

DIY PROJECT #1

BANKS DERRINGER TUNER
+ IDASH DATAMONSTER GAUGE

DIY PROJECT #2

SINISTER DIESEL BYPASS
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DIY PROJECT #3

CURT TRAILER HITCH RECEIVER
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WAY OFF THE GRID

Tiny trailers come in all shapes, and many have off-road features that let you get away from the crowds. Page 30





Testapalooza 2019

At our annual testing event, we put trailers, fifth-wheels and motorhomes worth \$1.8 million through their paces in the world's RV capital

Each August, members of the *Trailer Life* and *MotorHome* team come together in Elkhart, Indiana, the epicenter of RV manufacturing, to test new-model-year RVs and tow vehicles. Since the team evaluates first releases of new models, a final prototype or one of the first models off the assembly line often makes its way to the testing grounds. This year three of the test units were still on the line when we arrived, and Chevrolet provided the highly anticipated, redesigned 2020 Silverado HD the week before the truck went on sale. These were all, quite literally, hot out of the oven.

Our Elkhart testing event, which we call Testapalooza, is a grueling procedure for everyone involved. We do it because we get a jump on the new RVs, and the location, time of year and scale of the event work in our favor. Not only are new RVs and tow vehicles tested, but we install new products and schedule photo shoots for upcoming projects, including the annual *Guide to Towing*. The event also gives us an opportunity to interact with the manufacturers and tour their facilities to learn more about proprietary RV-building processes.

Of course, we camp out in the new models we test, which is fun, and we have a few evenings off to socialize, but — no joke — transporting, prepping, testing, photographing and cleaning 13 RVs and two tow vehicles is no small task, not to mention that shopping for and preparing meals for the whole team can be a daunting assignment.

Our thanks go out to everyone who made this year's Testapalooza possible, and without

Transporting, prepping, testing, photographing and cleaning 13 RVs and two tow vehicles over the course of two weeks is no small task.



whose investments of time, trust and effort, it could not happen. Publisher Emeritus Bob Livingston and his wife, Lynne, Managing Editor Donya Carlson, photographer Shawn Spence, Bob and Gita Patel (owners of Elkhart Campground), and contributors Rick Diaz, Jan and Tom Dougherty, Rich and Susan Dubnow, Stephanie and Jeremy Puglisi, and Barb Riley all went well above and beyond the call of duty.

We'd also like to thank our Elkhart and industry friends for helping to make this event successful: B&W Trailer Hitches, Blue Ox, Clear-source, Creative Products Group (RV Locks and More), First Baptist Church of Elkhart, Ford Motor Company, Forest River (Coachmen, Dynamax, Rockwood), General Motors, Furrion, Grand Design, inTech, Jayco, Keystone, Lippert Components, Fran and Jim Mac, No Dirty Water (NDW), Newmar, Pulliam Enterprises (PullRite), *RVBusiness*, RV/MH Hall of Fame and Museum, Travel Lite, WiFiRanger and Winnebago. 📺

— *Chris Dougherty*
Technical Editor

Indiana's Elkhart Campground hosted our two-week testing event in August. The test units pictured above will be reviewed in future issues.

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LONE WOLF



LEADER OF THE PACK

We recently purchased our first new travel trailer, a Cherokee Alpha Wolf by Forest River. After two weeks of being trailed by our friends on the road, they commented that it was like following a snow pile, as the rear of the trailer was simply a white wall with a small decal. A business acquaintance of mine does large-scale vehicle wraps, and we decided we needed one to cover the "snow." My wife thought it would be appropriate to stay with the trailer's wolf theme, so after much consideration we settled on a lone-wolf print. We love it, and it's a great conversation piece.

Jim Harris, Lachine, Quebec



Ⓢ Divide and Conquer

Imagine my surprise when I read Jim Brightly's "Conquering the Great Divide" in the August issue

and saw mention of the tiny burg my wife and I call home: Datil, New Mexico. Datil rhymes with "cattle," which I dare say our county of Catron probably has more of than people.

I had to sympathize with the author, observing his night spent in Datil as being "very cold." This past March was one of the coldest I can remember in our 10 years living here. We even got snow a couple of times. I'm pleased but not surprised to hear that he and his group had good treatment

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and a great meal at the Eagle Guest Ranch. Folks around here are pretty friendly and quite hospitable to visitors. It's not at all uncommon to have a passing motorist give a friendly wave to complete strangers when meeting on the county's lonely roads.

I was also pleased to see several of our other favorite places in the article, including Silver City, New Mexico, and Fairplay, Leadville and Mosquito Pass, Colorado. We used to spend a lot of time in that part of Colorado during our 32 years living near Boulder.

An interesting and easily accessible side trip from Datil is the Karl G. Jansky Very Large Array (VLA) facility, which is functionally the largest radio telescope on earth, made up of 27 satellite dishes gazing skyward, spread out on three legs of a circle that spans 13 miles in diameter. Visitors are welcome and can view close

up the enormous dishes that are moved about via a special dual-track railway to "focus" them as required for the project being conducted. Visitors can also enter the "nerve center" building and view some of the activities within, as well as informative displays explaining how the system works and some of the spectacular photographs of deep space captured by it.

