who along with his brother Mike are the fourth generation to work in the business. Also putting in a real city system which includes roads, and sewer-



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them, the Cables were able to continually reinvest profits from the campground back into the business, adding more sites and making other improvements, while keeping the campground profitable and debt-free.

Cable and his wife took over management of Austin Lake RV Park & Campground 24 years ago, and helped build it into a 210-site park that also has cabins and an onsite water ski school. The Cables now run the park with the help of their two children and 20 full- and part-time employees.

"Sweat equity is how we built this park," Cable said, adding, "My mom, Jeanne Cable, was the matriarch who held it together when there was zero money."

Many campground owners say they feel a powerful sense of duty to keep their family businesses alive, no matter what kinds of obstacles they encounter.

Mike Gurevich traces his family's history in the campground business back to 1930s, when his grandparents Rose and Jacob Gurevich operated the **Cherry Hill Poultry Farm** as well as a general store and gas station in College Park, Md., just outside of Washington, D.C. The Gureviches always allowed travelers to spend the night on their property, and the numbers of travelers increased with the development of the interstate highway system.

The Gurevich family subsequently relocated the campground (now called Cherry Hill Park) in 1989 to a location just outside the Washington, D.C., beltway to catch more north-south travelers as well as visitors to the nation's capital. But it was a tough transition.

"It was a very painful first five years," he said. "We thought we were just taking an existing business and moving it over to the new site. But people still went to the old park, didn't see our relocation sign and left. Then we ran into the recession and the first Gulf War, which affected business."

But Gurevich didn't give up, and his family has built Cherry Hill Park from a 70-site campground into a 350-site park that serves as base camp for visitors to Washington, D.C.

"I don't think that failure was really an option," Gurevich said. "I really felt at the time that we had to see it through however long it took because this was a

family business legacy."

The legacy factor weighs heavily on today's private park operators, including the second and third generations of Baker family who own and operate **Bakers Acres Family Campground** (founded in 1968) in Little Egg Harbor Township in Ocean County, N.J.

John "Reds" Baker, the patriarch of the family, was killed along with three other volunteer firefighters who lost their lives while battling a forest fire in 1977, just 12 years after he had founded the campground.

"When my Dad died, we came together and worked together to fill his shoes," Jack Baker said. The family subsequently built the park into a 250-site RV resort, complete with Wi-Fi service and organized family-oriented activities.

The thought of selling the park or leaving the campground business is unthinkable to members of the Baker family.

"We have too much invested in this campground with our emotions," said Monica Baker Frazer, John "Reds" Baker's granddaughter, who manages the campground alongside her two brothers, John and Jason Baker. "Even us grandkids who never met our grandfather feel very strongly for what he did and what he stood for."

And while Bakers Acres has gone through the ups and downs of the economy, Monica Baker Frazer said her family has been blessed by their location and by the resiliency of the campground business itself. "We remain a spot that people want to come and visit," she said, adding, "When the economy takes a downturn, we are still an inexpensive place to go."

Of course, not every owner of a family-owned campground has children or other relatives who want to go into the campground business.

Such is the case with Paul Casini, who grew up working with his parents and sister when his family established **Casini Ranch Campground** along California's Russian River in the 1960s.

"My family has been here and owned the ranch since the 1880s," Casini said, adding that the property was originally used for a redwood lumber mill and then a dairy before becoming a ranch for raising sheep and cows. "In the early days, my grandfather would allow people to cross



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the hay fields to go fishing," Casini said.

Local officials subsequently approached Casini's father about building a campground in an effort to develop Sonoma County's tourism business.

The Russian River, in Northern California, is a popular location for steelhead fishing, river tubing and kayaking, and Casini Ranch Campground has grown into a 200-site RV park that includes group sites as well as camping cabins.

"I promised my parents on their deathbeds that I would do whatever it took to keep their business and their legacy alive. That's how I feel," Casini said, adding that he hopes to keep the business in the family.

Casini himself doesn't have any children, but he does have a sister, two nephews and a niece. "My nephew was my right-hand man when my father passed away," Casini said. "There was some talk

about letting him go off on his own, letting him struggle on his own, and then have him come back. That gives the heir a real feel for what it's like to build a business."

Paul Casini's nephew, Andy Casini, has been working as a heavy equipment operator for a rock quarry in Northern California, but recently told Casini he wants to come back to the family campground.

"Andy has told me that his heart is here at the ranch and he'd like to come back into the business," Casini said, adding, "He has gone out on his own and found his way. I hope his brother, Gino, may someday wish the same. Their memories of their grandparents and growing up here are strong and I see the pull in their eyes, the pull that I have in me. So I think the future is looking good for another generation. Gino also has a young son. So, maybe" ♦

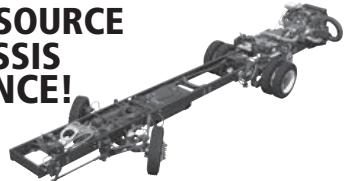
 Jeff Crider is a Palm Desert, Calif.-based freelance writer, photographer and camping enthusiast who previously covered the RV industry and tourism for newspapers in Southern California.

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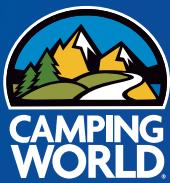
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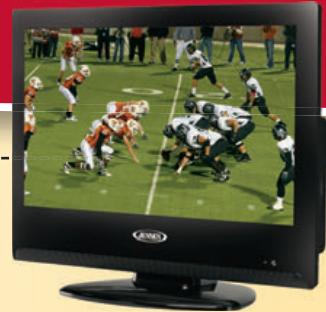
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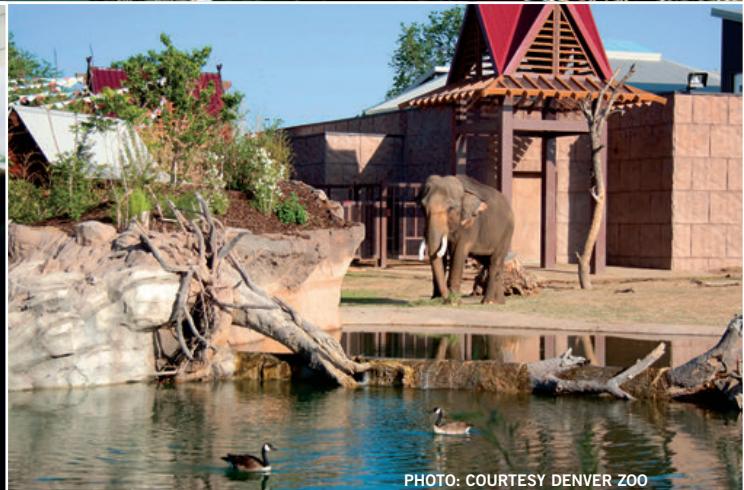


PHOTO: COURTESY DENVER ZOO

Denver, Colo., has long been our frequent destination for top-notch entertainment, weekend getaways and family gatherings. Less than an hour north of our home in the small community of Monument, Denver is where we go when we long for the excitement, variety and sophistication of a big city. In order to write an article from an RVer's point of view, we packed up

the motorhome and spent a few days exploring Colorado's magnificent Mile High City.

We used Cherry Creek State Park in Aurora as our home base. The 4,200-acre park with an 880-surface-acre reservoir is located in the southeast part of the Denver metro area. The park offers 131 campsites, most with full hookups, in a natural prairie environment with gentle rolling hills and cottonwood trees.

There's plenty to do without ever leaving the park: boating, fishing, swimming and water skiing in the lake; hiking, biking and horseback riding on the trails; a model airplane field; and a shooting center. After a stroll on the swim beach, we headed downtown.

No trip to Denver would be complete without exploring its downtown area. There are several ways to get there. You could drive your dinghy vehicle or



Clockwise from above: Red Rocks Amphitheatre is an amazing natural venue with two 300-foot sandstone monoliths rising dramatically to provide acoustic perfection. Denver Botanical Gardens has more than 20 well-maintained theme gardens, a tropical conservatory and numerous pools. The 10-acre Toyota Elephant Passage at the Denver Zoo is home to Asian elephants, Indian rhinoceroses, Malayan tapirs and gibbons. Free guided tours are available at the Coors Brewery during the summer; self-paced tours are available the rest of the year. Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge is a 15,000-acre wildlife haven with more than 330 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish.



take the RTD Light Rail. RTD's Nine Mile Station is not far from Cherry Creek State Park. We rode our bikes on the Cherry Creek Trail, a paved hiking and biking path that runs from the state park to downtown Denver. It passes by golf courses and the upscale Cherry Creek Shopping Center, and ends at Confluence Park where Cherry Creek and the South Platte River meet. The 16th Street Mall is a mile-long pedestrian mall lined

with outdoor cafés, shops and restaurants. You can walk or take the free shuttle buses to explore this popular area (no bikes allowed except on Sundays).

The next day, we drove to the Coors Brewery in Golden, the world's largest single-site brewery. Free guided tours are available in the summer; self-paced tours are available the rest of the year. Before our tour started, we perused the displays in the lobby to learn about the

company's history. Adolph Coors started brewing beer in Colorado in 1873. The company survived Prohibition by converting the facility to produce malted milk and near beer, and by investing in porcelain manufacturing, concrete production and real estate. The company also survived the Great Depression and two world wars. The MillerCoors joint venture was created in 2008. Our guide explained the company's efforts toward environmental stewardship and the process of brewing beer. We quenched our thirst with beer samples at the end of the tour.

The Colorado Railroad Museum is just a five-minute drive from the brewery. We knew we were in for a treat when an excited 6-year-old boy told the ticket agent he'd been saving his allowance — \$5 in quarters — to run the trains. We followed this young fan's lead to the basement where the Denver HO Model Railroad Club maintains an impressive track with HO, HO_{N3} and traction models. Visitors can drop a quarter into a coin box to make the trains run. Outside, we

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COLORADO'S MAGNIFICENT MILE HIGH CITY

Top to bottom: Confluence Park — where Cherry Creek and the South Platte River meet — is a popular spot for swimming, rafting and kayaking in downtown Denver. More than 100 classic cars, including those featured in Clive Cussler's bestselling adventure novels, are displayed at the Cussler Museum; this 1948 Delahaye was featured in "Crescent Dawn." The Colorado Railroad Museum houses locomotives, passenger cars, freight cars, cabooses and a few massive snowplows.

wandered by locomotives, passenger cars, freight cars, cabooses and a few massive snowplows. If we would have come on a Saturday, we could have ridden on a train.

Since it was a Tuesday, we headed for the Cussler Museum in nearby Aurora, which is open Mondays and Tuesdays from May through September. Dirk Pitt may be a fictional character, but the cars featured in many of Clive Cussler's bestselling adventure novels are real. More than 100 classic cars are in the collection, plus a cast-iron bathtub with an outboard motor Pitt used to escape Cuba in "Cyclops." RVers will appreciate the 1937 Pierce-Arrow Travelodge Trailer Pitt pulled with a 1936 Pierce-Arrow V12 Berline in "Inca Gold." The 16½-foot trailer slept four. It had a kitchen area with an icebox and heating stove and a bathroom with a sink and toilet. This trailer cost \$875 when it was new. Our visit prompted me to pull "Inca Gold" from our bookshelf and scan it to see how the daring hero used the Travelodge in his adventures.

We ended our first day with a new experience at an old favorite. More than 30 years ago we attended our first concert at Red Rocks Amphitheatre west of Denver, and we've been fans ever since. It's an amazing natural amphitheater. Two 300-foot sandstone monoliths rise dramatically to provide acoustic perfection. A wide variety of musicians have performed on this famous stage, including The Beatles, U2 and Norah Jones. In addition to live performances, Red Rocks also presents cult-classic movies on Tuesday nights throughout the summer. If you want to visit Denver's top attraction, plan ahead to get tickets, and arrive early enough to visit the Performers' Hall of Fame in the visitor center. You can also check out the visitor center during non-event hours free of charge. Check the website for informa-



tion on handicapped parking and shuttle if you have disabilities or mobility impairments, as the hike from the parking lots is steep and can be physically challenging.

We spent the next day visiting two more old favorites, the Denver Art Museum and the Denver Zoo. In more than a dozen visits over the years, we've seen just a fraction of the 70,000 works of art in the museum's collection. With traveling exhibits featuring artists like Vincent

van Gogh, Homer Winslow and Georgia O'Keeffe diverting our attention during previous visits, hours flew by leaving little time to explore the rest of the museum. This time we focused solely on the permanent collection. My favorite was Sandy Skoglund's "Fox Games," a large-scale, multimedia installation depicting a restaurant interior. Everything is red — walls, floor, tables, chairs, tablecloths, silverware and bread — except for 28 gray foxes playfully

COLORADO'S MAGNIFICENT MILE HIGH CITY

frozen in action.

The Denver Zoo, an 80-acre facility in City Park, has plenty of playful animals, from arctic foxes to monkeys to elephants. Since we didn't have time to visit all 3,500 animals, we went straight to the 10-acre Toyota Elephant Passage. It's divided into three thematic habitats: Chang Pa Wildlife Preserve, Schoelzel Family Village and Village Outpost. In the Wildlife Preserve, not only did we see Asian elephants, Indian rhinoceroses, Malayan tapirs and gibbons, we saw the work being done to protect Asia's most endangered animals. With its prayer flags and pull carts, the Family Village looks like a small town and marketplace in Southeast Asia. The Outpost tells the story of a village struggling to coexist with elephants that raid their crops.

The last day of our Denver getaway coincided with a visit from an out-of-town relative. With all the talented gardeners in our family, it wasn't surprising that the clan wanted to go to the Denver Botanic Gardens. More than 20 well-maintained theme gardens, a tropical conservatory



The 4,200-acre Cherry Creek State Park in Aurora offers 13 campsites, most with full hookups, in a natural prairie environment with gentle rolling hills and cottonwood trees.

and numerous pools create an idyllic setting. We especially enjoyed the rose garden, which was in full bloom, the Japanese Garden and the perennial walk. In summer months, a sunken amphitheater provides a venue for concerts. The facility is open year-round, with a highlight being Blossoms of Light during the holidays when colorful lights adorn trees, shrubs and manmade structures.

Our final stop was the biggest surprise of all. Say "Rocky Mountain Arsenal" to long-time Colorado residents and they will probably remember it as the controversial chemical weapons plant that closed in

1992. Now, it's a 15,000-acre wildlife refuge with more than 330 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish. At the visitor center we learned about the facility's history and marveled at its transformation. The 9-mile self-guided Wildlife Drive winds through the large enclosed bison area where more than 70 bison live. We hiked around Lake Mary on the floating boardwalk and easy Lake Mary Loop trail. A catch-and-release fisherman pointed out two deer on the small island, a safe haven away from predators where does give birth.

Four days was not enough time for us to explore all that Denver has to offer.

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We focused on things we hadn't done before, or in a long time. Some of our favorite attractions are still on the agenda for future trips. Next time, we'll view the Rocky Mountains from the steps of the Capitol, which at 5,280 feet above sea level, gave the city its Mile High nickname. At the Colorado History Museum and Buffalo Bill's Grave, we'll brush up on our state's history. We'll stand in awe of dinosaurs and Mars, and watch an IMAX movie at the Denver Museum of Science and Nature. Maybe we'll get tickets for a Colorado Rockies game at Coors Field, a Broncos game at Sports Authority Field, or my number-one reason for a trip to the big city — a musical theater performance at the Buell Theatre in the Denver Performing Arts Complex. We have plenty of motivation to go back to my favorite big city again and again. ♦



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

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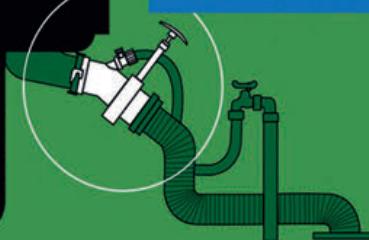
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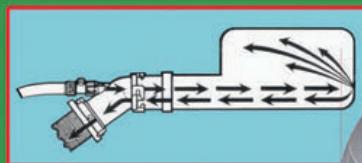


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A DAY AT THE BEACH

Put kids on a beach, give them a bucket and sand shovel, and what happens? Sand castles. Call it child's play if you will, but the magical mix of sand and water that has always enamored youngsters is increasingly capturing the interest and imagination of adults as well. Sand-sculpting contests and festivals are popping up on beaches around the world, attracting master sculptors who shape tons of sand into massive and intricately detailed works that you'd swear were chipped and chiseled from stone.

Once you've seen a few of these beauties, embodying a brilliant mix of engineering and artistry, you'll never think of sand castles or, for that matter, sand and water in the same way again.

Sand-sculpting contests rival beach volleyball tournaments for attendance in seaside communities around the country as thousands of spectators come to marvel at the multiday process of forming and fashioning the sculptures.

Much like touring golf or tennis pros, a close-knit clan of master sand sculptors — estimated to number more than 100 — follow a worldwide circuit of competitions spreading from Australia to Switzerland and Indonesia to Turkey. As skilled professional artists, most sand sculptors earn \$50,000 to \$100,000 a year from prize money, appearance fees, sponsors and commercial projects.

THESE 8 GREAT SAND-SCULPTING EVENTS OFFER FUN IN THE SUN FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES

by DAVE G. HOUSER



Above: Spectators marvel at the artistic creations of more than 30 master sand sculptors during the Annual American Sand Sculpting Championship in Fort Myers Beach, Fla. Below: Sculptors at work during the event employed a variety of tools, such as shovels, trowels, palette knives and dining utensils, to trim and shape the sand.



PHOTOS: DAVE G. HOUSER

Most competitions are organized into four categories: solo and doubles, amateur and professional. On opening day of a typical contest, solo sculptors or “carvers” are assigned to a 10-ton mound of sand, while two-person teams in doubles competition start with 20 to 25 tons. Then begins a rigorous process of shoveling, packing and stacking — known as the “pound up” — followed by long hours of shaping and carving.

Sculptors employ a variety of tools such as trowels, palette knives, spoons and drinking straws, along with an assortment of custom-made utensils to trim and shape the sand. Carvers continuously wet down the sand as they work, since it is the surface tension of the water that holds the sand together. In good weather or under protective cover, completed sculptures will hold together for several days, sometimes even a week, and much longer if sprayed with a solution of school glue and water.

Join us on a coast-to-coast, eight-state tour of the country’s favorite sand-sculpting contests.

FORT MYERS BEACH, FLA.

Skirted by more than 1,350 miles of coastline — much of it soft, sandy beach — Florida is quite naturally home to a number of sand-sculpting events. The largest and longest running of them is the American Sand Sculpting Championship, staged each November since 1986 on Fort Myers Beach.

The 10-day-long event brings together an international mix of several dozen master sculptors, a large supporting cast of amateurs, and tens of thousands of spectators, all mingled together on a sandy strand behind Pinchers Crab Shack and the Wyndham Garden Hotel to celebrate the creation of a veritable sculpture garden lined with works rivaling any carved from stone or cast in bronze.

Watching sculptures take shape is just part of a busy schedule of activities in store for guests. The Quick Sand Speed Sculpting Contest matches master sculptors in face-to-face 10-minute “sculpt offs,” carving subjects chosen by members of the audience — and the audience then decides the winners. Sand-sculpting demonstrations and lessons offer another opportunity for interaction as master

sculptors share the tricks of their craft with guests. Snacking and shopping urges are well served too, at Sand Vendor Village, where more than 50 vendors offer food, beverages, specialty retail items, arts and crafts. Music is always in the air as well, with live performances throughout the event.

Presented by the Fort Myers Beach Chamber of Commerce, the 28th Annual American Sand Sculpting Championship is scheduled for Nov. 21-30. For more information, go to www.FMBsandsculpting.com. The nearest campground is the beachfront **Red Coconut RV Park, 239-463-7200, www.redcoconut.com**

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA.

Each September for the last 40 years, the city of Virginia Beach, Va., has bid farewell to its summer season with one last beachfront bash, known as the Neptune Festival. It’s a mega-party featuring a medley of events ranging from a triathlon to a symphony concert — with the signature event being the International Sand-sculpting Championship.

Decades in development, this is a well-organized, highly refined event that has earned a reputation in sand-sculpting circles as a world-class venue. As such, and bolstered by its bountiful \$50,000 purse, the Virginia Beach Championship

draws the largest and most talented field of international sculptors of any competition in the country. A glimpse at the 2013 results tells the story: the first four places in the solo competition were foreigners, led by top prize winner, Jooheng Tan from Singapore, while the team, or doubles, crown went to Canadians Jonathan Bouchard and Jacinthe Trudel.

The event, dubbed “Neptune’s Land of Sand,” is staged beneath a huge oceanfront tent, nearly as large as a football field, where 12 solo sculptors and 10 doubles teams carve and display their masterpieces during a 10-day period. It’s a gallery-like atmosphere, protected from any inclement weather, inviting spectators to stroll boarded walkways for intimate viewing of the sculpting process and finished artwork. Teaching demos, live “QuickSand” competitions and Meet and Greet opportunities with sculptors add to the visitor experience.

Managed by a nonprofit volunteer community organization, the Neptune Festival’s International Sandsculpting Championship will celebrate its 41st year Sept. 26-Oct. 5. For more information, visit www.neptunefestival.com. Camping can be found nearby at **Holiday Trav-L-Park of Virginia Beach, 866-850-9630, www.campingvb.com**

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.

History, they say, repeats itself — and that’s what has happened in Atlantic City, N.J., new home to the DO AC Sand Sculpting World Cup. Most experts on the subject concur that this seaside Jersey city, so famous for its boardwalk, was the birthplace, back in the late 1800s, of American sand sculpting.

The event itself has a long history, moving to Atlantic City last June (then named the World Championship of Sand Sculpting), as a refugee from a Seattle suburb where it had been staged for a couple of years. Prior to that, it was held at Harrison Hot Springs, British Columbia, Canada, where it originated in 1987.

A free public event staged on Missouri Avenue Beach (between the Pier Shops at Caesars and Trump Plaza), the World Cup brings together 20 internationally renowned master sculptors who compete in head-to-head singles and doubles



PHOTO: VIRGINIA BEACH NEPTUNE FESTIVAL

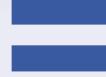
The signature event at the Virginia Beach Neptune Festival is the International Sandsculpting Championship.



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competitions for more than \$75,000 in prize money.

Organized and produced by veteran local sculptor John Gowdy, working with the Atlantic City Alliance, this year's event is set for June 19-27, with sculptures remaining on exhibit until July 7. For more information, visit www.atlanticcityalliance.net. The nearest RV campground is **Long Beach Carefree RV Resort in Barnegat, 609-698-5684, www.carefreeresorts.com**

HAMPTON BEACH, N.H.

New England's largest sand-sculpting event has taken place for the last 13 summers on the rocky shores of New Hampshire. The invitational Hampton Beach Master Sand Sculpting Competition pits 10 world-class masters vying for a share of the \$15,000 purse during an intensive three-day showdown.

The event was born back in 2000, when local artist and master sand sculptor Greg Grady was commissioned by the U.S. Mint and the State of New Hampshire to create a larger-than-life-size replica of the just-introduced New Hampshire quarter out of 10 tons of sand for a local festival celebrating the coin's release. The coin carved in sand made such an impression on Hampton Beach Village officials that they organized a sand-sculpting competi-

tion to begin the following year — with Grady in charge of making it happen.

Grady, who has indeed made the event happen for well more than a decade, says the only obstacle has been the fact that local sand is too coarse and grainy for sculpting, making it necessary to truck in more than 250 tons of imported sand for the annual competition.

This year's event is scheduled to run June 19-21. For more information, go to www.hamptonbeach.org/sandcastle-competition.cfm. The nearest RV park is **Tidewater Campground, 603-926-5474, www.ucampnh.com/tidewater**

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, TEXAS

Famous for its soft, white sand, the Texas Gulf Coast is home to several major sand-sculpting events, the longest running and most popular of which is South Padre



PHOTO: RICHARD STOCKTON

South Padre's soft, white sand makes it an ideal location for sand-sculpting events such as Sandcastle Days in October.



PHOTO: HAMPTON BEACH, N.H.

The invitational Hampton Beach Master Sand Sculpting Competition, held June 19-21 in Hampton Beach, N.H., is New England's largest sand-sculpting event.



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Island's Sandcastle Days.

This free, family-friendly funfest was founded 27 years ago by resident master sand sculptors Walter McDonald (aka Amazin' Walter) and Lucinda Wierenga (aka Sandy Feet) as a way of drawing attention to the magical sculpting qualities of South Padre's sand — and the critical importance of protecting the island's beautiful but fragile shores. It has grown over the years from a purely local celebration to one of the country's top sand-sculpting competitions, gaining a large following of traveling pros who create museum-worthy sculptures along the beach next to Clayton's Beach Bar & Grill to the delight of more than 30,000 spectators.

Hundreds of amateurs — some serious, some not so — give free reign to their creativity as well, and there are sandcastle lessons for those who really want to take up the art of sculpting. A food fair, art show and live music add to the festivities.

Sandcastle Days 2014 is set for Oct. 2-5. For more information, visit www.sandcastledays.com. Set up camp at nearby **South Padre KOA, 800-562-9724, www.southpadrekoa.com**

SAN DIEGO, CALIF.

Promoters like to point out that “it’s on the water, but it’s not on the beach,” when touting the U.S. Sand Sculpting Challenge & 3D Art Exposition in San Diego, Calif. That’s because this urban sand-sculpting extravaganza is staged each Labor Day weekend on the “B” Street Cruise Ship Terminal Pier. It’s a unique setting to be

sure, but one requiring a huge effort to bring in the more than 300 tons of sand needed to keep sculptors carving during the four-day event.

The pier has proven a popular and picturesque venue for the event (now in its third year), surrounded by San Diego's large bay and with downtown's skyscrapers as a backdrop. More than 200,000 spectators turned out for last year's Challenge, which matched the skills of 40 master sculptors from the U.S. and a host of other nations, including Canada, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Latvia — all vying for a share of \$60,000 in prize money.

Activities and attractions along the pier go well beyond sand sculpting — with tall ships sailing past with cannons ablaze; singers, dancers and circus performers entertaining the crowds; bungee jumping and zip lining; an arts and crafts exposition; and a long, tempting string of gourmet food and beverage stands.

This year's event is scheduled for Aug. 29-Sept. 1. For more information, visit www.ussandsculpting.com. Nearby camping can be found at **Campland on the Bay, 800-422-9386, www.campland.com**

CANNON BEACH, ORE.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the annual Cannon Beach Sandcastle Contest with an activity-packed three-day festival running June 20-22. The longest-running sand competition in the Northwest — and one of the region's most popular summer events — focuses on a



PHOTO: JON GEBHART

San Diego's U.S. Sand Sculpting Challenge & 3D Art Exposition is unusual in that it's not held on a beach, but on the “B” Street Cruise Ship Terminal Pier.

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busy day of sculpting, Saturday, June 21. It's a dawn-to-dusk marathon during which dozens of teams square off — right on the town beach — to shovel, pack and carve an array of elaborately sculpted creations.

While there's plenty of fun to go around in this generally low-key, family-oriented contest, the event headlines an elite Masters Division made up of pro sculptors who compete for cash prizes. Amateurs go at it in large group, small group and children's divisions, with winners receiving medals and ribbons.

It was a damaging tsunami, resulting from an Alaska earthquake in March 1964, that's credited as the genesis of the Cannon Beach Sandcastle Contest. A big wave that swept the Northwest coast following the quake flooded downtown Cannon Beach and took out bridges and other infrastructure. Local residents rallied that summer to stage a community sand castle contest to help raise funds and spirits.

Recognizing the spectator potential of the event, the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce expanded the contest the following year, promoting it as a means to help bring tourists back to town. It has grown steadily in popularity through the years and now attracts tens of thousands of visitors annually.

The event gets underway on Friday evening, June 20, with a "Shovels & Buckets" dinner, continues with the big Sandcastle Contest on Saturday and concludes Sunday with a 5K Fun Run. A concert and beach bonfire set for Saturday night complement the festivities.

For more information visit www.cannon-beach.net/cbsandcastle.html. A nearby RV campground is the **RV Resort at Cannon Beach, 800-847-2231, www.cbrvresort.com**.

LONG BEACH, WASH.

Washington's Long Beach Peninsula celebrates the art of sand sculpting each July, as it has for 30 years, with a low-key, family- (and pet-) friendly event called Sandsations.

This year's event gets underway July 16-18 with teams of master sand sculptors demonstrating their skills to onlookers at the Port of Ilwaco, the community of Ocean Park and in downtown Long Beach

PHOTO: LONG BEACH PENINSULA VISITORS BUREAU



Sandsations in Long Beach, Wash., has entry levels for sculptors of all categories, from children to professionals.

as they build, shape and carve intricate and amazing sculptures from simple mounds of sand. On Friday afternoon, July 18, the public is invited to join in for some free sand-sculpting lessons at Bolstad Beach, followed by the lighting of a festive bonfire (and some old-fashioned marshmallow roasting).

Sandsations culminates on Saturday, July 19, with the much-anticipated Sandsations Beach Competition. Contestants are given five hours to transform beach sand into the most imaginative sculptures possible — consistent with a yet-to-be-announced theme. Judges vote for winners in four categories — masters, intermediate, novice and family — with victors awarded cash prizes up to \$1,200. Spectators line up to view the frenzied contest from the Long Beach Boardwalk.

Pets can get in on the fun here as well by joining the Sand Flea Pet Parade, with prizes offered for the "Beachiest" Pet, Best Pet Trick, Pet-Owner Lookalike, Best Costume and others.

So bring along your sculpting tools (and the family pet) for the 30th annual rendition of Sandsations, July 16-20. For more information, visit www.sandsationslongbeach.com. Camping is available nearby at **Driftwood RV Park, 360-642-2711, www.driftwoodrvpark.net**. ♦



Florida-based writer/photographer Dave G. Houser has contributed regularly to *MotorHome* magazine since 1985.



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FABULOUS FUNDY COAST

SIPPING TEA AND TIMING TIDES
IN NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA

by CHRISTINE GOODIER



PHOTOS: ROBERT GOODIER

Atlantic Canada is a treasure-trove for RVers, with gems to fill an entire summer, as my husband, Robert, and I discovered while touring in our 22-foot Sprinter motorhome. In New Brunswick, we encountered historic sites, the world's highest tidal range, a bustling city and a dramatic coastline worth lingering to explore.

CAMPOBELLO ISLAND

We leave Lubec, Maine, via the toll-free Franklin Delano Roosevelt Bridge and breeze across the border in minutes. We've decided to begin our adventures on 8.7-mile-long Campobello Island, named in 1770 to honor Lord William Campbell, Britain's governor of Nova Scotia.

Spruce trees and shady campsites await a few miles away at Herring Cove Provincial Park. With a nine-hole golf course, restaurant, and dark sand Bay of Fundy beach, this resort-like park makes a great base for our island weekend. After changing our watches to Atlantic Time, we stroll to the beach and dip our toes into the bay's icy water before turning in.

Always willing to be lured by a lighthouse, we drive the next morning through gray fog and a fine mist to the island's

Opposite: During high tide each day, Hopewell's Flowerpot Rocks turn into islands for kayakers to explore. **Left:** The low-speed Fundy Trail Parkway has opened up a previously inaccessible region of the wild and scenic Fundy coast. **Below:** FDR's 34-room Campobello Island cottage is open for self-guided tours.





Deer Island Point Park has a lighthouse, campground and views of the “Old Sow” whirlpool.

far northeastern end. East Quoddy Head Lighthouse in Passamaquoddy Bay was built in 1829 and sports a distinctive red St. George’s Cross daymark.

Here, we learn a key fact: Tide times may impact your adventures. The wooden lighthouse is accessible only during the four hours surrounding low tide, and yes, we still can buy \$5 tickets and walk out to it. But after watching other visitors navigate wet, mossy rocks and climb a steep, ladder-like staircase to reach it, we’re content to admire the lighthouse from afar.

We head for the 2,800-acre Roosevelt Campobello International Park, jointly administered by the Canadian and U.S. governments. At the visitor center we learn that “Tea With Eleanor” is about to begin and the last two free tickets are available. A helpful guide hustles us down the side-

walk to a cottage where 18 other visitors are already eating homemade lemon cookies and sipping tea from dainty flowered porcelain cups.

The small audience listens intently to stories three guides tell from the remarkable life of FDR’s wife, Eleanor Roosevelt, America’s longest-serving first lady. A controversial early activist for civil rights and the status of women, she ultimately became one of the most-admired Americans of the 20th century

We study Mrs. Roosevelt’s framed newspaper columns and family photographs and then walk to see her family’s summer “cottage.” Despite having 34 rooms, it feels cozy and lived-in, as if the family will return any minute from a day at the beach. A floorplan in the self-guided tour folder notes the second-floor bed-

room where Roosevelt slept until he was paralyzed by polio, at age 39, in 1921 during that summer’s vacation.

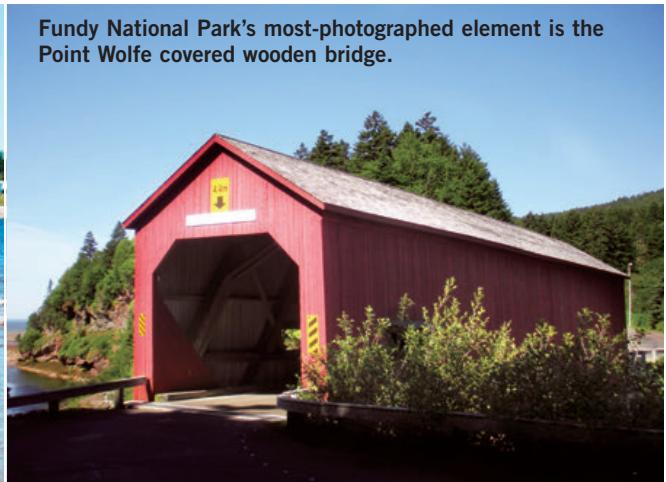
DEER ISLAND AND THE “OLD SOW”

The next morning we’re leaving Campobello for the New Brunswick mainland. It’s a warm, sunny day and rather than backtrack through Maine, we can save 50 miles of driving and enjoy two scenic mini-cruises of the Bay of Fundy on the way. A car ferry operates from Campobello to Deer Island every hour and a second, free, government ferry continues from Deer Island to the mainland. Both can easily accommodate large motorhomes.

As the first ferry approaches Deer Island, we notice a cluster of RVs next to a white lighthouse and decide to investigate. We maneuver up a rough road and



New River Beach Provincial Park offers wooded campsites and a Bay of Fundy beach 30 minutes away from the city of St. John.



Fundy National Park’s most-photographed element is the Point Wolfe covered wooden bridge.

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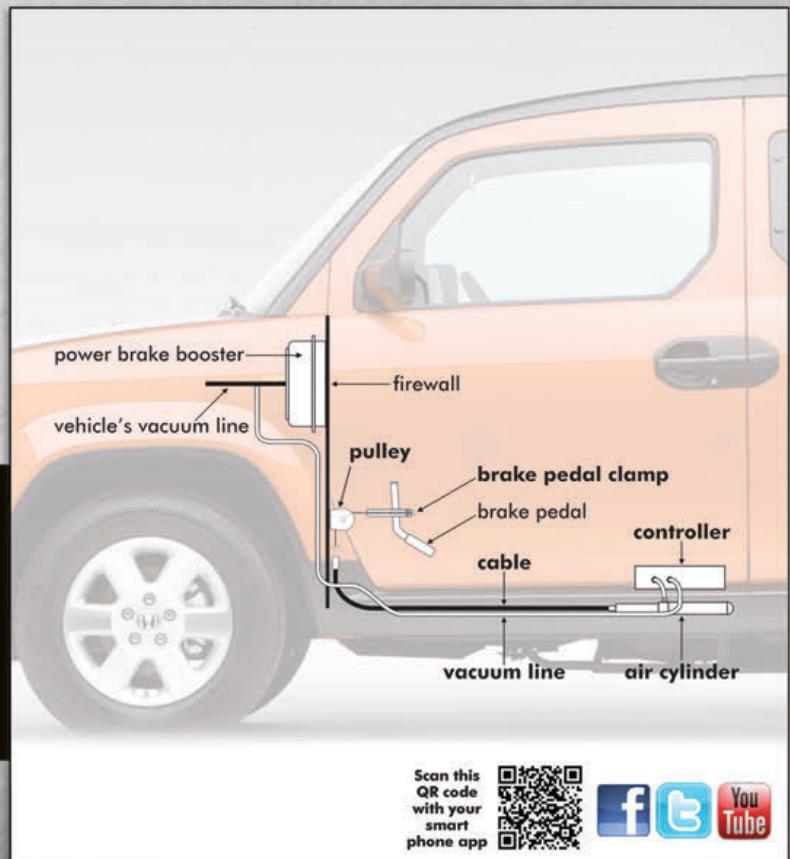


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After visiting Campobello, RVers headed for the New Brunswick mainland can save a 50-mile drive by taking the Deer Island Ferry.

discover that Deer Island Point Park not only has a lighthouse and campground, it's also the best spot to view the "Old Sow" whirlpool.

Fierce currents in this narrow stretch of Passamaquoddy Bay create the largest whirlpool in the Western Hemisphere and one of the five largest in the world. Entire sailboats and their occupants have disappeared into these swirling depths during flood tides. But all is calm this Sunday morning; the Old Sow, named for

Crossing the Border

Since there are more than 100 ports of entry between the United States and Canada, each traveler's experience will be different. With a little advance preparation, most RVers report a painless crossing that takes just a few minutes.

Before your trip, be sure your passport(s) will be valid beyond your planned length of stay, and consult each country's website. You'll find links about border locations and wait times, and laws about limitations on transporting food, alcohol, plants, animals, firearms and more.

Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) for entering Canada: www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/visit-eng.html

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for returning to the United States: www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/

If you plan to bring along your dog or cat, be sure you have a valid rabies certificate in case you are asked to produce it. For rules on what makes it valid go to www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals

As you approach the border, the driver should have passports handy to present when the border agent requests identification. Seasoned RV travelers suggest removing hat and sunglasses so your face is visible. Allow the agent to take the lead and, to save time, avoid volunteering unnecessary information. Answer all questions truthfully, and be ready to accurately report verbally on the goods you have in your RV during the short interview.

You will probably be asked your planned length of stay, purpose of your trip, and a few additional questions. Small amounts of wine, beer, liquor and cigarettes for personal use, as outlined on the website, are permitted and should be declared along with any meats, fruits, vegetables, plants, animals or animal products. You may be required to surrender a food product, but this can vary depending on the province you are entering. Unopened packages of items labeled as produced in the U.S. or Canada are usually allowed.

To avoid hassles, many motorhome travelers prefer to leave weapons at home, but if you have a firearm, you'll need to obtain a form available online, declare it in writing, provide documentation and pay a fee. As is the case with air travel, agents may perform random searches, so have keys for all external RV compartments available. Be aware that

the U.S. and Canada exchange biographical information on people crossing their borders. If you, or anyone traveling with you, have a criminal record, you may not be admitted.

Once happily across the border, you'll find that camping in Canada is quite similar to what you've experienced in the U.S. Canada has abundant private, provincial and national park campgrounds, often with "serviced" or "semi-serviced" sites (some combination of water, sewer and electricity, though not always 50-amp service). Most take reservations, which may be advisable for summer weekends and Canadian holidays.

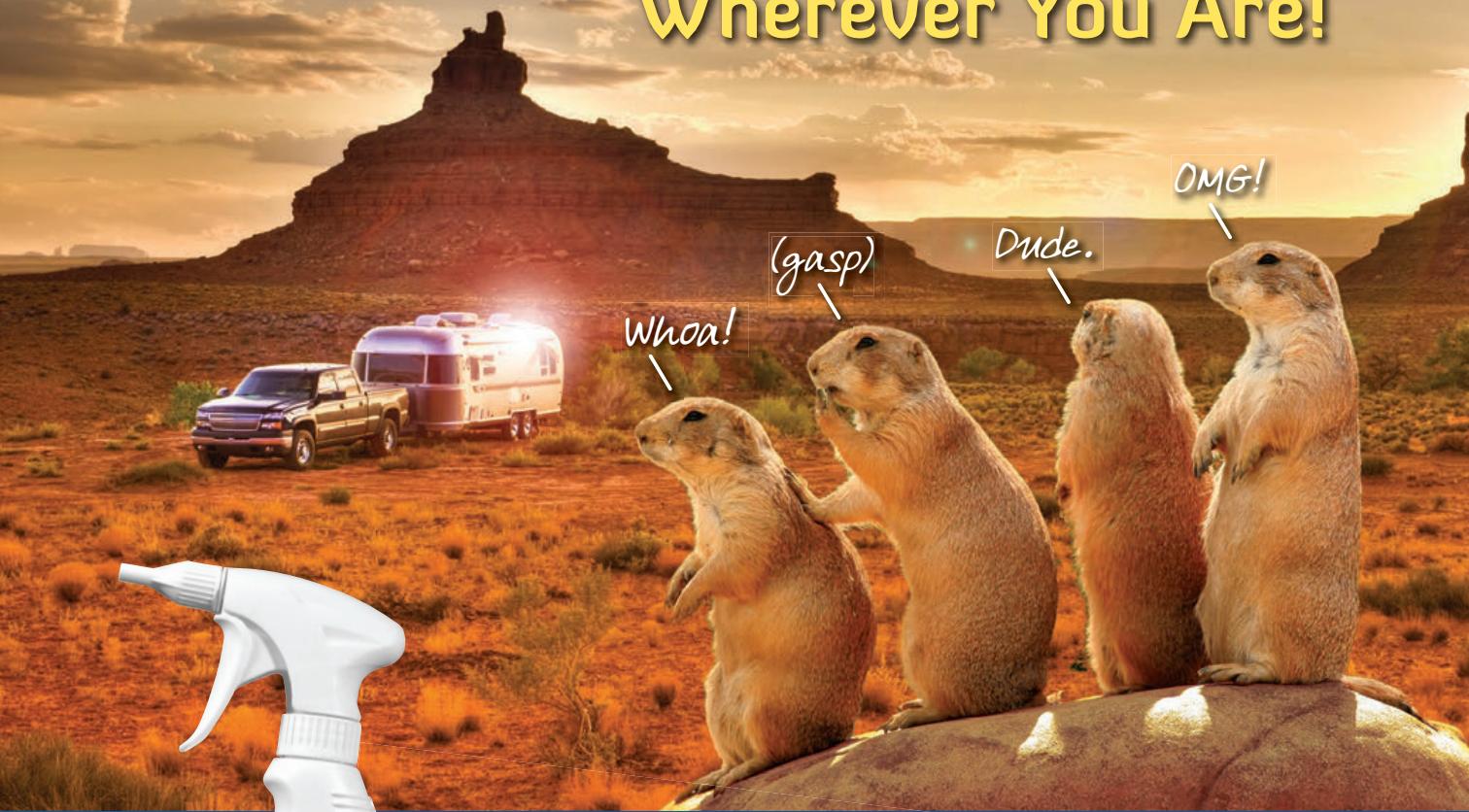
Diesel fuel and gasoline are readily available, but expect to pay approximately \$1 more per gallon than in the U.S. after calculating your purchase converted from liters to U.S. gallons. You'll find large stations that can easily handle big rigs, especially along the Trans-Canada Highway and other major routes, just as in the U.S. For directions, download Canadian routes onto your GPS unit via computer before leaving home, and request maps and campground guides from provincial tourism offices online.

Laws regarding motor vehicles vary from province to province, as they do from state to state, so if you have concerns about dinghy towing or other road issues, check with the transportation department website for each province you plan to visit. You may also want to talk with your insurance providers about your plans.

Credit cards are widely accepted in Canada for fuel, food and often for campgrounds. (To save on international currency fees tacked on to each transaction, it may be worth your while to apply for an additional card from a fee-free company like Capital One.) Still, it's a good idea to get Canadian currency from a bank or bank machine soon after arriving to use for small purchases and places where credit cards are not accepted. Away from border towns, U.S. dollars will not be so useful.

When returning to the U.S., prepare again for your border crossing in reverse, this time with a record of any major purchases you may have made, in case you are asked. Citrus is usually confiscated before you enter, so enjoy a fruit salad with your final breakfast in Canada. — C.G.

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Having fun at Cape Enrage, zip-lining high above the Bay of Fundy.

its snorting sounds, is best seen two or three hours before high tide. That's still six hours away, so we vow to camp here next time and leave to drive to our second ferry's dock.

NEW RIVER AND ST. JOHN

Once on the mainland, we join Highway 1 and arrive at New River Beach Provincial Park, popular with campers and day visitors. We select a level site with a nook to one side for a picnic table and fire ring. Just 30 minutes away from St. John, this woody park has hiking trails and an expansive sand beach, and makes a good overnight stopping place before we explore the city.

Next morning in St. John, we easily find a van-size parking space in an hourly open lot just a block from the Market Square Exhibition Centre. Incorporating the brick facades of old waterfront warehouses, the indoor-outdoor square houses the New Brunswick Museum, shops and restaurants.

At the tourist office, we find just what we need: this year's daily tide tables! Fundy tides are semidiurnal, with two highs and two lows daily, and the cycles take about 12 hours: six hours in, six hours out. High tide — affected by the cycles of the moon — raises the water level roughly 25 to 55 feet along much of this coastline depending on location and date.