The VLA is located about 25 miles east of Datil, just off U.S. Route 60 on a short paved road. There is no RV built that cannot be accommodated in the huge visitor parking lot. By the way, I learned of the VLA by reading a great article about it in a late-1990s issue of *Trailer Life*.
Chuck Hill, Datil, New Mexico

My husband just showed me Jim Brightly's "Conquering the Great Divide," and I noted his 40-year quest to visit the Tabor Opera House. Wouldn't you know that Monday is the

NEWBIE INGENUITY

In January my wife and I bought a new Coleman Lantern LT 21-foot travel trailer and entered the world of RV camping. By reading *Trailer Life* and talking to the experts at Camping World, I was prepared for just about anything, with one major exception. I was not ready for backing the trailer into an uphill site among a bunch of trees and other obstacles in the dark with two dogs in the back seat.

After years of backing up various trailers while using the rearview mirror and looking over my shoulder, I thought backing a travel trailer would be the same thing. What I did not realize is that looking at a video display on the dashboard is different from looking over your shoulder. Thanks to a little ingenuity, I mounted my backup-camera display behind me. Now I can use the mirror and look over my shoulder to back up the trailer, knowing that my reactions on the steering wheel will be correct.

Being a newbie, I am thankful for all of the information, articles and submissions in *Trailer Life*. You have made our entry into the world of RVing a lot easier.

Joseph "Joe" Kelly, Mauldin, South Carolina



📄 HAVE A COMMENT?

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



one day of the week that we close? We would love to give Jim a full tour of the Opera House if he returns to Leadville.

Mary Ann Graham-Best, President
Tabor Opera House Preservation Foundation
Leadville, Colorado

As a former park ranger at Yellowstone National Park, I wanted to correct something that appeared in "Conquering the Great Divide." It was not Theodore

Roosevelt but Ulysses S. Grant who signed the legislation that established Yellowstone as the nation's (and the world's) first national park. That event took place on March 1, 1872, and Teddy Roosevelt was 14 years old at the time.

However, after becoming president in 1901, Roosevelt used his authority to protect wildlife and public lands by creating the U.S. Forest Service and establishing 150 national forests, 51

federal bird reserves, four national game preserves, five national parks and 18 national monuments. During his presidency, he protected approximately 230 million acres of public land, a lasting legacy that we are still enjoying today.

Wes Hardin, Dearborn, Michigan

Cool Reception ➔

Regarding "This Is Cool!" by Chris Dougherty and Bob Livingston in the August issue, I installed



the Micro-Air EasyStart and can run not only my Coleman 13,500-Btu air conditioner with a Honda 2000i inverter generator, I can leave it in Eco mode. It revs up as the compressor ramps up but then drops way down again. I also have run the A/C on battery.

I have a 3,000-watt pure-sine-wave inverter with four 110-watt solar panels and four 100-amp-hour deep-cycle batteries. When pulling into a spot in the heat of the day for lunch, I can cool down my 1983 Alpenlite 22-foot fifth-wheel without getting the generator out from my truck.

Stan Wilson, Capitola, California

Thanks for "This Is Cool!" I did a little internet investigating and discovered a company selling on eBay that supplies two components that allow us to operate our 13,500-Btu Coleman-Mach rooftop air conditioner on a single Honda EU2000i portable generator instead of two. The company is Appliance and Air (www.ebay.com/str/applianceandair).

The two products are a super-boost capacitor that connects to the existing compressor capacitor and a delay box for the fan motor. The extra capacitor delivers a boost to the compressor on start-up when the electrical current demand is highest, and the delay box allows the compressor to start up first before the fan motor starts up. With the excellent instructions, the installation went smoothly, and it all works. We can now leave a generator at home on boondock trips.

Robert Volk, Talking Rock, Georgia

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I have verified that a Yamaha EF2000iS generator, purchased about four years ago, successfully starts and runs a new Coleman-Mach Mach 1 P.S. (PowerSaver) 11,000-Btu air conditioner installed on my 2018 Northwood Nash 22-foot travel trailer. Nothing else can be turned on in the trailer when starting, and the microwave must be unplugged, but after the air conditioner has started, some devices can be used. The A/C has more than enough capacity to cool our trailer, especially since it has ducting in the ceiling with three vents, besides the vents in the A/C itself.

Rick Ulrich, Ladysmith, British Columbia

There is an error in "This is Cool!" The instruction for checking the charge on the start capacitor of the air conditioner being modified can be read using a multimeter set to DC volts, not AC.

Jack Schmotzer, Alliance, Ohio

Chris Dougherty replies: *You are correct that the charge on a capacitor is measured as DC volts, not AC, once the power had been shut off to the unit from the source. We discussed this with Micro-Air's engineers and determined that if the air conditioner is running (compressor on) and the source power circuit is opened at the source, the cap will discharge on its own.*

RamBox Meets Fifth-Wheel

We recently made changes to our RV and tow vehicle, trading our travel trailer for a 2019 Keystone Cougar Half-Ton 29RES fifth-wheel and our 2008 Toyota Tundra for a 2013 Ram 2500HD Cummins shortbed with the RamBox storage system. We never gave the RamBox a second thought when considering our new fifth-wheel, but we soon learned we had a truck and a fiver that couldn't be matched up. What an expensive dilemma.

After much research and hearing multiple times that the RamBox configuration cannot be set up to pull a fifth-wheel, we were determined to find a way, if for no other reason than to save us from having to trade in our new truck, which we didn't even have tags for yet. My wife joined a few Cougar Facebook

groups, and we found someone else with the same dilemma, except they had the answer and were kind enough to share the information with us.

We ordered the Curt A16 fifth-wheel hitch and a Reese Revolution pin box with a custom wedge (the stock wedge causes problems with this hitch), and had them installed. They work beautifully and even give us a 90-degree turn with plenty of room to spare.