Pondering a steep climb up King Street, we're happy to learn that Uptown St. John is connected by an indoor pedway system. We ascend on multiple

escalators linking blocks of hotels, office buildings and shopping centers until we pop out at Canada's oldest continuing farmers market. The vintage brick City Market has a ceiling like an inverted boat hull above stalls with produce, meat, seafood and crafts.

Outside, we duck into King's Square to relax on a shady park bench and admire the two-level King Edward VII Memorial Bandstand. Pathways radiate from this point to form a British Union Jack; it's a reminder, along with the Old Burial Ground nearby, that thousands of British loyalists fled America following the Revolutionary War to become St. John's primary early settlers.

THE FUNDY TRAIL PARKWAY

Less than an hour's drive from the city is St. Martins, where fishing boats sit on the mud awaiting a tidal change before they can float. We drive through a covered bridge with a 13-foot-tall center clearance and park to explore red rock sea caves carved by Fundy's force.

The village is the gateway to a fine RV experience, driving the 10-mile Fundy Trail Parkway. Since its 1998 debut, this formerly inaccessible stretch of rugged coastal wilderness is now open to motorists, hikers and cyclists. With some easy-to-handle hairpin turns, the paved road winds through forests and fields dotted with wildflowers, and provides ample parking at a dozen scenic lookouts.

Tooling along at the parkway's speed limit, 25 MPH, we stop often to peer down

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itors like us must backtrack to St. Martins and leave the coast for 70 miles.

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We slowly bounce down a rough road that smooths out as we enter the park's lush spruce forests, and drive to Chignecto North Campground for a site. This park holds surprises: hiking trails to waterfalls, a heated saltwater swimming pool and a nine-hole golf course. The nearby fishing town of Alma provides conveniences: a grocery store, post office, fish market, gas station and bakery with excellent sticky buns.

The next morning, we drive to Point Wolfe, site of a coastal sawmill settlement in the 1800s, and stop to admire a red wooden covered bridge, a contender for the park's most-photographed element. It's a 1992 replica of the original accidentally destroyed by a 1990 engineering project. We hike the easy Shiphaven Trail to read interpretive panels about the park's heritage and wildlife.

Fishing boats in the village of St. Martins are on the hard until high tide.

at the "chocolate river" close to the shoreline, a contrast to the blue-green deeper bay. As water rushes across the mud flats near shore and mixes with sandstone silt, it turns brown as chocolate milk.

We climb down a cable ladder to admire Fuller Falls, eat a picnic lunch with a view, and visit the parkway's Big Salm-

on River Interpretive Centre and working sawmill to learn about the area's logging and ship-building history.

Guides there explain that the non-profit Fundy Trail Development Authority hopes to complete the trail 12 miles eastward by 2017, linking it to Fundy National Park. Until then, park-bound vis-

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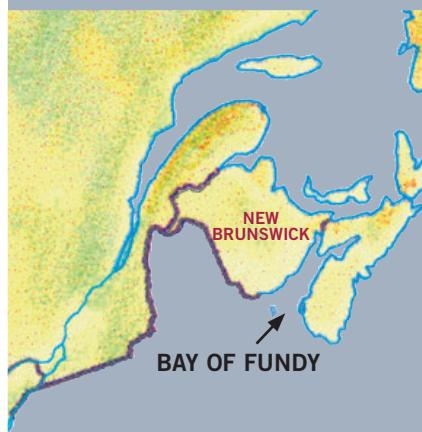
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A lighthouse is just 10 miles east of the park entrance, so we drive down to Cape Enrage, a rugged point on a cliff in the Upper Bay of Fundy's Chignecto Bay. We find lots of RV-size parking available and walk up to the hilltop lighthouse, first built in 1840 and replaced 30 years later. It sends out a green flash every six seconds — visible for 11 nautical miles — and a loud horn triggered automatically by fog.

We join a group forming around a guide who explains that the name comes from wild waters that churn over a reef pointing south. On sparkling days like today, there's a view of the rocky shore, mighty bay and Nova Scotia in the distance, along with opportunities for zip lining, rappelling or rock climbing.

HOPEWELL ROCKS

At our final stop, people can walk on the ocean floor around and beneath reddish-brown monoliths sculpted by thousands of years of rushing water. At high tide, Hopewell's towering sandstone "flower-pot rocks" turn into islands complete with trees and shrubs.

A sign warns, "To avoid being trapped by the rising tide YOU MUST return to the stairs by the time shown here." We can walk on the sea bottom for three hours before low tide until three hours after. But after 4:30 p.m. today, Fundy waters will rush in, traveling at 6 to 8 vertical feet per hour.

We walk a 15-minute trail and scamper down a multi-level wooden staircase to the damp sea bottom. Wandering the beach for an hour, we stare up at the rocks, walk under arches and peer into caves. At around 7 p.m. tonight, our footprints will be covered by more than 40 feet of brown water.

Next trip, we'll linger to watch that happen. Maybe we'll even paddle a kayak around the top of the rocks at high tide, ride the Cape Enrage zip line and find another covered bridge to photograph. There's always more to do on New Brunswick's Fabulous Fundy Coast. ♦



Christine Goodier is a freelance writer and editor who lives on the North Carolina coast and travels with her husband, photographer Bob Goodier, in a Class B Sprinter motorhome.

Good Sam Snapshots

WHERE'S GOOD SAM?

Can you name this towering asparagus-tinged landmark and its North American location? Let us know and you could be the next winner in the Where's Good Sam photo contest. Email your entry to whereisgoodsam@goodsamclub.com, along with your name and mailing address. On May 31, we'll select one correct entry at random. Look for the answer and the \$50 winner in *Highways* later this year.



HERE'S GOOD SAM!

Members mistook this scene for ferry landings as far-ranging as Alabama and the Yukon, but the majority of entrants correctly identified Halls Crossing, Utah, on Lake Powell. Selected at random, Nevada member Edward Kuball collected the \$50 prize, as did Colorado member Steve Thomas, who shot the photo while waiting to board the ferry in his RV.

TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT

You too can earn fame, glory and \$50. Simply take a photo of your RV in a postcard-worthy setting, with the Good Sam sticker in full view, and email it to whereisgoodsam@goodsamclub.com, along with your name and mailing address. If we publish your photo in *Highways*, you'll receive a check for \$50.

PET TALES



Above: Under the watchful gaze of a Wildcat, Stan and Vickie Jordan's faithful companion, Cali, takes a break behind the wheel, while the California Good Sam couple sets up camp in the Sierra Nevada range.

Above right: Shawn and Brody are always up for a road trip with their owners, Jim and Lisa Green. The Michigan Good Sam members tell us their spaniels feel right at home in the couple's classic 1966 Airstream trailer.

Left: South Carolina Good Sam member Jane King-Shirer prefers not to travel light. She and her family go camping with half a dozen canines: Zuni, Peanut, Dolce, Mayhem, Janie and Rat Monster. Here they are making the rounds at a Myrtle Beach RV park.

SHARE A PHOTO. Email your best RV pet picture to *Highways* at pettales@goodsamclub.com. Include a description of the photo along with the names of you and your pet(s) and your home town.

SEA TO RIVER: OREGON'S SPECTACULAR NORTH COAST

HERE YOU'LL FIND
BREATHTAKING BEAUTY,
FUN LEISURE ACTIVITIES
AND A SENSE OF HISTORY
ALL ROLLED INTO ONE

by BOBBIE HASSELBRING



Oregon has some of the most spectacular and accessible coastline in the world. From the salt-water-taffy beach village of Seaside to the historic cannery town of Astoria, the North Coast offers breathtaking beauty, opportunities for fun leisure activities and some of the most compelling history in the West. It's no wonder Oregon's North Coast is an RVing favorite, and I've decided to take a few days to explore it all.

It's about two hours (100 miles) from Portland to Seaside, my first stop, west along Highway 26 over the Coast Range. Just outside the Portland suburb of Hillsboro, traffic thins and the land opens to farm fields, nurseries and horse farms. It's springtime and patches of snow dust clear cuts in the forests of the coastal mountains.

As I churn into the Coast Range, gaining elevation, the sun peeks from behind the clouds and the temperature hovers around 50 degrees. Big swaths of Douglas fir have been logged here, and panels along the roadway tell the story of the famous Tillamook Burn, a series of huge forest fires that occurred from 1933-1951 and consumed 355,000 acres of forestland. Today, conservation, salvage logging and replanting are breathing new life into the forest.

I pass a couple of deer, still shaggy in their winter coats, and cross the Coast Range summit (elevation 1,642). At the Tillamook turnoff, the road narrows to two lanes (with passing lanes) and forests replace farmlands. I have the road to myself, and I turn off the radio and let the sound of my wheels and the lush scenery fill me.

I encounter a number of intriguing places that make me want to explore the coastal mountains more — the Banks-Vernonia hiking trail, L.L. Stubb Stewart State Park (the



PHOTO: NPS

Top: Beautiful Ecola State Park, located between Seaside and Cannon Beach, Ore., stretches along 9 miles of coastline and offers excellent sightseeing and recreation opportunities. Every summer, during the third weekend in August, visitors can meet re-enactors of the Corps of Discovery as they prepare salt for the Salt Makers Return.



Clockwise from above: Conservation, salvage logging and replanting are breathing new life into the Tillamook State Forest. Explorers Lewis and Clark and their Corps of Discovery boiled sea water for salt on rock stoves, like this one in Seaside. At High Life Adventures, visitors sail along eight different zip lines around and over a 7-acre lake in Warrenton, Ore.



state's newest), Saddle Mountain Natural Area, and the iconic eateries, Oney's Roadhouse and Camp 18, a timber-themed restaurant said to serve lumberman-size meals. It will all have to wait for another day because the salt air pulls me north onto Highway 101.

I COME TO THE SEA TO BREATHE

A few miles farther, the neon sign for Bell Buoy of Seaside market, touting fresh crab, spring salmon, oysters and razor clams, lets me know I've reached Seaside and the sea. I roll down my window and breathe deeply.

I haven't even reached the town's main street when I'm drawn by a brown sign announcing "Lewis and Clark Salt Works." Most of us know from school that Meriwether Lewis and William Clark

were the first American explorers to cross the continent from St. Louis, Mo., to the Pacific Ocean. They landed in the Pacific Northwest and their colorful history is plentiful here on the North Coast.

I follow the signs, winding through clapboard-cottage neighborhoods along the ocean to a short street that terminates at the beach. The sign tells me I am on the Lewis and Clark Trail and it's exhilarating to think I am standing where these intrepid explorers once walked. There is a small park with a rock-cooking station where buckets were filled with seawater and boiled to harvest salt. I later learn that the third weekend in August, costumed actors camp here on the beach reliving the history of Lewis and Clark for The Salt Makers Return.

I'm eager to learn more, so I stop at

the Seaside Historical Museum and Butterfield Cottage just off Highway 101. This modest museum traces the colorful history of the area, including the important role cedar played in the lives of the native Clatsop and Nehalem peoples and a profile of local native woman Tsin-istum (aka Jennie Mitchell), one of the few people who could identify, through family stories, the location of Lewis and Clark's salt works. The museum also explores Seaside as a resort town, including its old natatoriums — indoor saltwater public pools popular with tourists and residents alike. Out back is Butterfield Cottage, one of the original area seaside cottages dating back to 1893.

Feeling a little road weary, I check in at the 250-site Thousand Trails/Encore at Seaside RV Park. Though it's not on the



Clockwise from above: One of the unique features at the Seaside Aquarium is that guests can feed the sea lions. This dramatic exhibit at the Columbia River Maritime Museum shows the Coast Guard making a rescue in the turbulent waters on the Columbia River Bar. Kids, adults and dogs all enjoy the beaches in Seaside, where kite flying is a favorite activity.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

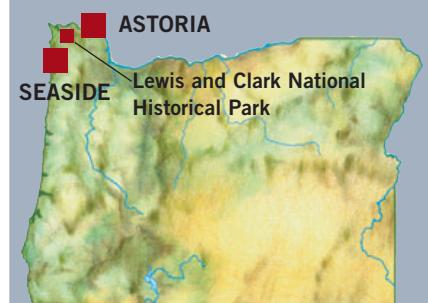
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ocean, the park offers big, gravel-topped sites, plenty of grass, room for big rigs, and full hook-ups, as well as a sauna, hot tub and an indoor pool. While I'm not a member, they reserve several sites for the public, and Tom, the attendant at the front gate, heartily welcomes me, and I settle in for a couple of days.

EXPLORING SEASIDE

The next morning, I'm refreshed and ready to explore Seaside. The town is bordered by the ocean to the west and by two coastal rivers, the Necanicum and the Neawanna, and it's surrounded by natural areas. At The Cove, a long, curving stretch of beach on the south end of town, I watch surfers in wet suits brave the chilly water. At Estuary Park, I gaze over constantly shifting sands where the Necanicum River

meets the sea and creates an important habitat for young salmon. It's also a great place to fish for Dungeness crab.

Following a tip from a local, I turn east off Highway 101 on Avenue S and drive to the Mill Pond area, a former quarry-turned-logging-mill that's become a haven for waterfowl. Material was scooped out to create roadbed for the highway and the resulting depressions filled with water. Later, lumber mills used the ponds to float logs. Today, herons, cormorants, buffleheads, Canada geese and iridescent swallows congregate here and I hike the 1½-mile trail and snap photos. During high tide, you can canoe the Mill Ponds by putting in at the Neawanna River at Broadway Park. However, if you miscalculate the tide, you'll end up pulling your boat over muddy shallows.

PHOTOS: BOBBIE HASSELBRING



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Power problems can damage the equipment in an RV in a number of ways. Low voltage conditions force some appliances to draw more current, resulting in overheating, which can damage appliances including air conditioners. High voltage will reduce the life of resistive loads such as lighting and will damage electronic control circuits.

We are all familiar with the potential damage faulty power and voltage surges will do to sensitive electronics in inverters, satellite antennas, entertainment systems, computers, microwaves, and other appliances. Miswired power pedestals can result in reverse polarity or an open neutral condition on the coach. Both are a safety/fire hazard and will cause severe damage. It is important that these electronics as well as your investment are protected. Wouldn't it be reassuring to know that Surge Guard RV power protection is there just in case there is a power problem?

Surge Guard®—Don't Plug In Without It!

The Surge Guard product family provides a full line of electrical safety products for RVs. Several models of 30 amp and 50 amp hardwires and portables protect RVs from power surges, high- or low-voltage conditions, open neutrals or mis-wired

pedestals, all of which can cause serious damage to RVs. Surge Guard 30 amp portable, Model 44750, uses core ground fault circuit interrupter technology. And the new Surge Guard surge protectors, 30 amp, Model 44260, and 50 amp, Model 44270, analyze circuits and identify faulty park power plus offer surge protection. All three of these products are perfect for pop-ups and travel trailers.

Portables with LCD Display

The Surge Guard 30 amp and 50 amp portables with LCD display (English) offer higher joules of power surge protection than the previous models. The 30 amp Model 34730 now has 2450 Joules. The 50 amp Model 34750 now has 3850 Joules.

These portable models protect your RV from faulty park power by automatically shutting off power when an open neutral or low (<102V) and high (>132V) voltage is present. The 50 amp model also shuts off if a reverse polarity is present. Both units continuously monitor for voltage and amp draw (RMS), reverse polarity (mis-wired pedestal, elevated ground voltage). A 128 second reset delay protects the air conditioner compressor. Plus, they reset automatically when good power returns.

The Surge Guard portable protection products are compact and easy to use. They plug in between the power pedestal and the line cord to provide protection. They are designed for all travel trailers, 5th wheels and motorhomes with 30 and 50 amp service.

The entire line of Surge Guard portable models and voltage regulators are equipped with Easy-T-Pull™ handles on both the load and line sides. No more frustration with trying to plug/unplug from the power.

Theft Protection

To help eliminate the possibility of theft of the portable Surge Guards and voltage regulators, Camping World also offers the



Theft protection for portable Surge Guards.

Seaside is just as appealing as its natural surroundings. Back in the 1850s, the city was established as a resort town and it's been hosting beach-going tourists ever since. The walkable downtown streets, filled with beachy stores selling T-shirts and towels, ice cream and candy parlors, and video arcades, are a throw-back to the 1950s and children and adults alike stroll late into the evening. I spend several hours cruising the shops and filling myself with chocolate-covered sea foam and saltwater taffy from Phillips Candies.

Broadway, the main thoroughfare through downtown, ends at the ocean and "the Prom" turn around, a circular drive-around featuring a statue of Lewis and Clark. It's also the location of the promenade, a broad, 1½-mile-long ribbon of pavement snaking along the ocean in front of many of the town's hotels and ocean-front homes. At nearly any time, you'll find visitors — old and young — strolling, running, skating, biking and walking dogs along its length.

One highlight along the Prom is the



At Thousand Trails' Seaside RV Park, campers enjoy plenty of wide-open space.

iconic Seaside Aquarium, a popular attraction for the past 75 years. I wander around the 35 tanks, ogling snake-like wolf eels, shy giant octopus, and colorful tiger, copper and yelloweye rockfish. At the touch tank, kids of all ages, including me, squirm as we touch starfish and sea anemones.

ASTORIA AND THE MIGHTY COLUMBIA

The next morning, I head north toward the mighty Columbia River and Astoria, a once hard-scrabble salmon cannery town that's now a historic city filled with breweries, museums and good restaurants. I pull off at Fort Stevens State Park, a fas-

cinating military reservation that guarded the mouth of the Columbia River from the Civil War through World War II. The park has hiking trails, bike paths and loads of fascinating concrete gun batteries. But the weather has turned rainy, so instead I head for South Jetty, a rock barrier that protects the mouth of the river and the place where the ocean and the river meet. I climb up onto the observation tower, barely able to stand against 30-40 mph winds, and watch the sea's waves crash up against the river.

I motor across Old Youngs Bay Bridge from the fort into Astoria. My first stop is the Columbia River Maritime Museum, a

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world-class exhibit that tells the river's dramatic story. The Columbia, the largest river in the Northwest, is a giant, stretching 1,243 miles, powering 14 hydroelectric dams, flowing through four mountain ranges, seven states, 13 Native American reservations, and one Canadian province, and draining 260,000 square miles (about the size of France). At its mouth here in Astoria, the river pumps 265,000 cubic feet per second, flowing at an astonishing 4-7 knots often with 70-mph winds that cause the sandbars and shoals to constantly shift. The river's mouth (the Columbia Bar) has earned the name "Graveyard of the Pacific" for the 2,000-plus ships that have wrecked here.

The museum features a fascinating collection of ancient mariner maps, a fur trade and exploration exhibit, videos of bar pilots braving the river's rage to safely steer ships over its shallows, and the 44, a Coast Guard rescue boat tipped at a dizzying angle. There's also a theater showing 3-D movies, the Lightship Columbia (a mobile lighthouse) and a huge map show-

ing shipwrecks in the river.

After a quick lunch, I head up the hill to tour the Flavel House, an impressive Queen Anne mansion built by Captain George Flavel, one of Astoria's most prominent citizens and the man who established the river pilot system. As I wend my way through the home's ornate Victorian furniture, coal-burning fireplaces, 14-foot-high ceilings, and 9-foot-tall carved fir doors, I'm grateful to the historians who preserved and restored this beauty.

I drive over to Fort Clatsop National Historical Park, one of several sites in the area that make up the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park. It's also here that I'll camp at one of the park's bargain-priced RV sites.

Ranger Bill Milligan, an expert in Lewis and Clark history, leads us through the woods to a small log fort, like the one the explorers stayed in during the winter of 1805-06. "We know Lewis and Clark stayed here," says Ranger Bill, showing us a map from the explorers' original journals. "Was the fort exactly in this location?

It's likely, but we don't know."

In the summer, costumed rangers and volunteers bring the Lewis and Clark story to life by re-enacting life at the fort. Today, however, summer is a distant memory and the mist has morphed into larger raindrops. I peer into the fort's small, dark rooms, and imagine the buckskinned explorers cursing the wet conditions.

The next morning as I churn southward back toward Seaside, I'm intrigued by the sign for High Life Adventures Zip Line and impulsively pull in. Yes, they have space for me. As I sign the waiver and strap on the tiny helmet and climbing gear, I wonder, what am I thinking?

But soon I'm streaking through the Douglas firs, across lakes, and over meadows, screaming and laughing my head off.

Yes, Oregon's North Coast really does have it all. ♦



Bobbie Hasselbring is a frequent contributor to *MotorHome* and editor of www.realfoodtraveler.com, which covers authentic food and travel. Bobbie owns a Class C Jayco Greyhawk SS.

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When Winnebago set out to add another line to its family of diesel pushers, the company targeted potential owners who desire to move up from a gasser and are willing to forgo some of the luxuries in order to keep prices down. The result is the Forza, a coach with an interesting disposition. While it feels more like a highline gas-powered coach, it has the advantages of length and weight, courtesy of the Freightliner XCS chassis powered by a Cummins 340-hp diesel. For the most part, gassers start running out of poop in coaches longer than 36 feet, so the diesel-powered underpinnings gave the Winnebago designers plenty of latitude to spread out and handle the additional amenities.

Winnebago's Forza makes its diesel-pusher debut in two floorplans, with the 38R we tested being just shy of 40 feet in length; the other is the 34T, which is 35 feet, 6 inches long.

The 38R is supported by a chassis with a 27,910-pound gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR), giving the designers necessary leeway for adding features common in diesel-pusher coaches. And all this comes in at a price point that's really not that far from the company's most expensive gas-powered coaches.

From the get-go buyers need to understand that 340 horses and 700 LB-FT of torque will not let the coach compete in the big leagues performance-wise, but it's still no slouch, considering the overall length of the coach and the weight required to handle its roomy bath-and-a-half floorplan. Hill climbing was acceptable with the expected slowdowns to the 45 MPH range on 6 percent grades (without towing a dinghy vehicle). The exhaust brake does an excellent job of maintaining safe descent speeds.

The Forza, though fun to drive, really excels in handling

MOLTO FORZA!

WINNEBAGO USES ITS DESIGN MUSCLE TO INTRODUCE **A FEATURE-RICH DIESEL PUSHER** THAT'S PRICED CLOSER TO A HIGHLINE GASSER

by BOB LIVINGSTON



big crowds. Double slideouts, one a full-wall extension on the curbside and the other a bedroom expander, contribute to livability versatility. The 38R is designed to be super comfortable for a couple, but is set apart from the norm with the addition of the company's family-friendly Multi-Purpose Room with Flex Bed System. Two youngsters will certainly enjoy the bunk-bed arrangement and the fact that the alcove can be closed off with heavy floor-to-ceiling drapes. We're not totally enamored by the look of the drapes hung on the wall, but it does provide an element of privacy, although the adjacent bedroom can also be closed off with a pocket door.

By day, the Multi-Purpose Room can be converted into a dinette booth for two — perfect for playing games or giving the kids their own place to eat. There's even a smartly placed 120-volt AC/USB charging station below the table, knowing that electronics will keep youngsters occupied. It's also a

great area for an out-of-the-way home office.