I would like to give a shout-out to Bruce at McGaugh RV Center in Lowell, Arkansas, for verifying the feasibility of the parts *before* they were ordered. He was a tremendous help.

Chris Williams, Bella Vista, Arkansas

CORRECTION

August's roundup of new fifth-wheels, "Finding the Perfect Fiver," misidentified the Forest River Sabre 301BH as the 310BH. **TL**

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SOUTHEASTERN NEVADA

Viva, Las Valley!

An hour's drive from the Vegas Strip, Valley of Fire State Park dazzles with vibrant red-rock views and breathtaking desert hikes

— by Jamie Schmidt

A visit to Nevada is a celebration of color. From the delightfully gaudy signage saturating the Las Vegas Strip to the blinking, twirling hues emanating from slot machines all over the state, color is worshipped here. It's a feast for the eyes in a seemingly barren desert. But don't be fooled. Mother Nature is very much an artist, and that drab landscape is teeming with subtle color splashed across canvases far grander than anything Vegas can offer.

Valley of Fire, Nevada's largest and oldest state park, covers more than 40,000 acres of spectacular geology near the town of Overton, 50 miles northeast of Las Vegas. The name derives from the 150-million-year-old red-sandstone formations that appear aflame when reflecting the sun's rays. Take a closer

look, though, and you'll discover a rainbow of tints among the weathered stratigraphy decorating this striking state park that is often overshadowed by its national park neighbors.

The park is brimming with gorgeous landscapes, all accessible via paved road. Many viewpoints are located at trailheads for the park's designated hiking trails, which vary in length from less than 1 mile to nearly 5 miles. Sheltered picnic areas and restrooms can be found at each of them. Antelope ground squirrels will visit during lunch, while bighorn sheep wander atop the rocks nearby. And everywhere you look, sweeping, chromatic vistas await.

The visitor center is at the south end of the park where the road to White

Domes heads north from the east-west Valley of Fire Highway, which extends 10½ miles between the park's two entrances. The center offers several interesting exhibits on the geology and history of the region, as well as souvenirs, washrooms and a very important water-bottle filling station. This is a good place to ask any questions regarding hiking, camping or rock climbing.

As a day-trip reprieve from the sensory onslaught of Las Vegas or as part of a bucket-list camping trip through the amazing national parks of the Southwest, Valley of Fire State Park should be on every RVer's must-see list.

STAY AND PLAY

Valley of Fire State Park has two first-come, first-served campgrounds that accommodate RVs. The larger Atlatl Rock Campground is open year-round and has 44 sites, including 22 with power and water hookups. Atlatl also has showers and flush toilets. Nearby Arch Rock Campground is open seasonally with 29 dry sites. Both campgrounds have potable water and dump-station access. parks.nv.gov/parks/valley-of-fire

↓ When the sun shines, Nevada's Valley of Fire State Park blazes more brightly than Las Vegas. Late fall is an ideal time to visit, after the scorching temperatures of summer have cooled.



PHOTO: JIA HE/GETTY IMAGES



Custom-Built Camper

Creating a one-of-a-kind teardrop from scratch

The Camp EZ 5945 was born out of necessity. As a nature photographer, I found myself making long commutes from hotels to remote sunrise locations. To reduce travel time, a good friend suggested I look into camping in a teardrop trailer. Small enough to negotiate winding mountain roads while affording many conveniences of home, a teardrop was the perfect solution.

Researching the market, I quickly experienced sticker shock. These little campers can be pricey! So, with a background in woodworking, I set off to build my own. Lying on my workshop floor, I took measurements of myself in a sleeping position and added a few inches for comfort. I transferred those dimensions to a CAD program where I drew an aesthetically pleasing curve above them. The final product would be an easy-to-tow, 5-foot-wide, 9-foot-long and 4½-foot-high camper — hence, the teardrop's name, Camp EZ 5945. It's essentially a bed on wheels with an outdoor kitchen.

The teardrop took about a year to

build. It features a 2-by-3-inch tubular steel frame that was custom welded, and sandwiched walls that consist of inner and outer birch ply with high-density foam. The Camp EZ is clad with .040-inch painted aluminum sheet. For added style, I used fenders from the rear of a 1932 Ford truck. I designed the logos and had decals commercially cut.

Albeit small, the cabin features a queen-size bed, cabinets and a ceiling-mounted fan. The rear galley is the showpiece. It has upper and lower cabinetry, a sink with running water (a 5-gallon freshwater tank is under the floor), a sliding drawer for a cooler, a pullout two-burner LP-gas cooktop and color-changing recessed lights. The teardrop is equipped with 12-volt DC and 120-volt AC power inside and out, and is wired for future rooftop solar panels.

Although I still enjoy using my larger Rockwood travel trailer, there's no comparison to the satisfaction I get when lounging in the Camp EZ and enjoying what I built with my own two hands. — *Michael Foster*



➦ **Top to bottom:** Just big enough for a queen-size bed indoors and a galley out back, Michael Foster's homemade teardrop sports lime-green fenders. A matching backsplash, birch cabinets, and a pullout cooktop and cooler equip the rear kitchen. A table attaches above the LP-gas cylinder. Inside, the comforts of home extend to overhead cabinets and a ceiling-mounted fan.

➦ **MORE ONLINE:** To learn more about Michael Foster's Camp EZ 5945 and follow his teardrop adventures, browse the series of videos at www.youtube.com/campandcamera.

East Coast Classic

With activities, amenities and ambience to spare, Massachusetts' Normandy Farms sets a high bar for resort-style RV parks

Normandy Farms Family Camping Resort in Foxborough, Massachusetts, could be the prototype for the ideal family-friendly RV park. Just 35 miles southwest of Boston, the resort is supremely situated for exploring the historic capital city. However, there's so much to do on the beautifully manicured grounds, families may

have a hard time dragging the kids away.

At the heart of Normandy Farms, a recreation lodge serves as the hub, offering a fitness center, sauna, art center, game room and indoor swimming pool. Outside, visitors can take their pick from three more pools, including one just for adults, plus a fishing pond,

a pair of playgrounds, sports courts and a bike park. Guided mountain-biking tours are offered in Foxborough State Forest right next door.

Normandy Farms buzzes with activities for all ages, especially during the summer season with theme events, classes and games offered daily. For canine campers, the resort has kennels, walking services and a 1½-acre dog park with a separate area for smaller dogs. An onsite snack bar makes it easy to grab a meal without taking a break from all the fun.



Nearly 400 campsites spread out across the gently rolling, tree-shaded landscape, most with full hookups. Rates vary by season and amenities, and Good Sam members can take advantage of the club's 10 percent discount. — *Kerri Cox* www.normandyfarms.com



Normandy Farms welcomes families to its four pools and two playgrounds.

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Located just off Interstate 40 and open year-round, **Fort Amarillo RV Park and Resort** is a convenient base camp for RVers visiting nearby Palo Duro Canyon, the 800-foot-deep, 110-mile-long chasm that is second in the United States only to the Grand Canyon in terms of size. Amenities at the Good Sam Park start with an indoor heated swimming pool, a large recreation hall, a workout room and a game room, and extend outdoors to tennis courts, walking paths, a fishing pond and a 4,500-square-foot dog park. More than 200 RV sites offer full hookups, free Wi-Fi and cable, and include big-rig-friendly pull-throughs. The park's gift store, Lizzie Mae's Mercantile, lines its shelves with local specialty foods and Texas-themed souvenirs. www.fortrvparks.com

2. Grand Prairie

On the western shore of Joe Pool Lake in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, **Loyd Park Camping, Cabins and Lodge** welcomes RVs in 221 campsites, most with full hookups, and each with its own picnic table, pavilion, grill and fire ring. Operated by the Grand Prairie Parks and Recreation Department, the year-round Good Sam Park has a swimming beach and boat dock, a camp store, hiking and biking trails, and plenty of shade trees. Kayak, canoe and bicycle rentals are available, along with free Wi-Fi. An 18-room lodge opened last year, and the park also rents one- and two-bedroom lakefront cabins. www.loydpark.com

3. Schertz

A great location for day trips to popular attractions in San Antonio and New Braunfels, **Stone Creek RV Park** is conveniently situated off Interstate 35. Onsite amenities include two recreation halls, a hot tub, a children's play area, a convenience store and an air-conditioned laundry. The full-hookup sites include some pull-throughs, free cable TV and Wi-Fi, and cabin rentals are available. Open year-round, the pet-friendly Good Sam Park also offers a pair of off-leash dog parks with agility equipment. www.stonecreekrvpark.com

The Good Sam website provides details on more than 700 RV parks and resorts in Texas, including 280 Good Sam Parks. To find them, go to www.goodsam.com/campgrounds-rv-parks/texas.

MORE ONLINE

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

TRICKED-OUT TRUCK CAMPER

Donya Carlson puts Lance's midsize 855s truck camper and Ford F-350 project vehicle to the test ("Lance Altimeter").

MURPHY BED AND BUNKS

Kerri Cox peeks inside the Keystone Bullet Crossfire 2200BH ("Family-Friendly RV").

PARALLEL POWER

In a new how-to video, Bob Dawson pairs two portable generators. www.youtube.com/trailerlifediarytv TL

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THE GREAT GALLEY



TIPS AND TRICKS FOR BOOSTING LIMITED CABINET AND COUNTER SPACE AND COOKING LIKE A PRO IN YOUR RV'S KITCHEN *— by Bob Dawson*

Whether your idea of meal prep in your RV's galley is slapping together a ham sandwich or creating an authentic Monte Cristo, the fact remains that space can be a limiting factor. From tight counters to cramped cabinets and compact refrigerators, the quest is endless to come up with the perfect gadgets and refinements to make cooking easier and more fun.

For my wife, Seana, and me, it's all a bit of a game. We both like to cook, and it's something we do together. We also try to eat healthy, so that adds another level to the challenge. And then there's the test of cooking together in the tight quarters of our 23-foot hybrid trailer, and every square inch matters.

Our friend and colleague Lorisa Pierson and her husband, Ron, have a larger travel trailer than ours, but they're still challenged for space in their kitchen and, like us, are always on the prowl for tips, tricks and gadgets to raise the bar.

So off we go on a virtual shopping spree to compile the consummate list of space-savers and efficiency-expanders to help up your RV-cooking game.

For RVs that didn't come from the factory with a stovetop cover, investing in a cover like this cutting-board-style one (above right) is a great way to extend counter space. Chopping mats (far right) add a layer of protection.



COUNTER SPACE

Whether you're in a full-timing fifth-wheel, a slide-in truck camper or anything in between, there's just never enough counter space. But there are a few ways to make it seem like your RV counter is bigger than it is.

Most newer RVs are shipped from the factory with a sink cover, but if yours doesn't have one, adding one is probably the single best way to maximize the kitchen's potential meal-prep area.