It's hard to get a visual feeling of how this plan is going to work when seeing the inside for the first time with the slides retracted. Frankly, the on-the-road look is kind of mundane, but once the coach is opened up, the wow factor kicks in. The aforementioned Multi-Purpose Room moves out with the couch and booth dinette, expanding the living area dramatically. The whole room comes alive by the curbside components that become visually apparent when the slide is out. Here, the eye goes from the angular entertainment wall unit that's fitted with a 50-inch LED TV and large fireplace and follows the galley, with its residential refrigerator, all the way to the driver's seat. Once the cockpit seats are turned around, it's easy to see that this coach is ready for company, without feeling claustrophobic. An opposing curbside slide, popular in most coaches this size, is simply not missed.



Left: Streetside structure is striking against light vinyl tile floor. Galley has room to spread out and there's good storage for kitchenware and foodstuffs. Fireplace and 50-inch TV are positioned for easy viewing while sitting on opposing couch. Above: Dinette easily seats four.



Clockwise from above: Driver's compartment is clean and ergonomic. Multi-Purpose Room, with electric top bunk, is perfect for two kids. Single key operates door, storage compartment and ignition.

2014 WINNEBAGO FORZA 38R

WHAT'S HOT

Open floorplan makes it easy to entertain, fireplace, comfortable bedroom with drop-down TV, bath-and-a-half, drivability, price

WHAT'S NOT

Couch doesn't recline, small toilet in half bath, faucet placement in bathrooms, under-size furnace, Multi-Purpose Room drapes



Queen bed rides out with streetside slide. Air mattress is comfortable and light enough to maneuver when making the bed. Nightstands (with power outlets) and padded headboard are welcome additions. TV drops down from ceiling and is out of the way when not in use.

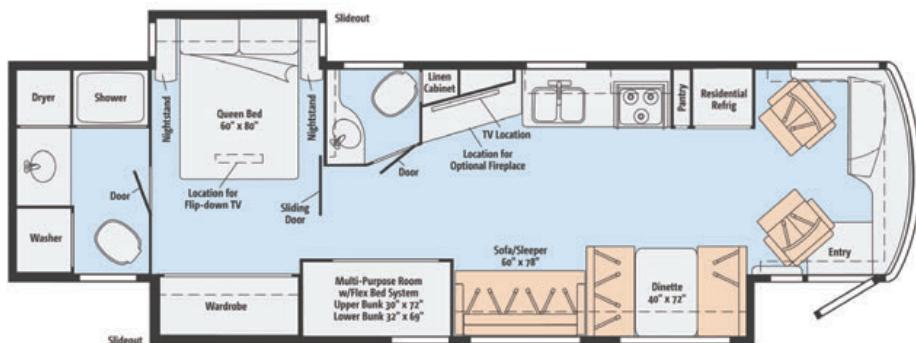
We confirmed the above observation by seating 12 adults for dinner one night while on one of our annual pilgrimages with friends traveling in five other motorhomes. Naturally, some of the diners balanced plates on their laps, but seven people were comfortably seated around the two dinettes. The galley counter was big enough to spread out the evening's food and drink and everyone got through the meal without much body-crashing while moving about.

Double stainless-steel sinks made cleanup fairly easy, although water pressure from the stylish faucet (with high reach and removable head) was anemic. A pump upgrade might be in order here. Care must be exercised not to splash the TV, which is only a few inches from the sink. A three-burner cooktop and microwave/convection oven handled cooking duties without complaint. And there is plenty of storage space above and below the galley counter, augmented by a two-door pantry.

Forza owners who spend most of their time in RV parks with electric hookups will likely appreciate the extra capacity of the two-door residential refrigerator. We spent our days evaluating the Forza parked in

primitive sites and relied on the coach's self-containment features. Supporting the refrigerator are four Group 31, 12-volt batteries tied to a 2,000-watt power inverter. While on the road, the refrigerator ran perfectly on power from the inverter. Since the days were on the warm side, the generator was running for at least eight hours a day to power the roof air-conditioners, charge the batteries and operate the refrigerator. At night, the refrigerator was turned off and the box maintained enough cold to keep food safe temporarily, although spikes in box temperature (most times caused by adding leftovers after dinner) forced us to consume the food sooner than planned. Fortunately, the refrigerator and freezer boxes cooled down quickly once power from the generator was restored at 10 a.m., which conformed to park regulations. Needless to say, an RV refrigerator is more practical if primitive camping is on the agenda.

Generally, the battery bank on this coach was borderline. Three hours of TV watching through a satellite receiver, a few lights and running the furnace in the morning for around 30 minutes zapped the batteries. The batteries should have



SPECIFICATIONS

PERFORMANCE

FUEL ECONOMY: 8.2 MPG
ACCELERATION:
 0-60 MPH: 29.6 SEC
 40-60 MPH: 18.7 SEC

CHASSIS

MODEL: FREIGHTLINER XCS
ENGINE: CUMMINS ISB 6.7-LITER
SAE HP: 340 @ 2,600 RPM
TORQUE: 700 LB-FT @ 1,600 RPM
TRANSMISSION: ALLISON 2500 MH
AXLE RATIO: 4.78:1
FRONT TIRES: 255/80R22.5
REAR TIRES: 255/80R22.5
WHEELBASE: 260"
BRAKES: AIR DISC WITH ABS
SUSPENSION: NEWAY FRONT AND REAR AIR SPRING
FUEL CAP: 90 GAL
WARRANTY: 3 YEARS, 50,000 MILES

COACH

EXT LENGTH: 39' 10"
EXT WIDTH: 8' 5.5"
EXT HEIGHT: 11' 10" WITH A/C
INT WIDTH: 8' 0.5"
INT HEIGHT: 6' 8"
CONSTRUCTION: ALUMINUM/STEEL FRAME WITH INTERLOCKING JOINTS, LAMINATED SIDE WALLS WITH BLOCK FOAM AND FIBERGLASS INSULATION, ONE-PIECE FIBERGLASS ROOF
FRESHWATER CAP: 84 GAL
BLACK-WATER CAP: 48 GAL
GRAY-WATER CAP: 54 GAL
WATER-HEATER CAP: 10 GAL
LP-GAS CAP: 23 GAL
AIR CONDITIONER (2): 15,000 BTU
FURNACE: 40,000 BTU
REFRIGERATOR: 19 CU-FT
INVERTER/CHARGER: 2,000 WATTS/100 AMPS
BATTERY: (2) 12-VOLT CHASSIS, (4) 12-VOLT COACH
AC GENERATOR: 6 KW
MSRP: \$216,068
MSRP AS TESTED: \$221,941
WARRANTY: 1 YEAR, 15,000-MILES BASIC; 3 YEARS, 36,000-MILES STRUCTURE

WET WEIGHT

(WATER & HEATER, FUEL, LP-GAS TANKS FULL; NO SUPPLIES OR PASSENGERS)
FRONT AXLE: 8,060 LBS
REAR AXLE: 16,200 LBS
TOTAL: 24,260 LBS

CHASSIS RATINGS

GAWR, F/R: 10,410/17,500 LBS
GVWR/GCWR: 27,910/33,000 LBS
ROCCC: 3,650 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)

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MOLTO FORZA!

performed better, based on capacity, so we'll chalk up the deficiency on partially sulfated cells from sitting discharged too long prior to building the coach. Since there is room in the easily accessible compartment, we'd opt for three pairs of 6-volt golf-cart batteries if the coach were ours.

By the way, the 40,000-Btu furnace will be hard-pressed to keep the coach warm in colder weather. It cycled too often considering the outside temperature dropped only to the high 40s. A two-zone heating system would be more efficient.

The counter built into the entertainment center (and adjacent to the galley) ended up being a catchall for frequently used stuff during the trip and the cabinets straddling the fireplace were suitable for storing taller items. The entertainment center is in excellent eyeshot of the opposing couch and front dinette bench, so watching TV and staring at the mesmerizing fireplace was comfortable. The couch was on the smaller side, to make room for the dinette alcove, and did not recline — although it did make into a bed for two. Add the convertible dinette to the bunks,



Master bath lav has roomy counter and plenty of storage. Clothes dryer is concealed in wall next to expansive shower.

and master bedroom, and the coach can easily sleep seven people, with a few kids in the mix.

The half-bath really shines when entertaining large groups. It shares a wall with the entertainment center and blends in nicely with the flow of the components — almost to a point of looking concealed. Inside, is a right-size lavatory with stainless-steel sink and a basic (meaning small) porcelain toilet. I would prefer the

more adult-size toilet, and there's room to handle a longer bowl without consuming too much floor space. Storage in the half-bathroom is immense because of access to a unique compartment created by the structure configured for the TV. We took advantage of this space to store taller items that would not fit in the network of cabinets in the living area and galley. The half-bath is easily accessible when the slides are in — a necessity, since traffic is totally cut off from the rear full-bath unless users don't mind crawling over the bed.

Once the slideouts are deployed, the bedroom is quite spacious. The wardrobe closet travels with the full-wall slide, and the queen bed moves out with the other on the curbside. The latter slide is dedicated to a queen bed and opens up the room tremendously from physical and visual standpoints. Nightstands are on both sides, and a padded headboard protects sleepers. Making the bed is a pleasure since the optional air mattress (with individual controls) is lightweight and easy to handle. Windows are conspicuously missing in the bedroom, and when the room

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SOLAR PANELS

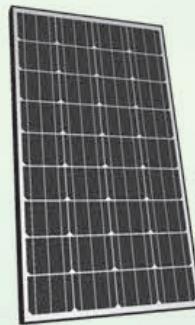
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POWER IN YOUR HANDS

A PORTABLE GENERATOR EXTENDS ENERGY OPTIONS WHEN HOOKUPS ARE NOT AVAILABLE

by CHRIS HEMER

PHOTO: RICH COX PHOTOGRAPHY

Part of the appeal of the motorhome lifestyle is having all the comforts of home wherever you go — and that includes electrical appliances such as air conditioning, TV, stereo and other conveniences. When we visit RV parks and campgrounds, usually the electricity we need is supplied by 30- or 50-AMP shorepower — but when dry camping, we tend to rely on the onboard generator. For most of us, it's a learned response; we need to run a 120-volt AC appliance, so we reach for the generator switch. But does it really make sense to run anything from 4kW to 10kW and beyond just to power a hair dryer or charge batteries? If you're energy-conscious and budget-minded, the answer is probably no. After all, a big generator uses a lot of fuel — and running it more than necessary can mean additional maintenance costs.

A separate, portable generator is a logical choice. When sized between 1,000 and 2,000 watts, they're small and light enough for most folks to handle on their

own — and with “clean” inverter power, they can even run sensitive items like computers. For bigger power demands, 3,000-watt generators are still manageable, as most are equipped with two grab handles (so a friend can help lift) and wheels for easy transport.

Today's crop of portable generators are also very efficient and quiet — many can run for nine hours or more during standby use, and have a sound rating of just 49 decibels (dB), which is even quieter than a human voice during normal conversation. When you consider that these generators can fit easily in most motorhome storage compartments, and can even be taken with you in your dinghy vehicle for off-site power needs, a portable generator just makes good sense.

To help you find the right one, we've compiled this guide to some of the most popular portable inverter generators on the market, as well as a few new offerings. Power on!

BRIGGS AND STRATTON



P2000 PowerSmart Series 2000-Watt Inverter Generator

Dimensions: 21"L x 14"W x 17"H
Weight: 56 lbs.
Fuel Tank Capacity: 1 gallon
Output: 2,000 watts max, 1,600 watts rated
Run Time (claimed): Up to 6.5 hours @ 25 percent load
Decibel Rating (claimed): 59.4 dB
Features: The P2000 features a PowerSmart mode to reduce fuel consumption by generating only the power that's

needed. The P2000 includes two 120-volt AC/20-amp outlets, a 12-volt DC outlet and a parallel connector port to connect two of these units for more power.

Warranty: Two year limited
Emissions Compliance: 49 state
MSRP: \$699
Briggs and Stratton
800-444-7774
www.briggsandstratton.com

CHAMPION



73540i 2000-Watt Inverter Generator with USB

Dimensions: 19.3"L x 13.2"W x 16.3"H
Weight: 55.1 lbs.
Fuel Capacity: 1 gallon
Output: 2,000 watts max, 1,700 watts rated
Run Time (claimed): Up to 9.5 hours @ 25 percent load
Decibel rating (claimed): 53 dB
Features: The Champion 73540i 2000-watt generator is equipped with a low-oil shutoff sensor and is designed for long

life and easy maintenance. The unit is equipped with two 120-volt AC outlets, 12-volt DC automotive style outlet, dual port (2.1-amp/1-amp) USB adapter, a parallel connection port and a 12-volt DC battery charging cable. An available kit (Part No. 73500i) allows two units to be connected in parallel (sold separately).

Warranty: Two year limited
Emissions Compliance: 50 state
MSRP: \$990



73536i 2000-Watt Inverter Generator

Dimensions: 19.3"L x 13.2"W x 16.3"H
Weight: 57 lbs.
Fuel Capacity: 1 gallon
Output: 2,000 watts max, 1,700 watts rated
Run Time (claimed): Up to 9.5 hours @ 25 percent load
Decibel rating (claimed): 53 dB
Features: Offering features similar to the 73540i, the main difference is

that the 73536i does not have a USB port. An available kit (Part No. 73500i) allows two units to be connected in parallel (sold separately).

Warranty: Two year limited
Emissions compliance: 50 state
MSRP: \$990
Champion Power Equipment
877-338-0999
www.championpowerequipment.com

HONDA



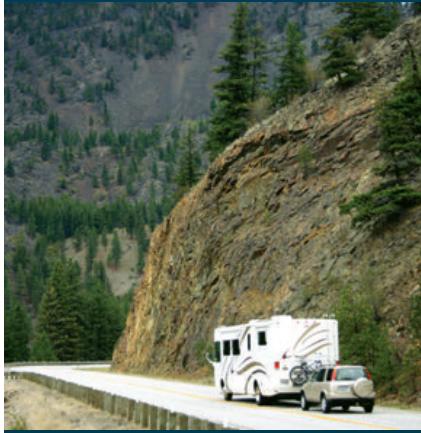
EU1000iA2 1000-Watt Inverter Generator

Dimensions: 17.7"L x 9.4"W x 15"H
Weight: 29 lbs.
Fuel Capacity: 0.6 gallon
Output: 1,000 watts max, 900 watts rated
Run Time (claimed): 8.3 hours @ 25 percent load
Decibel rating (claimed): 53 dB
Features: Honda's smallest inverter generator still has big features, such

as low-oil alert, Eco-Throttle load dependent operation, electronic ignition, simultaneous AC/DC use and parallel operation ports. This generator is equipped with two 15-amp, 120-volt AC and one 12-volt DC outlet.

Warranty: Two years
Emissions compliance: 50 state
MSRP: \$949.95

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HONDA

EU2000i/EU2000i Companion 2000-Watt Inverter Generators

Dimensions: 20.1"L x 11.4"W x 16.7"H

Weight: 46.3 lbs.

Fuel Capacity: 1.1 gallons
(.95 gal for Companion model)

Output: 2,000 watts max,
1,600 watts rated

Run Time (claimed): 9.6 hours
@ 25 percent load

Decibel rating (claimed): 53 dB

Features: Easily the most popular portable generator among RVers, the EU2000i and EU2000i Companion offer the same features as the smaller EU1000iA, except that the EU2000i Companion features an RV-specific 30-amp, 120-volt AC locking plug (requires optional adapter) and a single 20-amp 120-volt outlet.

Warranty: Three years

Emissions Compliance: 50 state

MSRP: \$1,149.95/\$1,279.95

Honda Power Equipment

770-497-6400

www.powerequipment.honda.com



POWERHOUSE PRODUCTS

1000Wi 1000-Watt Inverter Generator

Dimensions: 20"L x 17.25"H x 10.75"W

Weight: 32.95 lbs.

Fuel Capacity: .78 gallon

Output: 1,000 watts max, 900 watts rated

Run Time (claimed): 6.9 hours
@ 25 percent load

Decibel Rating (claimed): 64 dB

Features: Providing for those with basic power needs, the 1000Wi includes a low-oil shutoff and a fuel-economy switch for variable speed or 100 percent full power. It's equipped with one 20-amp, 120-volt AC outlet and one 12-volt DC outlet.

Warranty: One year

Emissions compliance: 50 state

MSRP: \$449.95



2000Wi 2000-Watt Inverter Generator

Dimensions: 21.3"L x 19.1"H x 11.3"W

Weight: 62 lbs.

Fuel Capacity: 1.4 gallon

Output: 2,000 watts max,
1,900 watts rated

Run Time (claimed): 8.2 hours @
25 percent load

Decibel Rating (claimed): 56 dB

Features: Same as the 1000Wi, but with quieter operation and two 20-amp, 120-volt AC outlets.

Warranty: One year

Emissions Compliance: 50 state

MSRP: \$624.95



PH2100PRi 2100-Watt Inverter Generator

Dimensions: 22"L x 19"H x 11"W

Weight: 73 lbs.

Fuel Capacity: 1.3 gallons



Output: 2,100 watts max, 2,000 watts rated

Run Time (claimed): 7.9 hours

@ 25 percent load

Decibel Rating (claimed): 56 dB

Features: Same as the 2000Wi, but with the addition of an automatic choke and a remote electric start that works up to 75 feet away. It can also be used in parallel with a second unit via an available kit, sold separately.

Warranty: Two years

Emissions Compliancy: 50 state

MSRP: \$782.95

PH2700PRi 2700-Watt Inverter Generator

Dimensions: 22.8"L x 17"H x 13"W

Weight: 80 lbs.

Fuel Capacity: 1.4 gallons



Output: 2,700 watts max,

2,600 watts rated

Run Time (claimed): 7.2 hours

@ 25 percent load

Decibel Rating (claimed): 58 dB

Features: Same as the PH2100PRi, but also has the added convenience of a built-in carry handle and wheels. It also offers an optional parallel kit to connect a second unit, sold separately.

Warranty: Two years

Emissions Compliancy: 50 state

MSRP: \$1229.95

Powerhouse Products

877-544-4449

www.powerhouse-products.com

YAMAHA

EF1000iS 1000-Watt Inverter Generator

Dimensions: 17.7"L x 9.4"W x 14.9"

Weight: 27.9 lbs.

Fuel Capacity: 0.66 gallon

Output: 1,000 watts max,

900 watts rated

Run Time: 12 hours @ 25 percent load

Decibel Rating (claimed): 47-57 dB

Features: The EF1000iS packs a lot of technology and thoughtful features into a small package. The load-sensing Smart

Throttle RPM control saves fuel and reduces noise by automatically adjusting engine speed to match the load. Pulse Width Modulation means that voltage stability is within ± 1 percent, and frequency stability is ± 0.1 hertz, according to Yamaha. The Auto Warm-Up feature automatically increases engine speed for 4-6 minutes to ensure smooth power delivery during cold startups, and the Oil Watch Warning System helps prevent engine damage from low oil. Other features include a wide-mouth fuel filler that reduces spilling and backflow during refueling, and a gasoline petcock that allows you to shut off the gas and run the carburetor dry prior to storage to prevent stale gas problems. The EF1000iS is equipped with two 120-volt AC outlets and 12-volt DC output with battery-charging cables included.

Warranty: Three years, limited

Emissions Compliancy: 50 state

MSRP: \$879



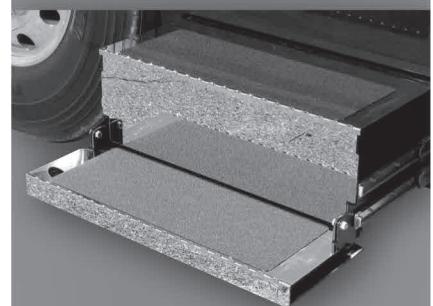
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EF2000iS 2000-Watt Inverter Generator

Dimensions: 19.3"L x 11.0"W x 17.9"H

Weight: 44.1 lbs.

Fuel Capacity: 1.1 gallons

Output: 2,000 watts max, 1,600 watts rated

Run Time (claimed): 10.5 hours @ 25 percent load

Decibel Rating (claimed): 51.5-61 dB

Features: Same features as the smaller EF1000iS, but with a fuel gauge, an auto decompression system for easier starting and a parallel function that allows connection of two generators.

Warranty: Three years, limited

Emissions Compliance: 50 state

MSRP: \$1,099



EF2400iSHC 2400-Watt Inverter Generator

Dimensions: 20.8"L x 16.5"W x 18.2"H

Weight: 75 lbs.

Fuel Capacity: 1.6 gallons

Output: 2,400 watts max, 2,000 watts rated

Run Time (claimed): 8.6 hours @ 25 percent load

Decibel Rating (claimed): 53-60 dB

Features: Same features as the EF2000iS, but with the added benefit of High Current output designed specifically to increase motor starting capability and improve air conditioner starting. Yamaha claims this model starts most high-efficiency 13,500-Btu air-conditioning units in temperatures as high as 110 degrees Fahrenheit.

Warranty: Three years, limited
Emissions Compliance: 50 state
MSRP: \$1,479



EF2800i 2800-Watt Inverter Generator

Dimensions: 19.2"L x 15.6"W x 16.7"H

Weight: 68 lbs.

Fuel Capacity: 2.6 gallon

Output: 2,800 watts max, 2,500 watts rated

Run Time: 15 hours @ 25 percent load

Decibel Rating: 65-68 dB

Features: The EF2800i is the lightest generator in its class, according to Yamaha. Its open-frame design not only sheds pounds, but provides a large gasoline capacity. Like its smaller siblings, the EF2800i features Smart Throttle and Oil Watch, plus a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) that helps reduce the risk of shock. It's equipped with two 20-amp, 120-volt AC outlets, one 30-amp AC outlet and 12-volt DC output.

Emissions Compliance: 50 state
MSRP: \$1,699

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Warranty: Three years, limited

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PREVENTING UNEXPECTED FLOW AND TASTE PROBLEMS

by BILL AND JENN GEHR

There's little question that a motorhome's freshwater system is the lifeblood of self containment — yet most owners tend to take it for granted that water will flow when the faucets are opened. That is, until problems show up at the most inopportune times. Whether it's a simple leak in one of the water lines or loss of pressure (somehow this always occurs while you have shampoo in your hair in the shower), motorhome freshwater systems are much more dependent on an-

cillary components than a stationary home. RVs depend heavily on a water pump, as well as the city water supply, to make the system function smoothly. Also, unlike a residential system, which requires very little attention most of the time, RV water systems do not take care of themselves, and they require a little care and maintenance on a regular basis. Understanding how the water system operates will help you plan and execute the necessary repairs and maintenance.