Likewise, many new RVs are factory equipped with a stovetop cover or cutting board. The Piersons' trailer has a nice stove cover that's flush with the countertop and works seamlessly as additional counter space. When slicing and dicing, they protect the countertop with a set

of reversible polypropylene chopping mats. We recently got a cutting-board-style stove cover with a nonskid shelf liner on the bottom, and it practically doubled our counter space — *bam!*

If your rig is accommodating, with the right space and countertop style, consider installing a counter extension to add another strategic foot or so to the galley counter. Camco makes an oak-finished extension (pictured on the right) that's sold at Camping World and other RV-accessory outlets. It extends the counter 12 inches, folds down when not in use and is attractively priced. Honestly, if you sourced the hardware and butcher block yourself, you'd pay almost as much but without the easy-to-install package. We put one in the bathroom and can't imagine RV life without it.



STORAGE SOLUTIONS

Maximizing storage space is the Holy Grail for most RVers. We can't even dream about adding a wing on an RV the way we can on our sticks-and-bricks homes, so the next best thing is using the space we have in the most efficient ways possible. To that end, there are a number of innovations that help us store and organize our stuff so it's easy to get to, whether it's right up front or way back in a dark corner.

The cubbies in our pantry are dark and 14 inches deep, and we knew early on that we'd need to improvise to use that space wisely. We discovered sliding baskets and installed them on all three shelves. These baskets come

Top: A flip-up counter extension adds much-needed work space. Above, from left: Sliding trays give quick access to items in the back of deep cabinets. Simple wire shelves make it easy to find canned and packaged goods. In the fridge, spring-loaded tension rods keep food and beverages in place during travel. Adjustable rods work the same way in cabinets.

in many shapes, sizes and materials, and we find them indispensable for shelves that are deeper than they are wide.

But even cabinets that are easy to see into can use some organizing, because every cubic inch, top to bottom, is valuable real estate. We like sliding wire shelves that give us the ability to store things in layers, be it dishware, glassware or dry goods.

Once the shelving was in place, though, we quickly realized the need

to keep all that stuff from tumbling out when opening the cabinets after being in transit. The solution for that challenge was tension rods. There are white ones and faux-wood ones, and they come in a few lengths to fit just about any cabinet or refrigerator.

No, they don't keep the contents of the shelves from shifting while we're traveling, but cups, plates and the food in the refrigerator no longer wind up on the counter and floor when we arrive in a new campsite.

SPICE RACKS

Because we like to cook, we've grown fond of a number of spices, from garlic salt to our own dry-rub recipe. Cooking with spices is one of our tricks to eating healthy, but it also adds up to more than a few spice bottles that need to be organized and reachable without taking up too much space in the cabinet. Camping World, for instance, carries at least a half-dozen options for solving this dilemma, including spice racks that stack the bottles and slide

Space-saving racks like this simple plastic one mount easily on a wall or cabinet door and keep salt, spices and other seasonings readily available.



RACKS FOR ALL SEASONS

Cooking with spices not only fires up the flavor, it spurs the quest for smart storage solutions.



Whether spicing things up with 15 seasonings or half a dozen, there's a rack for that, from sliding ones with clips (far left) to solid-wood ones that mount on a shelf (left).

into the cabinet, and racks that can be mounted on cabinet doors or on the wall so they don't take up valuable shelf space.

There are multiple options from

other retailers, as well as myriad DIY possibilities for keeping spice jars organized in a small footprint. Lorisa and Ron, who are equally fond of cooking with spices, found a quick

way to add a spice rack in their galley. They simply attached an adhesive-backed 3M Command hook and a hook-and-loop strip on the pantry door and hung the rack on it — *voilà!*



From salad spinners and storage bowls to individual measuring scoops, collapsible gadgets are less bulky and ideal for RV kitchens.

COLLAPSIBLE ... ANYTHING

Also under the category of taking advantage of every cubic inch of space are collapsible kitchen gadgets. Through the miraculous science of plastics and silicone, there seems to be almost no limit to this category.

We particularly like collapsible measuring spoons, measuring cups, colanders, bowls for mixing and storage, and, one of Lorisa's favorites, a collapsible dish drainer. Lorisa says these space-saving gizmos have been game changers in the Pierson galley, and she just wishes she'd known about them sooner.

Maximizing storage space is the H

NESTING COOKWARE

Almost as cool as things that are collapsible are things that nest. When an entire set of pots and pans, including a 5-quart stockpot, a 2-quart saucepan and a 10-inch frying pan nests into that 10-inch footprint, it can occupy a fraction of the space of a mismatched set of cookware. Camping World carries the Magma seven-piece nesting set (pictured) that comes with three professional-grade pots and pans, along with two lids, an interchangeable handle and a storage cord.

Nesting pots, pans and lids designed to stack make the most of limited space.



Let There Be Light

There's rarely enough light in RV cabinets and pantries, no matter how well they're organized. To remedy that, Bob Dawson installed small metal plates with two-sided tape in the dark recesses of his trailer's kitchen and attached battery-operated magnetic LED lights. Watch our *Make Me RV Smart: Magnetic Cabinet Lights* video to learn more about this simple, inexpensive solution to a universal problem. www.youtube.com/trailerlifediytv

MULTIPURPOSE GADGETS

Among the things that help make the best use of space in our galleys, there are also gadgets that do multiple chores. Chief among these in our trailer is a handheld immersion blender. These pint-size appliances generally have blender attachments for soups and smoothies, choppers for nuts and salsa veggies, as well as whisk attachments for desserts. And we love that all those options can be stored in an RV-friendly footprint.