IN GOOD TASTE

Prior to starting any trip after the motorhome has been in storage — and particularly after an extended period of time — the system should be sanitized thoroughly. Fill the water tank with freshwater and add ¼ cup of household bleach for every 15 gallons of water. Pump the bleach-and-water solution through the entire system and don't forget the water heater. Open the low-point drains as well, because contaminated water can get trapped in the lines. Let the bleach-and-water solution stand in the entire system for roughly 12 hours. Drain the water tank, low-point drains and the water heater (this is a good time to change the anode rod if the coach is equipped with a Suburban hot-water tank and replacement is necessary). Refill the water storage tank and pump clean water through the system. Then open the "hot" side of the galley faucet to purge the water heater. Flushing the system with water and baking soda (about ½ cup of baking soda mixed in 1 gallon of water before pouring in to the tank) can help remove any chlo-

rine smell and taste from the water.

It's recommended to repeat this process at the end of the travel season to ensure that the lines are sanitized and ready for the next adventure. If you live in a cold climate and winterize the system, you must also go through the above sanitation process before setting the system up for the season. Although most RVers travel to parks with hookups, it's best to run a tank of city water through the system at least once a month while on the road to help prevent the growth of bacteria. Most city water has some chlorine added, which helps to keep bacteria from growing inside the tank when not in use. However, chlorine has a finite lifespan, so you'll need to replenish the freshwater tank on a regular basis.

Traveling from campground to campground and even state to state, one can never be sure of the water quality. Algae and other contaminants can enter the freshwater lines and storage tank. Check the water quality before hooking up; if it looks cloudy, has a rust-colored hue and/or any particles, don't use that water source.



On the left is a bowl of normal tap water from Southern California; it has a reading of 545 grains of hardness. The bowl on the right has a reading of 238 as a result of using a water softener. The EPA guideline is 500 grains of hardness.

Temporarily use the onboard water pump and storage tank until you can purchase a water purifier/filter to protect the freshwater system. Keep in mind that not all water filters are created equal, so choose a type of filter that handles the individual water condition and quality you're seeking (see "H2 Oh!" on page 122 for more details on water filtration systems).

FILTERING BASICS

Although water filtration is very impor-



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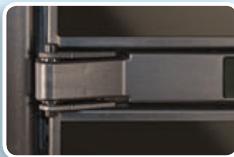


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tant, it's uncommon to see an RV'er using a high-quality filter setup between the campground faucet and the city water hookup. While it's true that many RVs are equipped with built-in water purifiers, they are usually only comprised of a basic activated-charcoal filter. Quality water filtration requires much more than just a canister of activated charcoal, largely because water follows the path of least resistance; it tends to flow around the charcoal pieces, not through them. After extensive research, we have concluded that a combination of a .3-micron ceramic candle-type filter and a solid carbon-block filter — both set inside a jumbo canister system for maximum filtration — works best. A .5-micron sediment filter and water softener should be used in front of the above combination. This system should also be used when filling the water storage tank. This will ensure that the water system stays clean and sanitized. If done right, most owners can refrain from buying bottled drinking water, which can be a sizeable savings over time.



From left to right is a residential-style water-pressure regulator, a sediment and rust filter, which is easily cleaned and reused, and an RV-style water softener that keeps interior appliances and the shower spot-free.

UNDER PRESSURE

Water pressure must be controlled when hooking up to city water. Regulators are available in different sizes and shapes, from simple in-line pressure regulators to

adjustable regulators with a gauge. Small, in-line regulators typically reduce volume in order to control pressure, while larger, adjustable regulators with a pressure gauge allow for more volume. A better

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ON SALE NOW for Good Sam Club members at Camping World. Also available at other RV retailers.



SHURflo's Revolution water pump is essential for boondocking. The new variable-speed pump performs well, runs quietly and delivers excellent water pressure.

choice is to use a residential-style regulator, available at most building supply stores. These regulators are adjustable and provide a higher volume of water, although we recommend adjusting the regulator to 50 PSI to create good water pressure without placing undue stress on the pump. It's also wise to attach the regulator to the faucet before connecting the water hose, in order to protect the hose from ultra-high pressure and possible bursting. Small, in-line regulators should be replaced every couple of years, as they lose their effectiveness over time.

Demand water pumps, which are needed to move the onboard water through the faucets, come in myriad sizes and flow rates, calculated at gallons per minute (GPM). They range from 2.8 GPM at 35 PSI to 5.7 GPM at 55 psi, and some have variable-speed motors. If your shower lacks decent pressure, for example, try upgrading the water pump.

There are a number of procedures for troubleshooting a water pump. Failure to prime itself is a very common problem. If this is the case, start by checking the filter on the intake side of the pump. Remove the filter, clean the screens if possible, and reinstall, making certain that the filter does not have an air leak. The filter should be cleaned at least once a year.

Trace the flexible hose from the intake side of the pump to the water tank, checking the clamps to make sure that they are not loose. Carefully inspect the hose for pin holes/air leaks, which will cause the pump to pull in a mixture of air and water and not prime itself properly. Inspect the fitting in the water tank; most



Place the "Y" adapter after the pressure regulator to avoid excess water pressure from building up when performing tasks such as washing bicycles.

of these fittings are threaded into the tank and a leak around that area could cause a



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‡Savings vary by bed model and size. \$300 savings applies to King Sleep Number® RV Premier bed purchase. See Camping World Associate for details and restrictions. ©2014 Select Comfort



There are a wide variety of water filters on the market to help remove basic sediments and other simple contaminants.

problem. An easy test to perform involves attaching a flexible piece of hose to the intake side of the pump and inserting the other end into a bucket of water. Then, turn on the pump and see if it is priming properly.

Noisy water pumps can be very irritating, especially in the middle of the night. To solve/prevent this problem, make sure the intake and discharge sides of the pump have flexible hoses connecting the water pipes, and that they are not positioned against a wall or any other solid objects. SHURFlo makes a silencing kit, Part No. 94591-01, for reducing pump



These two jumbo canisters contain a .5-micron ceramic filter and solid-carbon-block filter. Used in conjunction with one another, this is one of the best filtration methods on the market today.

SERVICING A CLASSIC WATER PUMP

The SHURflo model 2088-series demand water pump has been a work-horse for most RVs for the last 15 years. Utilizing three independent chambers, this pump was noted for its dependability. The model 2088-series water pump was quiet, self priming and able to run dry for long periods of time without causing any damage to the valve system.

SHURflo retired its 2088 series and replaced it with the 4088 Revolution, a water pump that's quieter and offers a higher flow rate. Its unique design eliminates the rapid cycling that was common in the 2088-series water pumps. Equipped with an automatic thermal overload protection, and capable of running dry for extended periods of time without damage, the Revolution pump is very durable and dependable. The built-in check valve eliminates the need for a separate check valve in front of the pump, which prevents city water from entering the discharge side of the pump.

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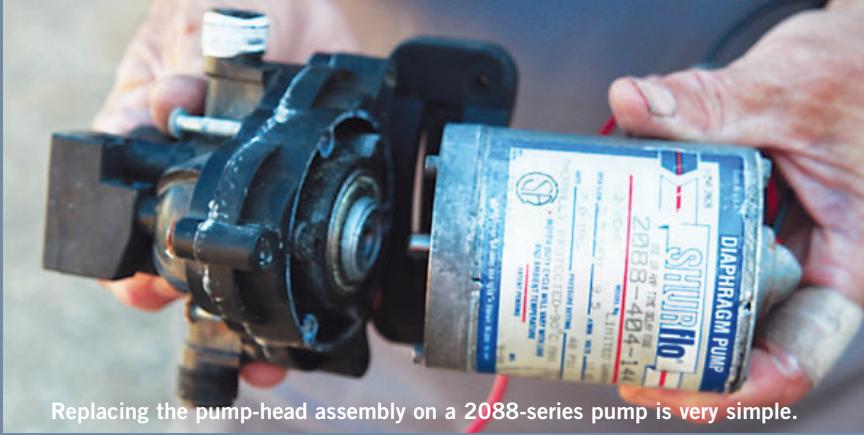
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Replacing the pump-head assembly on a 2088-series pump is very simple.

Despite its dependability, it's possible to experience a failure, usually after a long period of time and after the pump provided water for many hours. A replacement pump head assembly is still available for the 2088-series water pump, but it's a little more than half the price of a new Revolution. Nevertheless, owners still elect to make the repair.

Replacing the pump head is quite simple. First, remove the pump from the motorhome after disconnecting the intake and discharge lines; remove the ground wire (it may need to be cut). Disconnect the red motor wire from the head assem-

by. Three machine bolts, which hold the head assembly to the motor, must be removed before separating from the pump. The motor shaft has a flat spot on one side that will need to be lined up to the corresponding flat spot in the pump head assembly. Start the head assembly onto the shaft and rotate into position to install the three machine screws. Attach the red positive wire from the pump motor to the head assembly and reinstall in the pump in the motorhome. Connect the intake and discharge lines. If you have a strainer on the intake side of the pump, it should be cleaned before reinstalling the pump.



SHURflo designed this pump-silencing kit for water pumps that "hammer" during operation.

noise, which is a necessity for those systems with rigid hoses connected directly to the pump.

Short cycling is a common problem with water pumps, especially in a small, closed system. Accumulator tanks will help with short cycling and extend the life of the pump. They are very easy to

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install in the pressure line (after the water pump) and are available at most RV supply stores.

KNOW YOUR HOSE

Water hoses come in a variety of lengths and diameters. Drinking-water hoses are specifically designed to ensure that water passing through remains tasteless and odorless. Do not use a garden hose, as they are manufactured using certain chemicals that will stay in the water lines and fittings for a long time. Purchase two, 5/8-inch by 25-foot-long drinking water hoses. The 5/8-inch diameter hose provides much better volume, especially when connecting the two. Most faucets are within 25 feet, but it's always good to be prepared when camping without hook-ups and the nearest faucet is farther away.

Always use kink-free water hoses; there is nothing more irritating than trying to get out several kinks that restrict pressure, and ultimately, water flow. Consider using a Y-fitting with shut-off valves at the faucet in case you need to fill a bucket

Be sure to purchase a water hose that is specifically designed for drinking water.



You never know what type of water-faucet configuration you'll encounter, so be prepared with various elbows and a Water Bandit for those pesky faucets that do not have threads.

of water or rinse something off while the motorhome is hooked to the city water supply.

THE HARD LINE

The hard, Pex water lines used in motorhomes are very reliable, but they are not

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An assortment of Sea Tech fittings that should be carried at all times for emergencies. It's better to be safe than sorry!

immune to failure. Usually a failure is attributable to a tee, elbow or other fitting that was not installed properly during coach manufacturing. Over time, they can become damaged, so it's wise to carry a few spare fittings (and some water line) when traveling. The kit should have a tee and a union, as well as a cap, in case the repair is not possible and the flow of water must be stopped to prevent damage. There are also swivel fittings avail-



Replacing a defective elbow or a tee with Sea Tech slip fittings is as easy as cutting the line and pushing it into the fitting.

able that can be used to replace the fitting at the bottom of a faucet. Pex tubing for motorhomes comes in two basic sizes, 1/2-inch and 5/8-inch outside diameter (OD), although almost all motorhomes use the 5/8 tubing.

In our experience, Sea Tech fittings are the most versatile. They have a clever, quick-install design that allows the user to simply push the fitting onto the tubing that has been cut. The Sea Tech fitting,

which is very reliable, can also be removed easily. They are especially handy to use in hard-to-reach locations. Consider carrying a 1-gallon plastic bag filled with spare fittings, which will allow you to quickly identify what parts are needed without going on a time-consuming scavenger hunt.

Keeping a few parts on hand and making sure the system is serviced regularly, will ensure that the water will continue flowing smoothly, without foul odors and surprising failures. ♦

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GET THE LED OUT

REPLACING TRADITIONAL BULBS WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY LEADS TO **IMPROVED EFFICIENCY AND LONGER LIGHT LIFE**

by KRISTOPHER BUNKER

In recent years, the “green” movement has come on strong in the RV industry. It only makes sense that a lifestyle that promotes communing with nature should advocate preserving the same. But going green can be achieved in many more ways than buying a fancy new trailer built only with composite materials. It also means making a change to more durable, longer-lasting appointments and technologies — and the easiest way to do this is by swapping out as many of the traditional incandescent/fluorescent/halogen bulbs in your RV as possible with LEDs. And if saving the Earth isn’t your thing (Tsk, tsk, tsk!), how about this: LEDs can last as much as up to 10-15 times as long as other bulb technologies (depending on conditions and bulb type) and they use less energy, which nets more savings in the long run. Now that we have your attention, we should discuss the differences between LEDs and traditional lights and fixtures.

Traditional light bulbs generate light by passing current through a filament, which in turn heats the filament to a temperature resulting in a glowing, visible light. (Halogen lamps work in much the same way, but have a bit of the halogen gas added to cause a chemical reaction with the filament for improved brightness.) Fluorescent bulbs function by passing current through a mercury vapor, which emits ultraviolet light that is absorbed by a phosphor coating inside the bulb. LEDs, or light-emitting diodes, aren’t bulbs at all; an LED is actually a dual-lead semiconductor that emits light when current is applied. In layman’s terms, that means LEDs are far more efficient than their dated counterparts.

“Typical halogen lights that are used in the RV industry are either 10 or 20 watts,” said Mike Camarota, president of ITC RV, a company that offers interior lighting products for the RV industry. “In contrast, the LED equivalent lights are 4 or 6 watts. This reduction on energy consumption of 70 percent means less draw on the power circuit of the RV.

A fifth-wheel may have 20 lights in a ceiling, which would equate to 400 watts using halogen lighting but is reduced to 120 watts using LED lighting. In dry-camping situations the battery will last longer.” But the benefits of LED technology go beyond power consumption. Ever notice how hot the interior of your trailer gets when all the lights are on? “Lights produce heat,” said Camarota. “The process of converting energy into light involves two byproducts, heat and light. The difference between LED lights and non-LED lights is not that LED lights produce no heat but instead that they use less energy to produce light. In that conversion process, a greater percentage of energy goes into light emission than heat emission.” The additional heat from a non-LED light source can mean extra cooling costs. Costs continue to escalate when you factor in replacement bulbs. And who among us enjoys changing light bulbs every few months (or storing them in your already precious cargo space, for that matter)?

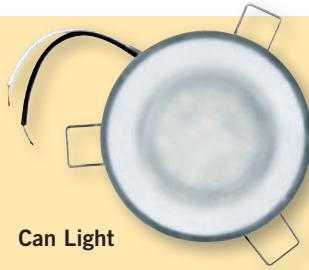
Buyers must also be wary of false claims from bulb manufacturers. “The ‘fake’ part about ratings on incandescents is that the manufacturers have historically rated them in watts, which only tells about power consumption, not light output,” said Jirah owner Tom Long. “[To dispel this], I always use the example of my wife’s blow dryer. It has all kinds of watts, but not much light! That being said, I would estimate the standard No. 1141 (most common bulb on the planet) at about 225 lumens.”

LED replacements are available in a variety of configurations, from entire fixtures to basic rewire kits to straight swaps. We’ve gathered a number of products to help you go green, and to even save some green in the long run. Although many of these manufacturers also produce LEDs for tow and/or dinghy vehicles — as well as turn, signal and brakelights for the RV — we’re saving these for another time in the interest of space.

Diamond Group



Bayonet Bulb



Can Light



Double Pancake

When you think RV lighting, your first thought is likely the double-pancake type lights. Diamond has you covered with these eco-friendly, energy-saving 12-volt DC LED fixtures. The 36-diode daylight white fixtures have a surface-mount and are easy to install, with just two wires. They draw a mere .22 amps and produce 350 lumens of light, and a three-way switch provides lighting from either side of the unit, or

both. A bezel (sold separately) is also available to use this unit to cover square holes. Camping World price: \$52.99. Also available in a single-pancake model: \$26.24.

Another easy way to upgrade standard lighting with eco-friendly, energy-saving 12-volt DC fixtures is the LED Puck click-light. It features on/off click functionality, with no switch required. Nine diodes combine for an 80-lumen output from a 3-inch

light. Camping World price: \$24.86.

For replacing wedge-type lighting, Diamond has a six-pack of LEDs for one-stop swapping. Each unit features 15 daylight white diodes capable of a 135-lumen output with a .073-amp draw. They are designed to replace a variety of bulbs recommended for overhead applications. Available at Camping World for \$89.99.

A swap of LED replacements for an

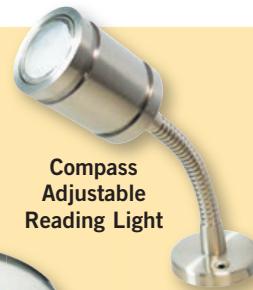
ITC RV



4.5-inch Radiance Overhead



Exterior Porch Light



Compass Adjustable Reading Light

Illumagrip Assist Handle



Courtesy Light



Wedge Base Bulb



Compass Switched Swivel Undercabinet

Looking for some versatile overhead lighting that looks great? ITC offers the 3-inch (No. 69231) and 4.5-inch (No. 69240) Radiance Overhead LED lights for a pleasing warm-white light output. The units are installed using a patented twist lock that holds the glass in place for easy removal and replacement, and no visible screws. The 3-inch model is offered with six or nine LEDs for an output of 110-160 lumens, while the 4.5-incher can be had with 12, 15 or 21 LEDs for respective outputs of 200, 260 and 340 lumens. MSRP: \$17-\$25.

The Surface-Mount LED Courtesy Light (No. 69360ss) is a scant 5/8-inch deep for clean installation. The trim ring can be cut for a custom look, and in addition to the cool white LEDs, buyers can special-order blue LEDs for an even cooler look. The fixture is watertight, and the unit comes in polished stainless-steel and brushed stainless-steel finishes. MSRP: \$18-\$20.

The Compass Switched Swivel Undercabinet Light (No. 69410-xx) swivels 360

degrees for unlimited lighting options. The unit features a 50,000-hour estimated life and cool-to-the-touch operation. The LED can be installed using a screw or spring-clip, and it's available in nickel, chrome, truffle, black or white finishes, with an output of 86 lumens. MSRP: \$37-\$38.

The LED Exterior Porch Light (No. 69767) is capable of emitting 270 lumens of entry-illuminating, RV-key-finding brilliant light. The surface-mount design is ideal for patio applications, or for use as scare lights. The amber illumination is designed to reduce bug attraction, while an accent reveal allows for up-light functionality. Available in chrome, black or white finishes. MSRP: \$37-\$38.

For a simple LED swap, the Wedge Base LED Replacement Bulb (No. 69112b) uses a scant 1.5 watts and offers a direct replacement for wedge base types 912 and 921 bulbs. With a 50,000-hour estimated life and an output of 136 lumens, these LEDs should far outlive their three-year

warranty. They are also dimmable using a compatible low-voltage LED switch (contact ITC for more details). MSRP: \$13-\$14.

The Compass Adjustable Reading Light (No. 69923S) offers 90 lumens of direct light sure to illuminate your favorite page-turner. The unit's flexible arm allows for unlimited light direction, and a 50,000-hour estimated life means the fixture will likely outlive the RV it's in! The screw-mount installation and attractive transitional styling give the light a classy appearance, and it only uses 2.06 watts. MSRP: \$40-\$50.

For an LED accent that can also enhance safety, Illumagrip Assist Handles offer a step up that's available in straight or formed models and offer 20 inches of leg-up assistance rated at more than 400 pounds. The handles have two mounting holes for additional support. The optional LEDs feature a quick-disconnect pigtail for easy replacement. MSRP: \$80-\$160.

ITC RV Division, 574-389-8986
www.itc-us.com



Puck Light



Reading Light



Wedge Replacement

old traditional bayonet bulb will brighten up an interior in no time. The warm-white, 25-diode units produce 175 lumens with a .13-amp draw. Camping World price: \$24.99.

For the RVing bookworm, Diamond has a Replacement LED Directional Reading Bulb. The bulb features a single high-intensity LED chip for replacing No. 1383 standard bulbs. The warm-white output reaches 110 lumens while remaining cool

to the touch. Camping World price: \$29.99.

For a bit of retro chic, try a timeless 3-inch LED can light. The downward-facing light features frosted glass and is a great way to draw attention to an intended area. Spring mounting means no visible screws, and the 15 diodes are rated for 100 lumens. Camping World price: \$26.74.

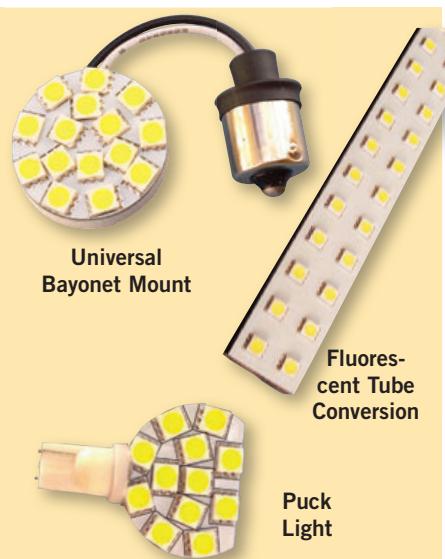
Diamond Group, 800-456-4498
www.dg-usa.com

Jirah

The Universal bayonet mount 1510-V64-R3 is said to be brighter, stronger and smaller than most of the items available in today's RV LED market. Emitting 320 lumens of white light, this quarter-size LED upgrade is designed to replace standard bayonet-based bulbs like No. 1141 and 1156. "All Jirah products that incorporate Surface Mount Diodes (SMD) use the 5050 three-chip technology that gives the most light for the money," said Jirah owner Tom Long. All diodes face outward, meaning no light is wasted when mounted in typical ceiling or pancake-style fixtures. MSRP: \$19.95.

Puck-light (1240-S45-R3) replacements for the ceiling and under-cabinet puck lights use only one-sixth of the power and give a brighter, cleaner and cooler light than the standard 10-watt bulb. This upgrade slips in to the existing socket, so no removal or modification of the reflector is required. The contact legs are offset from the PC board, making installation as easy as changing a regular bulb. Solder joints are encased in shock-absorbing epoxy to offset the bumps in the road. A built-in bridge rectifier ensures that polarity is correct. Output is 275 lumens of warm white. MSRP: \$19.95.

If you're looking to replace old fluorescent tubes, a JC-42-FL LED conversion kit is available. With ratings of 460 lumens per (18-inch) strip, these low-profile strips broadcast 20 percent more light with only a fraction of the power usage. Plus, they allow



Universal Bayonet Mount

Fluorescent Tube Conversion

Puck Light

you to ditch the ballast, and no mercury is required for operation. The low-profile fit ensures the light is projected at a wider angle than most other replacements, giving more light in a larger area. Solder joints are encased in shock-absorbing epoxy. And they are all populated with the 5050 SMD three-chip technology. MSRP: \$45/pair.

The flat-top (1230-S45-S3) replaces the 921-style bulbs and fits in the four-glass clamshell vanity fixtures found on higher-end coaches. The flat side allows the LEDs to be attractively tucked behind the frosted glass of the clamshell. The replacement is brighter, cooler and lasts longer than stock bulbs. The LEDs feature the 5050 SMD three-chip design, are non-polarity and have a warm-white glow. MSRP: \$19.95
Jirah, 909-297-1926, jirahled.com



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Single Pancake Light



Dual Pancake Light



Opti-Brite Surface Mount



White Strip Light



Surface Mount Tap Light



Chrome Strip Light



Opti-Brite
Dome Light



Aero Style Interior Light

Experience instant LED light by simply tapping the lens of the UCL60CSNB 3-inch diameter surface-mount LED light. This light is ideal for interior under-cabinet and slideout applications. The sealed, waterproof unit comes in black nickel or black finishes, and is capable of outputting a brightness of 168 lumens. MSRP: \$16.99.

The Opti-Brite ILL36CB is a surface-mount LED interior light. The compact 2.75-by-5.75-inch size allows it to fit many applications, including ceiling mounts. The unit's durable polycarbonate construction means it should last for many years, while its 3/4-inch thickness yields a surprising 227 lumens. MSRP: \$11.99.

Another dome-light option is the Opti-Brite ILL22CB, a surface-mount LED interior light with or without an integrated switch. Its 1-inch thickness and 2.75-by-5.75-inch dimensions make for versatile installations. The unit is hard-wired with 6-inch leads, is waterproof and has an output of 810 lumens. MSRP: \$17.99.

The ILL70CSB Strip Lights are low-profile, sealed slimline units designed with interior undercabinet and storage applications in mind. The lights feature a wedge-based mount that projects light at a 45-degree angle, and are hard-wired with

lead and ground wires. They are available in a polished-chrome or black housing, with or without a switch and are capable of an output of 171 lumens. MSRP: \$49.99.

The LL70CBAWN white LED strip light for surface mounting pumps out 171 lumens of clean light. The strip is ideal for above-entry doors, as a scare light, a hitching light or a docking light. MSRP: \$35.99.

The RVILL33 and RVILL34 are traditional interior pancake-style single and dual fixtures with an integrated switch. The single fixture features 11 LEDs (the dual-fixture, 22) that reduce energy requirements and heat output compared to the incandescent and/or halogen bulbs they replace. The single fixture is rated at 407 lumens, while the dual is 815 lumens. MSRP: \$6.99/\$13.49.

The RVILL39 is an Aero Style Interior Light with style. The surface-mount ceiling light features a push-button switch and a replaceable white snap-on bezel, and an 18-gauge, 6-inch lead and ground wire. Its oval shape and 230-lumen output make it ideal for many interior applications. MSRP: \$20.49.

Optronics products can be ordered through most RV dealerships.

Optronics, www.optronicsinc.com

Starlights



Revolution 1141
Replacement Bulb



Replacement
Vanity Bulb



Wedge-Base Revolution
Replacement Bulb



Smart Light 2000



Interior Single With all Modules



Interior Double With all Modules

For RV applications, the popular Brilliant Light series has several options. Among the most popular is the BL 3002, which is an Interior Single fixture with a 150-lumen LED bulb; the BL 3003 is an Interior Double fixture with two 150 lumen LED bulbs (\$41.99 approximate retail). They are modular/customizable fixtures that allow the customer to add any or all modules, which include a dimmer dial, nightlight, day/night sensor and motion detector. The modules are approximately \$10.99 each retail. MSRP: \$26.99 (BL 3002), \$41.99 (BL 3003).

The water-resistant Revolution LED (No. 1141-200) offers 200 lumens of light ideal for porches or even interiors. Revolution units replace single-contact bayonet-style lights and fit most RV fixtures. The power range is 8-30 volts DC, and just 2.5 watts will run this LED, which Starlights claims will last 100-times longer than a standard bulb. Camping World price: \$20.99. Also available in a 250-lumen version (\$29.50) for brighter applications.

Enjoy the benefits of a bulb-type fixture with all the advantages of LED lighting with the Revolution Replacement LED Vanity Bulb (No. 2099-270F). The LEDs are placed in a bulb housing to produce 270 lumens of soft, natural light for an RV's bathroom vanity fixture.

A direct LED replacement for incandescent vanity bulbs, it lasts 200-times longer and is 432 percent more energy ef-

ficient, according to the company. Camping World price: \$26.99.

Keep the campsite and surrounding area illuminated with the Smart Light 2000 Replacement outside round light. Available in white or black, the 12-volt DC unit features battery and motion-sensor capabilities for added safety and security. It helps to prevent accidental slips, falls and theft by giving owners on-demand light wherever it's needed. The Smart Light installs easily using the same hole pattern as most standard lights. An amber lens kit for enhanced pest control is included. It can be used with all Starlights Revolution series 1141 LEDs. Camping World price: \$83.99. Also available in a more compact 1000 model (\$69.99).

For wedge-base applications, Starlights offers the Revolution 921-220 LED replacement bulb. The extremely bright polarity-sensitive unit produces 220 lumens of soft natural light, and lasts 100-times longer than the bulb it replaces, with a noticeably reduced energy consumption of .32 amps. Starlights claims these LEDs have a life expectancy of 60,000 hours. Camping World price: \$26.99.

Starlights, 800-883-5444

www.starlightsinc.com ♦



Kristopher Bunker, the former editor of *Trailer Life* magazine, has been RVing for more than a decade and is currently a freelance writer and stay-at-home dad.

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Motorhomes come in a variety of sizes and offer a vast array of available options depending on size and cost, but one thing they all have in common is a mattress. In our homes, the right mattress is considered extremely important for a good night's sleep, but for some reason, many of us deal with a cheap mattress in our motorhomes for as long as we own them. Perhaps it's because we don't sleep

on these beds as often as the ones in our homes, or it might be that we've never even considered that other options are available. Well, if you've been looking disdainfully at the mattress in your coach for too long now, we've got good news for you: There are countless mattress sizes, designs and configurations available for RV use — in fact, it's safe to say that if you have it in your house, you can probably get something similar in your motorhome.

REST EASY

WITH **A VARIETY OF SHAPES, SIZES AND DESIGNS** AVAILABLE, THERE'S SIMPLY NO REASON TO DEAL WITH A CHEAP OR WORN-OUT RV MATTRESS

by CHRIS HEMER



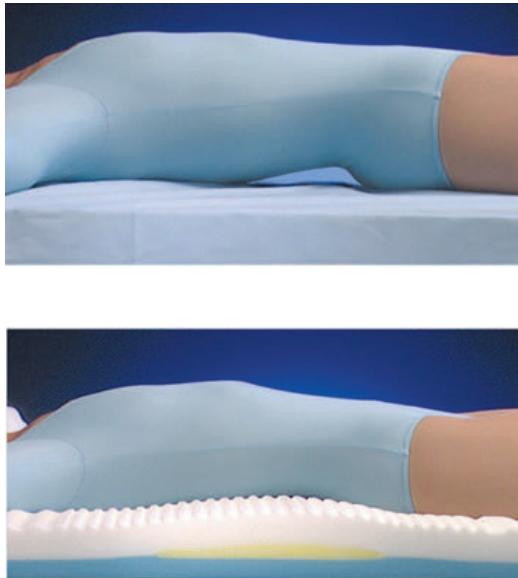
RV MATTRESS SIZES

As you've probably already discovered, the mattress in your coach isn't necessarily the same as the one in your home, even if they are in the same size category. That's because there are more size and configuration restrictions in an RV bedroom, so various RV mattress sizes have been created to make the best use of the space available. For example, the most common queen-size bed is an RV short queen, which most commonly measures 60-by-75 inches (sometimes 60-by-74 inches) versus a residential queen, which is typically 60-by-80 inches. According to MattressInsider.com, a Denver, Colo., company that specializes in RV mattress replacements, the most typical RV mattress sizes are: short queen, 60-by-75 inches (or 60-by-74 inches); RV queen, 60-by-80 inches; three quarter, 48-by-75 inches; RV full, 53-by-75 inches; RV short king, 72-by-75 inches; and RV king, 72-by-80 inches. There are also several varieties of bunk- and twin-bed sizes that are commonly used.

Obviously, the first step to purchasing a replacement mattress is to figure out what size you already have, but this isn't as elementary as it seems. "Most people will measure the mattress," said Jonathan Prichard, founder and CEO of Mattress Insider.com. "However, the most accurate method is to measure the dimensions of the surface the mattress rests on (usually plywood). There are two reasons why this is more accurate. The first is that your RV mattress may not be the same size as it was when the motorhome was built. This can be due to temperature variations during off-season storage or long-term exposure to UV light. The other reason is that RV mattresses are made by both human beings and machines, so the tolerances can vary. If you take 10 of them out of stock, you'll find a slight variation in size — so if you measure the mattress instead of the surface it's on, you may be led to believe that you need a custom size even if you don't."

MATTRESS TYPES

Where it used to be common to choose between a foam or an innerspring mattress, there are now several varieties to choose from, and that doesn't include the num-



Another option over a new mattress is one of the many mattress toppers available like this Contour Cloud Pad available through Camping World and other outlets. This pad features a top layer of plush memory foam that is designed to mold and fit your body, helping to relieve stress and pressure. The yellow insert adds lumbar support for your waist, lower back and hips to support your spine in its natural position.

ber of hybrid mattresses in the residential market that may incorporate two or more mattress technologies (i.e., air and memory foam). That said, the most common mattress types are polyurethane foam, memory foam, latex, innerspring and air.

A polyurethane foam mattress is a

good choice if you're on a budget and/or you don't use your motorhome more than the typical two to three weeks a year. Standard foam RV mattresses are usually constructed of one type of foam, are approximately 5-6 inches thick, and generally cost between \$150 and \$350

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The TheraGel memory foam mattress features a 3-inch top layer infused with TheraGel micro beads on a 7-inch base layer of high-density foam. Temperature-sensitive TheraGel is designed to adjust to body temperature, improve circulation and reduce pressure points. Polyester microfiber cover wicks moisture away for a cooler night's sleep. Available at Camping World.



Gel memory foam mattresses may incorporate a gel formula, or gel beads like this one offered by MattressInsider.com.

depending on the size. "When shopping for a one-layer foam mattress, the most important thing to consider is the density of the foam," said Prichard. "The 1.8- to 2-pound densities tend to be more durable and can withstand more body weight."

Going to a lighter density (1.2- to 1.5-pounds) might save you some money, but it will be at the cost of quicker breakdown, which can result in sagging and/or depressions in the mattress. "Another

thing to consider is if the foam is 100 percent petroleum-based or not," said Prichard. "Some suppliers offer mattresses which use soybean plant-based foams, which are more eco-friendly and temperature-neutral."

Memory foam mattresses are a good choice if you're a full-timer or just want a comfortable, supportive mattress with a medium to plush feel. These are typically around 5-8 inches thick, and as with stan-

dard foam, density is an important consideration. According to Prichard, memory foam mattress densities for motorhome mattresses typically range between 2.5 and 5.3 pounds, but unlike standard polyurethane foam mattresses, more isn't necessarily a good thing. "We've found that memory foam in the 3- to 4-pound range provides excellent pressure-point relief, conformability and breathability," he said. "However, they tend to trap heat, which

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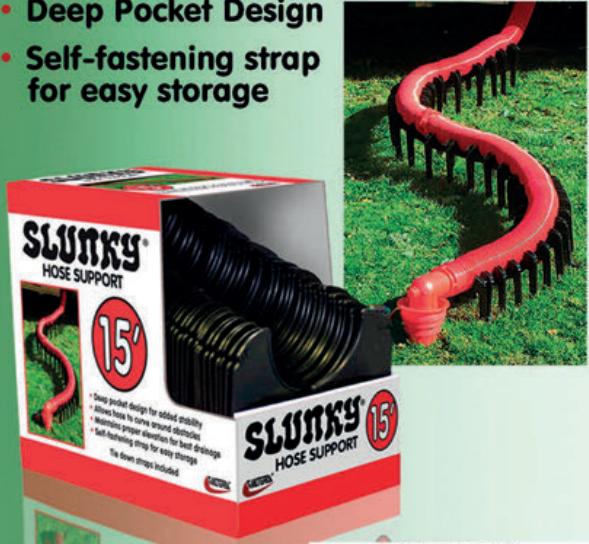
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If the foam mattress sleeps hot, consider an Isotonic Iso-Cool mattress pad. The 300-thread count, 100-percent cotton cover is filled with polyester fiber and features Outlast, adaptive support material that helps keep you cool and comfortable. Available at Camping World.

Foam mattresses can vary greatly in their comfort/breathability levels depending on how they are constructed. These 5.5-inch COOLMAX Elation and 8-inch COOLMAX Gel Foam RV mattresses from MattressInsider.com are double sided (the base side is firm, the gel side is softer). The 8-inch features 1 inch of Cool Gel 4-pound memory foam, 2 inches of 3-pound Cool Gel open-cell temperature-neutral viscoelastic memory foam, 1.5 inches of 1.8-pound density airflow foam (for breathability) and 3.5 inches of heavy-duty, 1.8-pound open-cell, high-density foam. Both mattresses feature a smooth top, COOLMAX zippered cover that is removable.

causes you to sweat. On the other hand, foam less than 3 pounds is usually not as durable, so it quickly loses its elasticity."

The so-called "gel beds" are another type of memory foam that is infused with a gel formula or gel beads. "Gel sleeps

about 1-2 degrees cooler than traditional memory foam, but it's really only a benefit if it's used in the top layer of the bed or directly underneath the quilting, next to your body," said Prichard. If you want a memory foam/gel bed that sleeps cooler,

he recommends you select a mattress with open-cell foam as opposed to closed-cell, and that you consider the fabric on the outside of the bed as well. [Mattress Insider.com](http://MattressInsider.com) prefers a fabric called COOLMAX, which is designed to help wick away

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The fabric on the outside of a memory foam bed can make a difference in how hot/cool it sleeps. COOLMAX fabric helps wick away perspiration and regulates temperature; it is offered by a number of mattress companies.

If you're looking for something more natural, consider a natural latex mattress. This one from MattressInsider.com uses a certified organic cotton fabric.

moisture and regulate temperature.

Whenever choosing a bed containing foam, Prichard recommends that the foam is made in the U.S. (where it is regulated) and that it has been independently tested and certified by CertiPUR-US (www.certiPUR.us), which assures that

the foam contains no harmful chemicals.

Yet another type of foam mattress is latex. "Latex is a good choice if you want something more natural," says Prichard. "Latex comes from rubber trees, and it has a very buoyant, springy feel to it. It tends to be more durable, but it is also

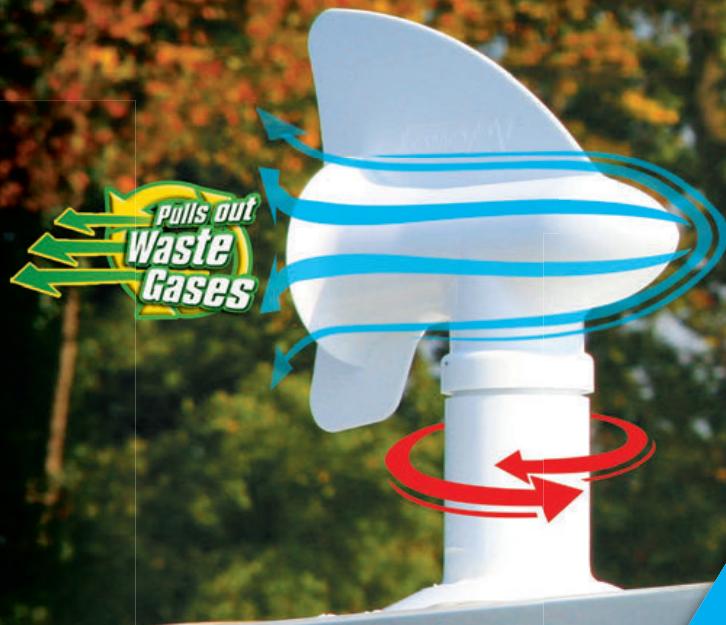
very expensive." The latex beds offered by MattressInsider.com feature a layer of Talalay latex foam on top, and a 1.8-pound high-density base foam underneath.

Innerspring mattresses are likely what you grew up sleeping on, and therefore are probably the most familiar to you.



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REST EASY

Like the other bed types featured here, there are many to choose from, but the basic design breaks down to just two: the inexpensive Bonnell innerspring mattress, which uses a structure of interconnected coils, and the pocketed coil bed, which uses individual coils. "Pocketed coils move independently from each other, so they don't transfer movement as much," said Prichard. "A lot of companies quote a high coil count with these beds, but what you get are a lot of small coils that break down more quickly. So to me, the gauge of the coil is more important than the count."

Prichard typically recommends innerspring mattresses over foam when a customer and/or their sleeping partner weighs more than 250 pounds, as the springs offer more support and better durability. However, he warns that innerspring beds can be very heavy, so if your motorhome has weight limitations or under-platform storage that requires frequent lifting of the bed, an innerspring mattress may not be the best choice.



A replacement mattress may be heavier than the model supplied by the coach manufacturer, which can make accessing under-bed storage a challenge. The Bedlift kit from Hatchlift makes access to under-bed storage easy with strong hydraulic struts that support the mattress platform safely. Each kit includes all hardware and gas springs for installation on both sides of the bed platform.

If you and your partner prefer different levels of firmness, then an adjustable air bed may be your best option. These beds are lightweight, can be adjusted on the fly, and are available in RV mattress

sizes. However, the available RV sizes are somewhat limited, they tend to be more expensive than standard mattresses, and Prichard says some caution should be exercised when using them in a mobile envi-

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The 8.5-inch Nature's Escape Plush from Mobile Sleep Components (a wholesale division of MattressInsider.com) uses 1 inch of super-soft foam quilted into a luxury knit fabric cover (not shown), 2 inches of Cool-Temp 3-pound-density soy-based open-cell memory foam and 5.5 inches of 1.8-pound density soy-based HDX foam. This mattress, as well as several other Mobile Sleep Components models, can be seen and purchased at RV dealerships across the U.S.



Mattress foam density is expressed in the weight of 1 cubic foot.

ronment. "Most don't have a pressure-relief valve, so if you travel to and from high altitudes, be sure that the mattress isn't fully inflated or the pressure differential could cause damage to the air chambers and pump."

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT MATTRESS

By Prichard's own estimation, 75 percent of the RV market uses a short queen bed, which presents problems when shopping. "I would say 95 percent of the replace-

ment RV mattresses on the market are not in brick-and-mortar stores, so the consumer has to find a mattress on the Internet. They're essentially buying blind, so it's important for them to choose a company that has a return policy or guarantee of some kind, so they don't get stuck with a mattress they don't like."

It would seem that the simple solution would be to visit a residential mattress retailer, find what suits you, then order it in an RV mattress size online — but it's not that easy. "You don't know the

specs of the bed you were looking at, and neither does the salesperson, because the manufacturer usually won't disclose them to the retailer," says Prichard. In a fiercely competitive market, it seems mattress manufacturers are unwilling to share product specifications for fear that its design will be copied. "Only if you can find a mattress company that will give you all of its specs can you compare apples to apples," says Prichard. In other words, just because you liked a memory foam mattress in the store doesn't mean you'll



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like an RV-equivalent you bought online.

The best solution here is to think about the attributes you want in an RV bed, which will help you nail down what you're looking for. Some key things to consider, says Prichard, are whether you tend to sleep on your back, side or stomach; how much weight it must support (above or below average); whether you tend to sleep hot or cold and how long you need the mattress to last. Then you can get some recommendations from online retailers before making your purchase.

If your motorhome has a full-size residential queen or other residential-size mattress, you have the freedom to shop at any mattress retailer. "Focus on comfort, support and durability," advises Prichard. "You can find the best bed there is, but if it's not comfortable to you, it doesn't matter."

CUSTOM OPTIONS

As you've likely noticed, not all motorhome beds are rectangular; some have rounded or cut corners to allow for walk-

around space, for example. If you're looking for a replacement mattress for one of these applications, or need something custom, MattressInsider.com can build a custom foam or innerspring mattress in almost any size or shape. "We can do cut or radius corners, bevel edges, handle odd rectangular dimensions, etc.," said

Prichard. "We can also customize the arrangement of layers and densities to fit the customer's exact needs."