Of course, we can't talk galley these days without mentioning multicookers that act as a slow cooker, rice cooker, pressure pot, steamer and oven. While these all-in-one cookers are an acquired taste, they do promise multiple functionality in a single footprint.

Bob Livingston, *Trailer Life's* publisher emeritus and a full-time RVer, says a pressure cooker is one of the best tools for any RV kitchen. He and his wife, Lynne, use an Instant Pot multicooker in their fifth-wheel for cooking everything from a whole chicken to chili made with ground turkey and beans. "The best part is not having to watch the food while it cooks," Lynne says.



Handheld immersion blenders with an assortment of attachments (top) and programmable multicookers (above) combine the functions of several kitchen appliances.



PHOTO: STEPHANIE AND JEREMY PUGLISI

#CampfireCooking

Lodge might be the most iconic brand name in the cast-iron cooking industry, but that doesn't mean the company is resting on its laurels. Lodge recently released the Cast Iron Cook-It-All, a multipurpose product that has camp-cooking enthusiasts reconsidering their entire cast-iron collection.

The Cook-It-All, which weighs 30.9 pounds and retails for \$150, is two pieces of cast iron that can be configured and flipped in five different ways to create a 6.8-quart Dutch oven, a 14-inch griddle, a 14-inch grill, a pizza oven, a skillet and a wok for cooking indoors or out. Two heavy-duty stainless-steel handles are included and help the camp chef seamlessly flip from the griddle to the grill side or easily remove the wok from the heat source.

The design is simple and intuitive, plus Lodge includes a user-friendly guide to walk you through the different cooking configurations. Instructions for proper cast-iron care are thorough and clear, and the guide also includes a handful of delicious and accessible recipes. Additional recipes on the Lodge website such as Campfire Paella and Beef Tips Stir Fry will help early adopters get the most out of the new Cook-It-All and wow their followers on social media.

— Stephanie and Jeremy Puglisi
shop.lodgefg.com/cook-it-all



LODGE COOK-IT-ALL

oly Grail for most RVers.

COFFEE CULTURE

We can hardly discuss RV galleys without a little banter about coffee. For some of us, climbing out of bed in the morning and pouring our first cup of coffee are one continuous action. And, for those of us hopelessly habituated, we like what we like, and compromise is a nonstarter.

The Piersons, for example, are drip-coffee fans. They aren't looking to economize on space

Right: A simple manual press makes quick work of brewing your morning joe or afternoon cup and takes up little room in the kitchen cabinets.



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THE GREAT GALLEY

by rethinking their morning brew, and they don't leave home without their programmable 12-cup coffee maker and an ample supply of ground coffee beans stored in a compact, airtight container. When boondocking, they've been known to fire up the generator just to get their coffeepot going.

I've long been a fan of stovetop percolator coffee. It's honestly kind of an artform and brings me back to the days of waking up to the smell of my dad's percolator coffee in the 1956 Shasta. But there are times — when the pooch's gotta go, for example — that I need a quicker cup than the percolator joe. On those mornings I turn to my AeroPress. The manual-press coffee maker gets me a great cup and out the door almost as fast as I can boil water.



A compact drip coffee maker (top) and tightly sealed container of ground beans get the day off to a great start at the campsite. The Progressive ProKeeper (above) comes with a scoop built into the lid.



RV KITCHEN MUST-HAVES

As first-time RVers and the proud owners of a lightweight bunkhouse trailer, Lorisa and Ron Pierson shared their top-30 RV essentials last year on www.trailerlife.com. Since then the post has become one of the most-visited pages on the *Trailer Life* website.

Among the couple's must-have accessories are a number of items earmarked for the galley, including a dish-towel rack that hooks over a cabinet door (top center), an anti-fatigue mat that keeps the floor under the sink dry (above center), a space-saving collapsible dish drainer (above left) and a folding trash-bag holder. They even list their compact, portable ice-maker among the gear they can't go camping without.

In the two years since the Piersons got into RVing, they have continued to stock up on supplies, especially when it comes to the galley. Recent additions include an under-the-cabinet paper-plate dispenser (top left), an over-the-cabinet plastic-bag holder (top right), a sponge cradle that attaches to the kitchen sink with suction cups, and wire caddies for napkins and plastic utensils (above right).

www.trailerlife.com/rv-gear/30-must-have-accessories-for-new-rvers



CAST-IRON COOKING

By definition, cast-iron cookware seems like it should be incompatible with RV living. After all, it's seriously heavy. But cast iron, especially a skillet, griddle or Dutch oven, is versatile and allows for some great recipes that might make it worth finding room in your galley for these items. In our RV kitchen, a cast-iron griddle was recently the perfect platform for a delicious pistachio-crusting salmon (pictured above).

If soups and stews are your idea of great meals, a Dutch oven might be an excellent addition. There are even dessert recipes that add to the appeal of having a Dutch oven. Also, cast-iron cooking transfers outside to the campfire for even more versatility (see “#CampfireCooking” on page 19).

With all these ways to enhance meal prep and seemingly add space to our galleys, or at least make the existing space more efficient, the Dawsons and Piersons are cooking more — and better — than ever. **TL**

Special thanks to Camping World and Gander Outdoors for supplementing the Dawsons' and Piersons' already impressive stashes of RV kitchen gear and gadgets. For links to the featured products, go to www.trailerlife.com/rv-gear/the-great-galley.



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Half-Ton Hideaway

The Escape 5.0TA offers fifth-wheel benefits in a package that can be towed by almost any full-size pickup

— by Chris Hemer

We've been entangled in a few heated debates with readers over the years on the subject of half-ton fifth-wheel towing. "You can't do it!" they howled. "There's not enough payload capacity!" We calmly attempted to explain that, depending on the size of the fifth-wheel, its pin weight and the tow rating of the truck in question, that it is indeed possible. "Noooo!" they'd continue. "You're not accounting for the weight of passengers in the truck, the load in the trailer, the Earth's negative axis forces..." and so on.

Yes, yes, we know. And for those of you who still say it can't be done, we present our humble rebuttal: the 5.0TA from Escape Trailer Industries. Weighing in at just 3,810 pounds (dry), it places a paltry 630 pounds on the pin. Even at its 5,500-pound gross vehicle weight rating, the little Escape burdens the bed with only a tad more than 900 pounds — and last we checked, any half-ton pickup can handle that. *Boo-ya!* Sorry, haters.

Now, we'll admit that, at only 21 feet, 2 inches long, this isn't your

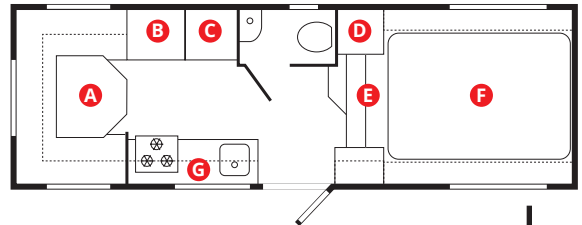


← Two-piece fiberglass construction provides durability and long-lasting good looks. An optional Dometic 9500E power awning features “arm-less” operation and a wind sensor.

inside the trailer, to which the interior walls and cabinetry are mounted for a structurally sound interior/exterior, according to the company.

In addition to being lightweight, the 5.0TA was also designed for easy towing. The unit’s aerodynamic shape reduces wind resistance, while a low center of gravity helps with stability. Rubber torsion suspension is standard, and while some manufacturers consider the tires an afterthought, Escape fits the 5.0TA with 15-inch radials — and all are balanced, even the spare. While it’s true that no one rides inside the trailer (or shouldn’t) these features make for smoother towing and help prevent items in the cabinets from ending up on the floor. In the long term, reducing road impacts and vibration can help improve the life of the structure.

The quality and attention to detail shows the moment you



- A) dinette/bed
- B) refrigerator
- C) storage
- D) wardrobe
- E) steps
- F) 60x80" queen bed
- G) overhead cabinets

walk up to the 5.0TA. The exterior is smooth, shiny and free of any of the waves or ripples you might find on other trailers. There’s a 2-inch hitch receiver earmarked for bicycle racks (150-pound capacity) on the back, and up front, two compartments: the upper for storage, the lower for dual 5-gallon LP-gas cylinders. No, the 5.0TA doesn’t have huge pass-through basement storage like other fifth-wheels, but this compartment is large enough for short getaways, and there is another small compartment on the street side.

The test unit was also fitted with a few nice options that

The quality and attention to detail shows the moment you walk up to the 5.0TA.

average-size fifth-wheel, but then again, that’s kinda the point. The Escape 5.0TA is the answer for those who want the easy, stable towing of a fifth-wheel, the size and maneuverability of a travel trailer and high-quality construction. If these attributes are on your checklist, the Escape 5.0TA is a viable option.

MOLDED-FIBERGLASS MYSTIQUE

Based in beautiful Chilliwack, British Columbia, Escape Trailer Industries not only manufactures a unique line of trailers (the 5.0TA being the only fifth-wheel in the lineup), it is a unique company in and of itself. Escape trailers are built one at a time on a 2-by-4-inch, 1/8-inch-thick structural steel frame of the company’s own making (the 5.0TA has a 2-by-3-inch frame), then topped with a hand-laid, 100 percent molded two-piece fiberglass body. Anchor blocks are integrated in strategic locations



The coil-spring queen-size mattress is very comfortable and has carpeted space on either side for items you want within reach. Overhead cabinets with frosted panels provide more storage. There are 120-volt AC outlets for both sleepers.



FAMILY TIME

The 5.0TA has plenty of room for family meals. A large countertop can be expanded with the sink and cooktop covers, and the stainless-steel sink and high-rise faucet are nice touches. There is more than enough storage space for essentials, and the optional U-shaped dinette seats four adults comfortably.

enhanced the appearance and functionality of the trailer, including 15-inch aluminum wheels, frameless, tinted dual-pane windows, an exterior shower, an 11,000-Btu air conditioner and an armless Dometic 9500E power awning with a wind sensor (a manual awning is standard).

THE LIVING END

The 5.0TA's interior is at once contemporary and cozy. In fact, it has a feel similar to that of a large truck camper, with most of the space dedicated to the living area, and the rest to that hallmark cabover queen-size bed. At the rear of the test trailer is the dining area, and the optional U-shaped dinette is large enough to seat four average-size adults. It's a bit difficult to squeeze into, but once seated, it's comfortable,



and the table has room for four place settings.

Supported by a pair of posts, the table is stable, and the dinette can quickly be made into a bed for two. Side windows, as well as a large rear window, keep the area light and bright, and overhead cabinets provide space for anything from pillows to playing cards. Pleated window shades will admit some light during the day when drawn but keep the area nice and dark when it's time for sleep.