Your motorhome is your home on wheels — so whether you're a seasonal traveler or a full-timer, you owe it to yourself to have a mattress that makes life on the road more comfortable. ♦

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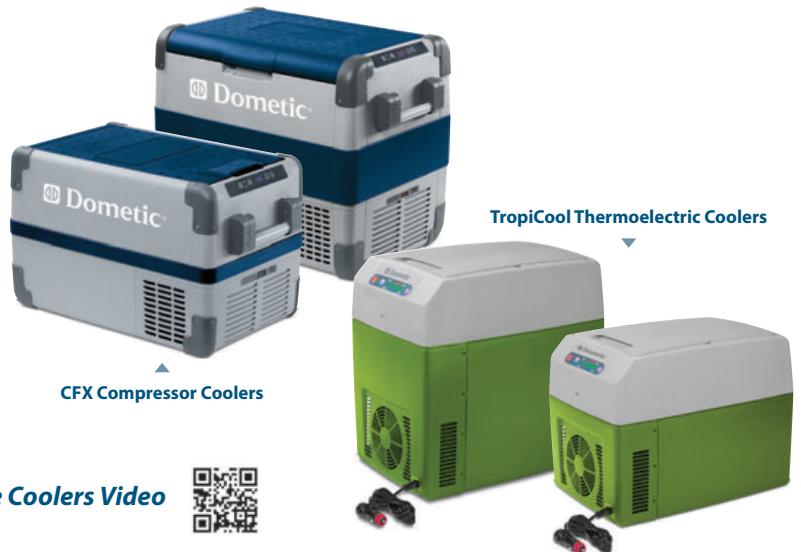
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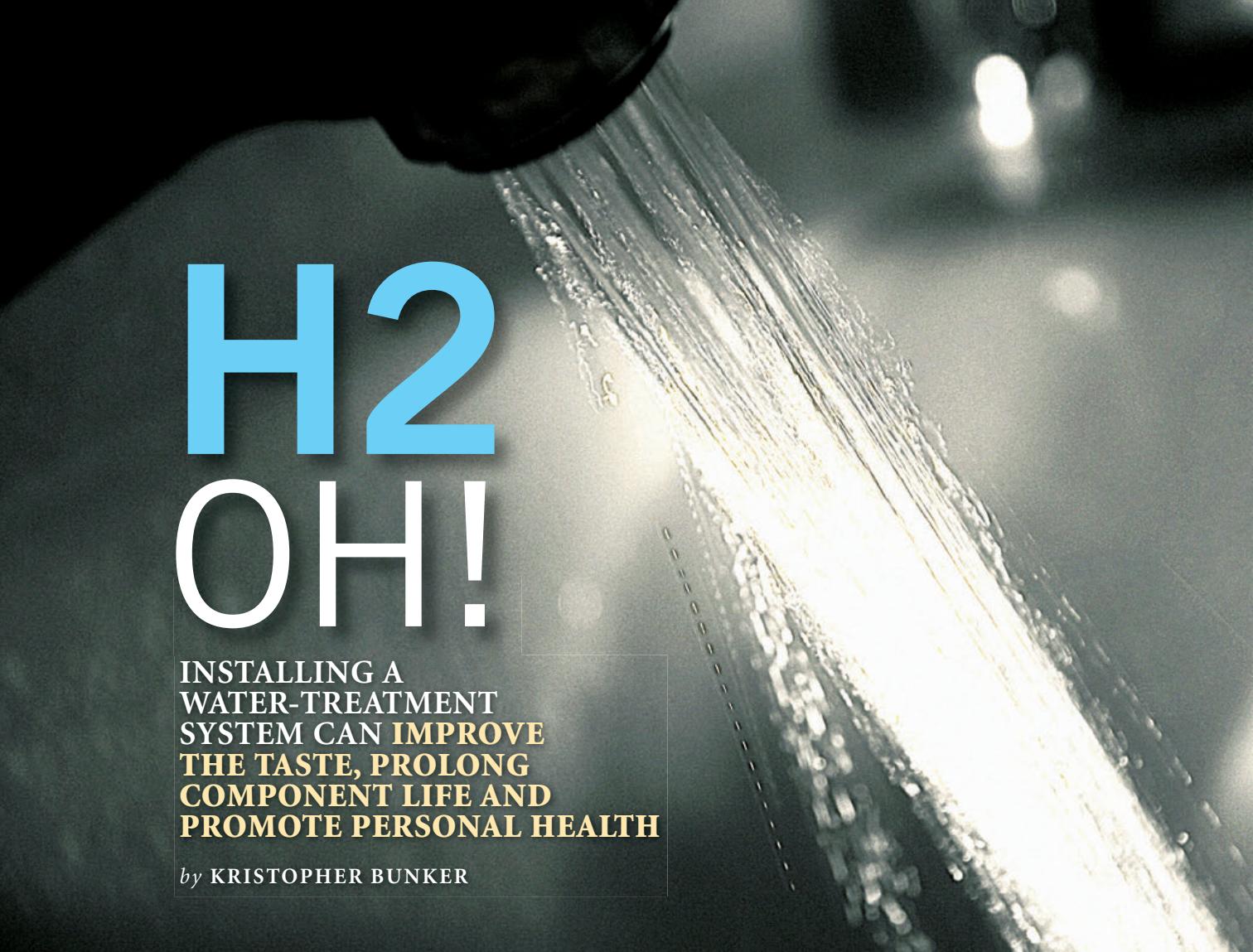


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INSTALLING A
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by KRISTOPHER BUNKER

Water is life. There's no getting around it. In fact, the scientific community, including those famous rocket scientists at NASA, estimates about 71 percent of planet Earth is covered by the wet stuff, and that water also comprises approximately 50-75 percent of the human body, depending on age and health. And that's not even mentioning the fact that many RVers rely heavily on water for recreation as well. But, like most things, all water is not created equal (OK, so technically it is, but work with me here). Much of the water we come into contact with may appear to be of the clean, pure variety, but upon further review (and consumption), that same water can be filled with sediments, foul odors and in extreme cases, harmful pathogens — most of which can be controlled with the simple addition of a water-conditioning product, be it an in-line filter, an under-sink canister or even an advanced reverse-osmosis or ultraviolet light system. "I would recommend filters to any RVer," said Richard Dahl, owner of the RV Water Filter Store. "You need filters because you're always going to have water that is dirty or has a bad taste to it. Even if you buy bottled water, you're still brushing your teeth and taking a shower in the water (from the tank or city hookup). If it stinks, who likes that? That's

where filters come in. You may not always recognize the need for filters, but it's there."

And Dahl truly knows his stuff. He's a self-taught water wizard who has been specializing in RV water systems for more than 20 years. His website, www.rvwaterfilterstore.com, is packed with all the info you'll ever need to help select an RV water-conditioning system, and Dahl is available to chat online or on the phone about any installation, consultation or problem you may encounter. To get a better understanding of the different systems found in RVs, we tapped in to Dahl's knowledge and let the information flow, so to speak.

"As you travel, you quickly learn that typical city water can be very clean, with few problems," said Dahl. "But RV parks located more out in the country are more likely to have their own well. When you get into your own well, you're going to have a variety of issues, depending on geography, that will affect the RV. I've seen wells take a nice, clean white sediment filter and turn it black as the ace of spades in about three or four days. It can plug them up in a week or less. It's not common, but definitely out there."

Dahl points to the transient RV lifestyle as reason to be more aware of these problems. "With RVers moving around so much,

the odds are high that they will experience poor water quality at one time or another. The sediment itself can be an issue with faucet operation, toilet valves, physical things like that. Sediment itself is an easy thing to catch.”

There are a variety of filters available designed to “catch” this sediment, most commonly the in-line filters placed between the water source and the city water connection to the motorhome. These sediment cartridges are used to catch dirt, sand, mineral or metal particles, and are available in 20-, 10-, 5-, or 1-micron sizes. Lower micron ratings mean smaller particle removal, and Dahl suggests a 5 micron or less. The cartridge should be replaced when the filter plugs up or reaches the suggested lifespan. Reusable cartridges are available.

“However, the problems can vary from sediment and include things like minerals and iron,” said Dahl. “The real difficult problems, like iron and minerals, don’t get covered by regular filters very well. They get a little bit done, but there are still going to be problems in the fixtures.”

Next up would be carbon-based filters, which remove contaminants that affect taste and odor using activated carbon in the form of solid block or granular carbon. Additional features are available with higher-quality carbon cartridges, such as the removal of chemicals, bacteria, giardia and cryptosporidium cysts, or even lead and other heavy metals. These units tend to last longer than sediment filters, but must also be changed when clogged, or at required intervals. There are even some units (dual canister or more) that contain both a sediment and carbon filter, while still more are designed to protect against water-borne pathogens.

Next up on the water-improvement chain is what is known as the “purifying” processes. These are more complete and there-

fore more expensive, but are worth the cost in the long run.

“At some point you’ll move to purification of the water, where it deals with bacteria, dissolved calcium and magnesium,” said Dahl. “Reverse osmosis (RO) is known as the most common purification system in the world.” In an RO system, a semi-permeable plastic membrane is used to filter out most of the contaminants in the water — including pathogens. The membrane produces pure water and flushes itself with waste, dissolved solids and contaminants. The resultant brine can be recycled, says Dahl, using what he calls a “boondock option,” where a separate line and valves divert the water back into the RV’s freshwater system to begin the process again, meaning little to no water is wasted.

And finally, if you are highly concerned about giardia, cryptosporidium, coliforms and other pathogens in your water, an ultraviolet (UV) system may be the way to go.

“UV has to do with using a germicidal fluorescent light bulb in a stainless-steel chamber. The water flows through the chamber across a quartz tube that contains the light bulb,” said Dahl. “The UV flow is sized accordingly to ensure complete coverage for sterilization. What that means is, the unit is rendering the living organism unable to reproduce so it can’t set up home in your digestive tract.” However, warns Dahl, UV systems on their own don’t address the taste and odor factors. “UV systems only deal with bacteria. In fact, they leave an ozone taste behind. You’d need a filtration system as well. That’s why a UV system will often have sediment filters and carbon filters, and some work with RO systems for increased protection.”

Respecting the water going into your RV is vital. Here are some of the top products designed to do just that.

Water Softeners

RVers who stay in one place for extended periods of time (think snowbirds) may sometimes notice mineral deposits or stains on their shower doors, countertops and fixtures. This could be due to hard water in the area, and though Dahl recommends it only for “RVers who don’t travel as much,” water softeners can be a wise investment. They can protect the RV’s freshwater system from harmful mineral deposits and allow owners to enjoy the benefits of soft water, which include better soap lathering, and softer skin and hair. Plus, those ugly, hard deposits don’t form as quickly on faucets or fixtures.



Flow-Pur/Watts Water offers the new **RV-PRO 10,000 Water Softener** (\$275) to combat hard water. Measuring 8-by-22 inches and weighing 26 pounds, the RVPRO 10,000 is the highest capacity softener on the market for its size, according to the company. It uses common table salt to regenerate and comes with a Y-valve on the outlet so you never have to disconnect hoses to perform regeneration.

Flow-Pur, 330-547-4423, www.flowpur.com

The **Frakco Travelsoft RV1200HD** (\$375) water softener uses ion exchange technology to soften water. Hookup is achieved with a simple garden-hose fitting. The fiberglass canister with durable one-piece PVC valve is 20¼-by-8-inches, so the unit is easily portable and stores neatly in the RV storage bay. Requires no electricity and features a built-in bypass and drain for easy winterization. Uses 6 pounds of solar or rock salt (sold separately).

Frakco, 800-967-1762, www.frakco.com



Camco

Camco Manufacturing Inc. offers an extensive lineup of products to keep water fresh and safe.

The exterior-use **Evo Premium Water Filter** with replaceable cartridge is designed to reduce bad taste, odors, sediments, bacteria, chlorine and more. The process begins with water traveling through a porous shell with openings no greater than 5 microns. The filtered water then passes through a bed of KDF (a copper/zinc alloy that creates an electro-chemical oxidation-reduction that neutralizes harmful contaminants, including bacteria) and granulated activated carbon (GAC) for further filtration and bacteria control. The result is clean, great-tasting drinking water straight from the tap, according to the company. Includes filter housing, one extension hose and one replaceable premium spun-polypropylene filter cartridge. **Evo Premium Water Filter:** \$67.59; **Evo Spun PP Cartridge:** \$17.29; **Evo Mounting Bracket:** \$9.97

The **Evo Premium Water Filter VOC Replacement Cartridge**

(\$19.59) is designed for Camco's Evo Water Filter housing. It contains premium carbon with a high microporosity level for absorbing harmful volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

Camco also offers a **Water Filter Stand** (\$19.29) to keep the water filter upright and off the ground. The foot bar makes it easier to secure the stand in the ground. The stand is lightweight and zinc-coated to inhibit rust.

The **TastePURE KDF/Carbon Water Filter** features a larger-capacity filter designed to last an entire season. The updated filter greatly reduces bad taste, odor, chlorine and sediment in drinking water with a 100-micron filter. This durable in-line, exterior-mount filter has a wider body to increase flow, and includes a flexible hose protector to minimize the kinking that impedes water flow. **TastePURE KDF/Carbon Water Filter with hose protector:** \$27.49; **TastePURE KDF/Carbon Water Filter two-pack:** \$36.19.

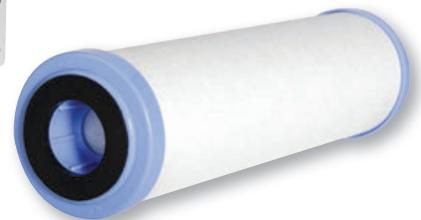
Camco Manufacturing Inc., 800-334-2004, www.camco.net



TastePURE KDF/Carbon Water Filter



Evo Premium Water Filter



Evo Replacement Cartridge



Water Filter Stand

Flow-Pur/Watts Water

Watts Flow-Pur line of RV products offers buyers a variety of options for water treatment.

The Flow-Pur **POE12GHGACB** (\$34.50) connects to the incoming water supply and filters the water to the entire coach. The system includes a filter cartridge to remove the chlorine, taste, odor, rust and sediment and can filter that water to every water faucet in the coach.

The undersink **FP10GKTUC** (\$45.70) in-line filter kit will reduce chlorine, taste, odor, sediment, rust, lead, copper and volatile organic chemicals.

MAXVOC-975RV filter cartridges (\$28.15) remove all of the above plus parasites such as cryptosporidium and giardia cysts, which can cause illness if digested.

Flow-Pur, 330-547-4423, www.flowpur.com



POE12GHGACB

FP10GKT
Replacement
Cartridge

MAXVOC-975RV

Hydro Life Inc.

Hydro Life filters feature the filtration properties of KDF and activated carbon. KDF is made of a high-purity copper/zinc alloy, which creates an electrochemical oxidation-reduction that neutralizes harmful contaminants, including bacteria. When used together with activated carbon, Hydro Life claims its filters remove or substantially reduce chlorine, THM, heavy metals such as lead and mercury, hydrogen sulfide (rotten egg smell), inorganics, VOC, chemicals, sediment, and lime/scale buildup. Hydro Life also claims many of its filters have a lifespan of up to two years, depending on use.

The **HL180** exterior hose filter (\$34.39 at Camping World) features a compact design with molded-in garden hose fittings built tough for the long haul. For use for up to two years, it features a 2-gpm flow rate.

The **HL200 Series** (\$63.88 at Camping World) is an exterior canister designed to filter all of the water entering the coach. It offers Hydro Life's largest capacity (2½ gpm) and flow rate (11,000 gallons), and garden-hose fittings are factory installed.

Comes complete with **C2063** cartridge for up to two years of continuous use before cartridge replacement is required.

The **C2063** (\$33.73 at Camping World) is a dual-media cartridge with granular activated carbon (GAC) and bacteriostatic KDF media. It features up to an 11,000-gallon capacity.

The **HL170 Series** (\$54.94 at Camping World) is a 2-by-10-inch in-line filter designed for cold-water hookup under the kitchen or bathroom sink. The kit includes a replaceable filter with quick-connect fittings, a mounting bracket and a winterizing bypass hose for easy installation on water lines. Filters are available with other connection options. Offers 2 gpm flow with up to 7,000-gallon capacity.

The **C2471** (\$29.06 at Camping World) is a 1-micron carbon block cartridge for taste, odor, chlorine and cyst filtration. It offers up to a 10,000-gallon capacity.

Hydro Life also offers a **filter holder** (\$14.39 at Camping World) that's designed to support exterior water filters off the ground and close to the water inlet on the RV. The unit will accommodate most canister-type and in-line filters. The holder slides in and out of the mounting plate, which is secured by screws. Can be attached to aluminum or fiberglass-reinforced surfaces. An extra mounting plate is included.

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



HL170 Kit

HL180 Filter

HL200 Series

C2471 Filter

C2063

Filter Holder

SHURflo

SHURflo offers buyers a virtual ocean of water-treatment products.

Beginning with **in-line filters** (\$21.95-\$47.95), the long-lasting Waterguard filters reduce chlorine taste, odor and sediment and inhibit bacterial growth, and are available as single- or dual-stage filtration (with KDF) with coconut-shell carbon and 5 micron measurement.

Everpure Filtration Systems (\$50.95-\$75.95) offer a super-chlorination/dechlorination method to disinfect the RV's entire water distribution system and can protect against waterborne bacteria, viruses, mold and algae, according to the company. The exclusive Micro-Purefilter reduces the taste and odor of chlorine, dirt, rust, cysts and asbestos down to .5 micron. The filter will treat 700 gallons or last up to one year. The kit includes a QL3-ADC filter head with disposable Quick-Change Filter Cartridge, mounting bracket, liquid chlorine dispenser, chlorine test kit, anti-freeze diverter, all fittings and tubing for installation.

PENTEK Cartridges (\$3.95-\$65.95) are available in polypropylene, carbon-paper, coconut shell (GAC) and carbon-block versions. They offer varying degrees of filtration, from simple sediment up to pathogenic and bacterial inhibition.

Cartridge housings (\$3.95-\$25.95) are available in a standard 10-inch model complete with garden-hose fittings, and a slim-line version for under-counter or service-bay applications. Both are claimed to result in bottled-water-quality water (in terms of taste).

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

Everpure Filtration System EV925205



Everpure Cartridges



EV959206

EV959206

Waterguard 10-inch Filter Housing

Waterguard In-Line Water Filter



PENTEK Slim-Line Filter Housing

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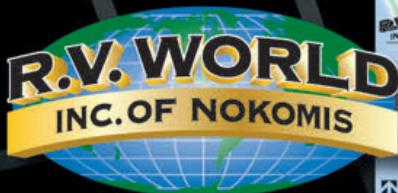
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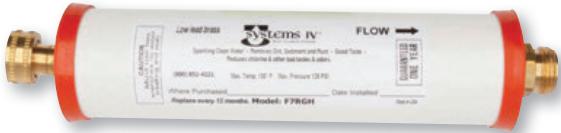
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F7R-GH

Systems IV

The model **F7R-GH** (\$29.99 at Camping World) is specifically designed to eliminate particulates to 5 microns. It comes with granular activated carbon (GAC) to eliminate bad tastes, odors and chlorine. Like all of Systems IV water filters, the F7R-GH is guaranteed for one year and includes AB1953-compliant brass fittings to withstand outdoor environments. All Systems IV filters are pressure-tested to ensure product quality.

Systems IV, 800-852-4221, www.systemsiv.com

3M Purification Inc.

In addition to the popular office supplies that it's known for, 3M offers RVers some interesting choices when it comes to water treatment.

The **US-A1** offers easy, under-sink connection to a faucet. The filter features a 1.5-gpm flow (2,000-gallon capacity) and handles chlorine taste and odors, in addition to sediment including dirt, rust, sand and silt.



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Newmar Canyon Star 3610



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Newmar Ventana 3433



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Your Price

\$169,995

Savings \$45,698

400HP ISL Cummins Diesel, Comfort Drive steering, 8K Watt Onan generator.



*All Units Are 2013 Unless Otherwise Noted.

Newmar Dutch Star 4344



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3M CONTINUED

The **USF-C** flows at .5 gpm and filters out virtually all impurities, from lead and mercury to protozoan cysts to pesticides and herbicides — in addition to the sediment and chlorine, according to 3M.

The **WV-B3** offers complete water filtration throughout the RV with high flow rate (3.5 gpm), vanquishing up to 99.9 percent of all waterborne bacteria, including mold, algae and protozoan cysts, plus the common sediment and chlorine filtration. Contact 3M for prices.

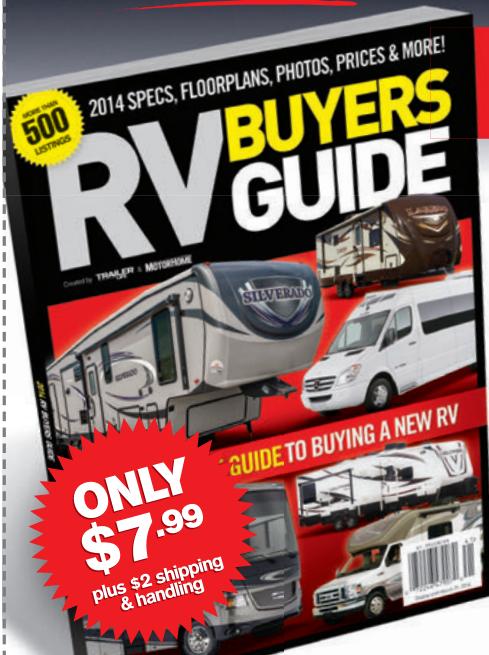
3M, 800-243-6894, http://solutions.3m.com/wps/portal/3M/en_US/3M-Purification-Inc/3MPI-US/Filtration-Solutions

The RV Water Filter Store

Richard Dahl and his website are so much more than simply the source material for this article. At www.rvwaterfilterstore.com, shoppers can purchase water-treatment systems from perhaps the most comprehensive selection on the market. Dahl and his small staff “put components into systems that specifically fit the RV application the best,” he says. “This can start with filtration up to purification, UV systems, RO, all those kinds of components, all put together in a variety of options that fit the RV space and the RVer’s needs for moving around and dealing with many different kinds of problems with water.” **602-625-1875, email: rick@rvwaterfilterstore.com.** ♦

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NAILING IT

While setting up camp, we have struggled with securing our outdoor carpeting to the ground. We've tried big rocks, planters, picnic tables, chairs, etc. We like to use steel pegs, but with the plastic tops, it's difficult to remove them from the hard ground. To help make the process easier, we now lay down a canning lid first and then put a nail through the lid. The lid adds leverage when removing the pegs.

BONNIE AND VANCE CLEGG
GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLA.

NO MORE SHAKE 'N' BREAK

Having gone through various racks, and still having wine glasses jingle and turn over, I decided to make my own. I used two pieces of 2-by-4-inch lumber glued side by side (the length was determined by the glass size). Then I made a template by placing the wine glasses upside down and tracing each one with a pencil. Next, I drilled the holes slightly larger than the size of the glass. And finally, I finished the wood with a clear satin and added four ½-inch "feet," which can be purchased or made from a scrap of wood to raise the glass holder. Now I no longer have overturned or broken glasses and it's noise-free.

DON DAVIS BRISTOL, TENN.



HANDY SHELF

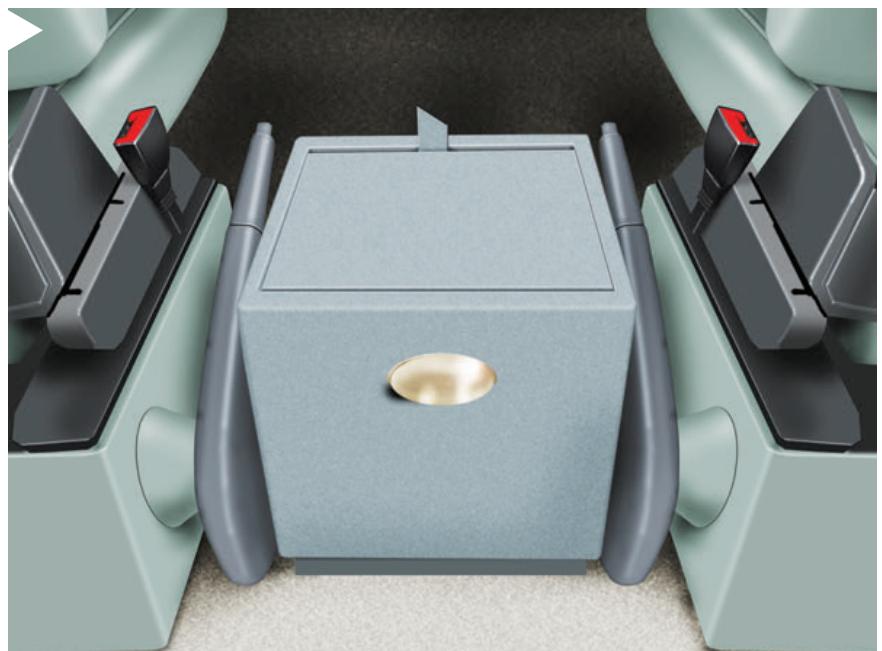
By using premade spindle rails and scrap lumber, I made some attractive spice/knack-knack racks for the motor-home. Using a piece of paneling on the back of the rack makes for easier mounting.

WILL GARNER
GRAND JUNCTION, COLO.

COMMAND CENTRAL

We needed something to fit between the front seats of our Roadtrek to hold maps and travel guides. We looked at the commercial consoles available, but they were either too big, too small or too ugly. So we designed and built one using fabric that resembles the upholstery in the motor-home, and we added a couple of cup holders at the front, since our coach only has one set built in. The storage console has sturdy handles on the front and back so we can pull it out when we turn the seats around to face the living area. When we put it back in place, it serves as a small table to hold snacks or books.

RHONDA VAN HEYST
EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA



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HAPPY DRIVER SNACK POCKET

I took an ordinary pocket-type potholder and added a wide piece of elastic to the back so it can be slipped onto the armrest of the front captain seats.

This washable pocket is great for keeping the driver supplied with snack food they can easily reach themselves. And we all know that a non-hungry driver is a happy driver.

MEME WAGNER

FORT THOMAS, KY. ♦

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Quick Tips, *MotorHome's* monthly column of handy, simple tips by fellow RVers, is looking for submissions. Please send your favorite DIY ideas to: *MotorHome* Quick Tips, 2750 Park View Ct., Ste. 240, Oxnard, CA 93036, or email letters@motorhomemagazine.com. Be sure to include photos, illustrations or drawings, if necessary. If your tip is selected for publication, you will receive \$35.

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techsavvy

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Above: The compact Weber smoker can be set up easily in minutes. Right: The premium-grade cover, which is included, helps to protect the finish from deterioration, and helps keep sections together.



HANDS-ON | *by* BOB LIVINGSTON

SMOKE ON THE WEBER

The new 14.5-inch Smokey Mountain Cooker livens up meat flavor using charcoal and hardwoods, and can be easily stored

A barbecue is almost standard equipment in a motorhome. Most people enjoy cooking outdoors and a barbecue is a great way to get favorite meats, poultry and fish to the dinner table. Another dimension to this culinary experience is to smoke food, a process of slow-cooking meat using some type of wood to add flavor. Smoking food is often done in crude-looking, metal drums that take their cues from various regions of the country that specialize in traditional cooking. Weber has refined that process with the Smokey Mountain Cooker Smoker, and the new 14.5-inch version is practical for taking along on motorhome trips.

As a smoked-food addict who worships Myron Mixon's "Smokin'" book, and an owner of a humongous smoker at home, getting the chance to try out Weber's diminutive Smokey Mountain Cooker met with some skepticism. The Weber smoker got the evil eye from my hard-core meat-smoking friends, but I touted that its dimensions make it packable in most motorhome storage compartments. So I took it along on a trip and volunteered to cook for a large group. After all, if this thing is going to work, it needs to be able to effectively smoke meat at its rated capacity.

Assembling the cooker was very easy. The instructions are clear and the whole process took about 20 minutes using only a screwdriver and 7/16-inch wrench. Basically, there are three sections: the bottom, which holds the charcoal/wood; the center module for the water pan and two grills; and the lid that sports the iconic Weber rounded look. In order to load the charcoal, the center section is lifted off the bottom; a lip keeps the components in place and stable without the use of fasteners.

Getting ready for the day's smoking is a pretty simple process, thanks to the guide provided in the instruction manual. Charcoal quantity, cooking time and the amount of wood chunks are listed by meat type, which takes the guesswork out of set up. In our case, we planned on smoking chicken breasts using one of our favorite recipes in Mixon's book. Following the guide, we counted out 75 briquettes of charcoal and lit them in a Weber

Water is added to the pan after lining it with aluminum foil. Adding the foil is not required, but aids in cleanup.



Wood chunks (and additional charcoal if necessary) are added through the door in the center section of the smoker using long-handle tongs.



Chicken is loaded on the top and bottom grills. Then, a probe from a digital thermometer is pushed into the meat on the top grill.



After 2½ hours, the chicken is ready to rest before serving. The smoky flavor was a big hit at our campground dinner party.



fire-starter chimney; starter chemicals or self-lighting charcoal should never be used, as these can impart an unpleasant taste in the meat. In about 15 minutes, the coals were ready to be poured into the charcoal chamber.

With the center section back in place, the water pan was positioned and the smoker filled with almost 12 pounds of chicken, divided between the lower and upper grates. The recipe we followed called for smoking the chicken in pans, so we bent the edges of disposable aluminum pans to fit the round, plated-steel cooking grates.

Wood type for smoking is personal choice, but the Weber guide offers suggestions based on the type of meat. We went with apple, which always works well for poultry. Some other good choices include pecan, oak and alder, but you should always stay away from soft woods like pine, aspen and cedar. Using long-handle tongs, four chunks of applewood (after soaking in water for an hour) were placed directly on the coals. Access is through a door in the middle section.

It's best to use a digital thermometer to monitor cooking temperatures. A silicone grommet is provided in the middle section for insertion of probes — one in the meat and one in the cavity of the smoker. The built-in thermometer in the lid can also be used to monitor cooking temperature. A standard cooking thermometer can be used to probe the meat, but every time the lid is opened, the temperature drops rather quickly. Temperature is regulated via aluminum dampers in the lower bowl assembly and lid.

According to the Weber cooking guide, some meat (depending on weight) requires up to 12 hours of cooking. That seems like a long time for the coals to last and our experience with the 2½-hour cooking time for the chicken suggests that adding briquettes and wood chunks during long cooking sessions will be necessary. We did not have to add charcoal or wood to smoke the chicken.

So how did it turn out? In a word, "great." The chicken was a big hit among our dinner guests.

Cleanup the next morning was uneventful. Once the coals were discarded and the grills tidied up, the pieces were reassembled, the cover (included with the smoker) installed and the whole thing was laid down on its side in a storage compartment. There was not enough height to store the smoker in an upright position, so the pieces got jiggled around during travel. It only took a minute to put everything back in place for the next cooking session.

The Smokey Mountain Cooker has the same porcelain enamel finish found on other Weber charcoal grills, which have a strong reputation for high quality and durability. Retail price for the smoker is \$219 and is available at Camping World and many home improvement/hardware stores.

Smoking foods allows outdoor chefs to experiment with recipes and wood. The Smokey Mountain Cooker will certainly make you very popular in any RV park.

Weber, 800-446-1071, www.weber.com ♦

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Leaning Sun Voyager

I have a 2003 Gulf Stream Sun Voyager 8368 MXG Class A motorhome on a Workhorse chassis. The right front of the coach is 1.5 inches lower than the left. I thought at first that the spring was getting weak, but when I started checking the frame-to-ground distance, it was close to the same on both sides. I measured the body to ground and found that is where the difference is. I don't know what would cause the problem. I contacted Gulf Stream and got no response.

Do you know what might cause the body to be lower on one corner and how I can rectify it? I purchased the unit used, but got no indication of body damage on a CARFAX search and I don't see that there has been any body damage.

DALE TRINKLEIN
BIRCH RUN, MICH.

It is possible that several small variances are causing the difference in height. Combined with unequal jiggling of body mounting points and/or a difference in how the coach body was trimmed, these factors could result in a height disparity. This is similar to what is known in the engineering world as "tolerance stacking." If the chassis is level side to side, but the coach is a little crooked, it's cosmetic and there's no real safety concern.

HOT-RUNNING HOLIDAY RAMBLER

We have a 2005 Holiday Rambler 40-foot Endeavor with a 400-hp Cummins engine. We acquired this motorhome in 2009. For two years we had no problems, but during the past few years we have had overheating problems when climbing long, elevated roads (i.e., Blewett Pass in Washington). This overheating sets off the alarm system in the coach. If we stop and let it cool, we are then able to continue ... at least

once the coolant has overflowed.

We have had the radiator cleaned and replaced the cap, thermostat and coolant tank. No shop, including Cummins, has been able to duplicate our problem. After having all of this done, we took it to eastern Washington and when climbing Blewett Pass it began to heat up again. I downshifted and we avoided the alarm coming on. I was told by a mechanic at Cummins that if I kept it at 1,500 rpm I would not have the problem. It seems I should not have to do that, since when I first got the coach it did not have this problem.

I recently was talking to the owner of a local repair facility and he said it sounded like the fan clutch might be malfunctioning. I was wondering if you have any thoughts on this. We are

UNEQUAL JIGGLING OF BODY MOUNTING POINTS, AND/OR A DIFFERENCE IN HOW THE COACH BODY WAS TRIMMED, COULD RESULT IN A HEIGHT DISPARITY.

IF THE CHASSIS IS LEVEL SIDE TO SIDE, BUT THE COACH IS A LITTLE CROOKED, THERE'S NO REAL SAFETY CONCERN.



planning an extensive trip soon and will have to climb through mountain passes in the summer. We are hoping to avoid any similar problems.

DARRAYL CLEVENGER
BONNEY LAKE, WASH.

It's difficult to simulate road conditions in the shop, although you could put the coach on a chassis dynamometer and load it down to get the engine hot for testing. It's likely that if the radiator is not partially clogged internally or externally, then the fan is not working properly. (You didn't say if you had the radiator cleaned inside or just the outside.)

I suggest before you spend a lot more money, to check the basics such as fin clogging due to oil residue, dirt, dust, leaves, debris, etc. While you're at it, check the charge air cooler to make sure it's not clogged with debris that could block the flow of air to the radiator. A handheld infrared spot thermometer can be used to check for radiator tubes that aren't as hot as the others, which indicates that tube is partially or completely clogged. If the radiator checks out OK, then have the fan system inspected. The fan clutch is the most likely cause.

A long shot would be a faulty water pump, which has had the impeller slip on the shaft, or blades are deteriorated due to cavitation erosion, etc.

LEAKY DOOR

We have a 2004 Holiday Rambler Scepter with a leaky front door. My husband has replaced the seal and the top hinge. The water comes in slowly, because we really don't see it, and stains the door. Do you have any ideas on what we can do other than replacing the whole door? My husband is very handy, but this has him going in circles.

PATTI PATTERSON | VIA EMAIL

Take a dollar bill, or piece of paper, and close it in the door so that it is clamped by the weatherstrip but sticking out. Give it a pull to determine how snugly it's held. It's a bit tedious, but work

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your way around the whole perimeter of the door. A loose area indicates you need to adjust the door to close more tightly, or shim the weatherstripping. Also, try using a straightedge to check the contact surfaces. If you don’t find a loose place, have one person spray water on the outside with a garden hose while another checks for leaks inside. When a leaky area is found, a close inspection will determine what needs to be done to stop the leak.

gine seems to run fine, there’s probably no harm done. You didn’t mention the make and model of generator, but compression specs are available from the manufacturers. Although I don’t think it’s necessary if the engine runs well, you can have oil analyzed by SGS Herguth Laboratories, 101 Corporate Place, Vallejo, CA 94590; 800-645-5227, www.herguth.com

GENSET CONCERNS AND OIL ANALYSIS

I had my motorhome in for repair, and for some reason, the shop started the generator and forgot to shut it off for more than 48 hours in blistering hot weather. I am sure that this incident has shortened the life of my generator, but I can’t prove it by having a compression test, since I don’t have a beginning compression test to match it with. So, I thought that maybe I could take a sample of the oil and have it tested for excess metals and breakdown of the oil. Can you assist and maybe steer me to someone in Northern California who does this testing?

RANDALL ANDERSON
FAIRFIELD, CALIF.

While the shop obviously burned up a lot of hours, the good news is that generators are actually designed to run for extended periods. As long as the engine didn’t run low on oil or overheat (most gensets have built-in protection against these perils and will shut down automatically) and the en-

INTERMITTENT FORD PROBLEMS

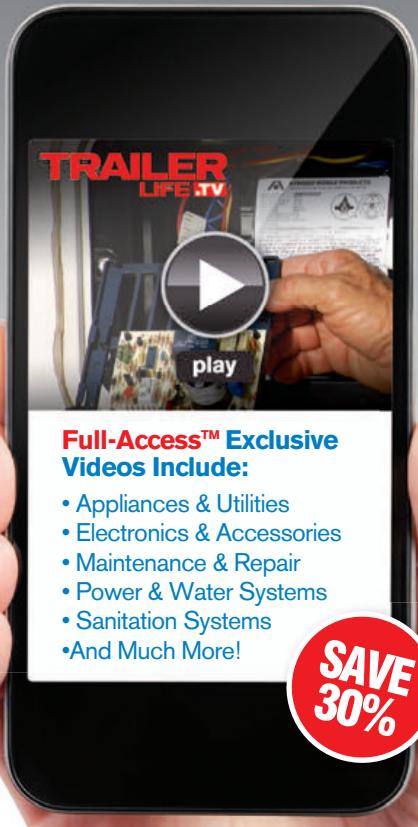
I have a couple of problems with a 2014 motorhome on a Ford F53 series chassis. Frequently, when starting up after a stop, or when attempting to accelerate on an entrance ramp, the engine will not come out of “idle mode” until after several, or many, depressions of the accelerator pedal. Repeated applications of the throttle pedal will finally result in engine acceleration. Sometimes, I am in the traffic lane on the expressway before acceleration starts. Several times, I have experienced the engine going into idle mode while underway at highway speeds.

The other condition is the illumination of the BRAKES warning light and the BRAKE RESERVE CAPACITY warning lights, always both at the same time, and usually after being underway for 50 miles or so. There are no error codes, so no remedial action by Ford.

I have taken the unit to five different Ford service facilities. They found no error codes on their analyzer, say all must be OK and send me on my way. I consider these conditions to be potentially unsafe.

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COACH & POWERTRAIN

The unit has been driven 3,800 miles. Any thoughts?

HERBERT MAYER | RAPID CITY, MICH.

On your chassis, the throttle is drive-by-wire, meaning there is only an electrical connection, not a mechanical connection, to the throttle body. When you step on the pedal, a sensor switch sends a signal to a stepper motor to open the throttle. In practice, the actuator at the throttle body is more likely to be at fault; bad switches are less common. A Ford technician should be able to connect a tester to the wiring, and a pressure test gauge to the fuel system to observe what is going on when the problem occurs, perhaps during a test drive.

If the brakes feel normal, the brake problem is likely an electrical glitch only, and again needs to be tested and diagnosed. In any case, what you are experiencing are safety issues that must be resolved promptly. Contact the Ford zone office and request that they have a dealer technician go with you as you test drive it while using a Ford scan tool capable of testing the engine and brakes. If they fail to resolve this problem, you can file a complaint with the NHTSA's Vehicle Safety Hotline (888-327-4236) or online at <https://www.odj.nhtsa.dot.gov/VehicleComplaint/index.xhtml>.

A "CHARGED" QUESTION

I have a 2008 Itasca Cambria 29H on a 2007 Ford E-450 SD chassis with a V-10 engine, with approximately 22,000 miles. It has an Onan 4-kW gas generator and 30-amp service. The chassis battery/charging system warning light on the dash comes on occasionally when I run the engine while plugged into shorepower. It is more common once the engine warms up and/or I raise the RPM by pushing the accelerator pedal. I have not noticed it happening during normal driving, or when I run my generator for power. This only seems to happen when connected to shorepower and idling the engine. All my batteries, alternator, power converter, generator, connections, ground, and TRC Surge Guard seem to be clean and up to specs. Everything else electrical (120-volt AC and 12-volt DC) appears to be working properly. Is this something I should be



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concerned about?

DAVID HERNANDEZ | MIAMI, FLA.

The chassis battery and house battery(ies) are connected in parallel via a continuous-duty solenoid relay, which is energized with ignition power. When the engine is running, its alternator is able to charge the chassis and house batteries. When the ignition key is turned off, the relay is de-energized and the two-battery/electrical systems are isolated from each other.

The charging system powered by the engine was not designed to be driven and connected to shorepower at the same time. I think you are either getting feedback through the circuits (via the relay), which provides enough power to illuminate the small light, or perhaps an alter-

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nating current ripple is causing it.

It's possible that a failed capacitor on the DC output was causing some AC ripple. As a result, an AC wave form riding on the DC output could affect sensitive electronics. This can be measured with a multimeter. Set the meter to AC volts and test at the house battery posts with the converter on. All power converters will have some AC ripple, normally less than 1 volt AC. If several volts AC is detected, the power converter section should be taken out of service and replaced.

Running your engine at idle doesn't produce a high charging rate, but it does build up carbon in the combustion chambers and forms moisture and acids in the oil, rusts out the exhaust, etc. You do not have to run the engine to charge the batteries — a maintenance charger can do this nicely.

HOT OIL SMELL

We have a 2006 Saturn VUE that we tow with our motorhome. After towing for five or six hours, and then starting the engine, there is a hot oil smell. Are we doing any damage to the transmission?

**CLINT CAUGHELL
NORTH BEND, ORE.**

Saturn approved the VUE for dinghy towing unlimited distances at up to 65 MPH. If the vehicle was towed according to the manufacturer's instructions, it should be OK. However, always take a burning oil smell seriously. After towing, open the hood, look for leakage around the transmission, including underneath. With an automatic, start the engine in PARK (parking brake fully engaged) and allow it to idle to warm the exhaust. Look for telltale smoke and oil smell under the hood and under the vehicle.

The most likely source of a hot oil smell in this situation is overflowing automatic transmission fluid that gets onto the exhaust pipes and gets hot when the engine runs. Therefore, carefully check the transmission fluid level on level ground before and after towing, following the procedure in the owner's manual. If it's too full, it's more likely to overflow from the vent or dipstick tube.

Another, less likely possibility is that road grime is getting onto the exhaust and the catalytic converter, in particular,

as it can get hot enough to melt residue such as road tar and oil that may be on the roadway.

TOWING A DODGE 4 X 4

While towing a Jeep, or in my case, a Dodge pickup truck (they both have essentially the same drivetrains, made by Chrysler), the manual says to leave the key switch in AUX and that will keep the steering mechanism "unlocked" so it will track properly. That works fine except if you do what I did, and pull the towed vehicle over a curb on a sharp turn, which caused the steering mechanism to lock up with the front wheels in the turned position, causing severe wear on the tires and destroying the front end of the truck.

I thought I had messed up the process and not properly unlocked the steering, until I mentioned this to a camping neighbor towing a Jeep who also was a retired tech specialist for Jeep. He told me what had happened. Essentially, the steering lock is a spring-loaded pin that goes up into the steering column when the switch is in the OFF position. It doesn't line up with the column when the key is in the AUX position, yet with the hard jolt such as a curb, it worked itself into the LOCK position.

He and I spent 30 minutes and disengaged the steering lock by removing the pin; end of issue. Since then I have talked with several Dodge and Jeep owners and they have had the same problem, but did not know what the problem was and apparently Jeep and Dodge continue to say this can't happen, and did not offer to disable the column lock. In the meantime, I have resorted to an old trick of tying a rag on the top of the steering wheel and watch it in my rearview camera when I make a turn. It's not high tech, but it works.

DICK HETRICK | LASALLE, ILL.

Thanks for writing, and sharing your expensive experience with us. Both items may help readers. If you disable the steering lock, consider adding some anti-theft measures, such as an external steering wheel lock like The Club, and/or an electronic anti-theft system. ♦

TO CONTRIBUTE TO COACH & POWERTRAIN, refer to Contact MotorHome, on page 15.

Color My World

DISCOVERING MY
INNER ARTIST IN TAOS, N.M.



Looking back over the years,

I can honestly say that it's the detours I've taken in my travels that have been the most rewarding. While interstate highways may be the most efficient way of getting between points A and B, following these roads less traveled has never failed to introduce me to people and

places that have profoundly affected how I see the world around me.

Take Leigh Gusterson, for example, a talented and wonderfully unpretentious artist whose job it is to see things differently. Hard as it may seem to believe, her whimsical paintings somehow manage to make the already picturesque northern New Mexico mountains she calls home look all the more extraordinary.

The story of how I met Leigh began on a recent trip to the historic artists colony of Taos, N.M. Long known for its many art galleries, this charming small town has a well-deserved reputation as a place where art lovers can surround themselves with the original works of dozens of local painters, potters, glass artists, jewelry-makers and more.

Determined to go with the flow, I found myself in a storefront gallery, contemplating an oversized canvas, when I was struck by the admittedly audacious notion that I wanted to create my own work of art instead of standing there looking at someone else's. Where this inspiration came from is a bit of a mystery, considering the only paintbrushes I'd ever held were the kind made for use on walls and window trim.

Knowing I needed some expert help to follow this whim, I rang up Leigh to inquire about her half-day private painting lessons. Though I felt a little sheepish confessing my complete lack of artistic experience, by the time I hung up the phone she had me half-convinced that maybe, just maybe, I could pull off this *artiste* thing after all.

My confidence was further bolstered that evening when I checked out the paintings on her website (www.leighgusterson.com). Browsing through Leigh's work — which combines the pastoral elements popularized by the famous landscape painters of the Hudson River School and the exploding rainbow hues of a really groovy acid trip — I began to understand that I didn't have to create something that looked like it was painted by an Old



Master. Suffice it to say this turned out to be a uniquely liberating insight.

Because Leigh specializes in a style of painting known as *plein air* — literally translated as “open air” — she packed up her supplies early the next morning and took me to a brush-covered hillside overlooking the rugged gorge of the Rio Grande.

As she set up our easels and squeezed dabs of vibrant paint onto my palette, she offered some basic tips on framing the dramatic landscape in front of me and explained how to begin translating that mental image into brush strokes.

As our lesson progressed, I was rather startled to find a fair, if somewhat abstract, representation of this panorama emerging from my blank canvas. A few more hints from Leigh, a dab of color here, a bolder line there and my first, *ahem*, masterpiece was complete.

In retrospect, the time I spent with Leigh left me feeling like maybe I have some artistic talent after all. More importantly, though, it taught me a valuable lesson that went well beyond painting techniques. Namely that some detours along the road of life lead us to discover as much about ourselves as the people and places we encounter along the way. ♦

Alan Rider has been wandering the backroads of America for more than four decades. Though he's never been big on traditional souvenirs, he's passionate about collecting memories of the remarkable people and unforgettable places he encounters along the way.

PHOTOS: GERANT SMITH/GERANTSMITH.COM



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Fig. 1 Saturn



Fig. 3 Asteroid Gaspra



Fig. 5 Mercury

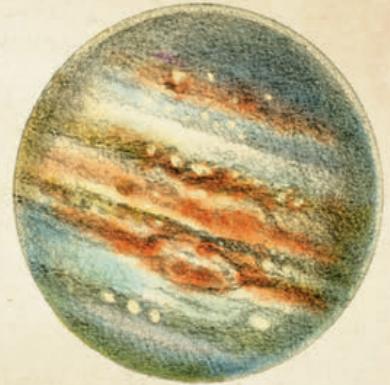


Fig. 7 Jupiter



Fig. 2 Neptune

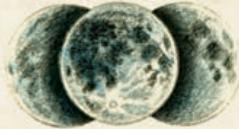


Fig. 4 Phases of the Moon



Fig. 6 Mars

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