Forward of the dinette is the well-equipped kitchen, which in the test unit included the optional three-burner stove with an oven, an overhead vent fan, a stainless-steel sink with a high-rise faucet and pull-out sprayer, and on the street side, a 6-cubic-foot three-way refrigerator. A cabinet-mounted



+ WHAT WE LIKED

Great build quality, easily towed by half-ton pickups, comfortable sleeping area, abundant interior storage

- WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE

Warmer reading lights with dimmers in the bedroom, standard audio system, TV/cable prep

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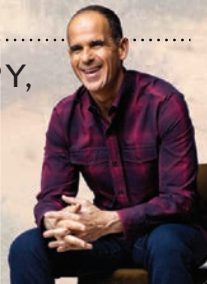
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microwave is an option. We found that the kitchen had adequate countertop space to prepare meals, but if more is needed, the sink cover and bi-fold range cover can be pressed into service.

A surprising amount of storage space includes overhead cabinets, plus a large cabinet underneath the sink, three floor-level cabinets and two drawers. On the opposite side is a large pantry, with two good-size upper cabinets and a larger one below with a shelf. There's more than enough room here to supply a family of four, and all of the cabinets feel sturdy and well made.

Across the doorway threshold, there's a waist-high cabinet that would be a good place to store a trash can and a small broom. Above it is a shelf with a drawer that seems to have been designed as a catchall area. The shelf is equipped with a 12-volt DC socket with dual USB ports and 120-volt AC outlets for charging phones and other power needs, and the drawer could be used for keys, wallets and remotes. To its left, the second of three stairs up to the bed not only doubles as a comfy bench but lifts to reveal another wide, deep storage compartment.



"Catchall" area inside the doorway includes a handy shelf with 120-volt AC and USB outlets, a cabinet large enough for a trash can, and a drawer for keys, wallets and other items. Carpeted steps to the bedroom incorporate a large storage area beneath the second step.

MANUFACTURER'S SPECIFICATIONS

2020 ESCAPE 5.0TA

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Exterior Length | 21' 2" |
| Exterior Width | 7' 4" |
| Exterior Height | 9' 7" |
| Interior Width | 6' 9" |
| Interior Height (Maximum) | 7' |
| Construction | Two-piece molded-fiberglass body |
| Freshwater Cap. | 28 gal. |
| Gray-Water Cap. | 28 gal. |
| Black-Water Cap. | 30 gal. |
| LP-Gas Cap. | 10 gal. |
| Water-Heater Cap. | 6 gal. |
| Refrigerator | 6 cu. ft., 3-way |
| Furnace | 12,000 Btu |
| Air Conditioner | 11,000 Btu |
| Converter | 55 amp |
| Battery | Group 27 deep cycle |
| Tires | 205/75R15 |
| Suspension | Torsion rubber |
| Weight, Dry | 3,810 lbs. |
| Hitch Weight | 630 lbs. |
| Axle Weight | 3,180 lbs. |
| GVWR | 5,500 lbs. |
| GAWR | 3,500 lbs. |
| Cargo Carrying Cap. | 1,690 lbs. |
| MSRP, Base | \$28,995 |
| MSRP, As Tested | \$36,836 |
| Basic Warranty | 2 years |

Escape Trailer Industries

www.escapetrailer.com/trailers/the-5-0-escape
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Aluminum wheels, a 170-watt solar panel with charge controller and an 11,000-Btu air conditioner are nice options.

BED AND BATH

The small wet bath looks more like it belongs in a boat than a trailer, with its gleaming white fiberglass surfaces and even a white fiberglass sink. It is functional, however, with a cover to keep the TP dry, a powerful little roof vent, a mirrored medicine cabinet, Thetford low-profile toilet and a plastic shower curtain. At 6 feet, 1 inch, I had no problems using the area for

showering or routine trips to the loo.

Climbing the steps to the bed made us feel like kids crawling up to a giant bunk bed, and that's a good thing. It's a cozy spot with windows and cabinets on either side and a huge skylight, and there's carpeted space on either side of the bed to put things you want to keep within easy reach, like clothes or a flashlight. There's also a 120-volt AC outlet on either side, so you can plug in

phones, computers or CPAP devices. Not being equipped with a television, we used one of the outlets to watch Netflix on the laptop and charged phones with the other.

The coil-spring mattress was supremely comfortable after a long day, and the furnace kept us quietly warm throughout the night. About the only complaint we had in this area, and it's a small one, were the reading lights. They

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Below: The small wardrobe at the foot of the bed has room for hanging clothes, and a shelf above fits shoes or other items. Bottom: Wet bath incorporates a corner sink and water-proof toilet-paper holder, as well as a powered roof vent and mirrored medicine cabinet.





Above, from left: At the front of the trailer are two compartments. The upper one houses two 5-gallon LP-gas cylinders. The lower offers room for leveling blocks, hoses, tools and the like.

were very bright and had a cool, bluish light temperature that seemed out of place in an otherwise welcoming area. Changing bulbs and adding a dimmer would solve the problem.

Having tried selling through a dealer network and finding that customer relations suffered, Escape Trailer Industries brought the process back home and has been offering its trailers factory-direct ever since. Not having dealerships may make it difficult to check out one of its trailers, but the positive side is that customers have a direct line to the manufacturer and can even make some custom requests when having a trailer built.

The company also offers a Customer Referral Program, where it can guide you to an Escape customer near you in the United States or Canada so you can see a trailer before ordering one for yourself. Buying an Escape 5.0TA may take a little extra time, but if a small, half-ton towable fifth-wheel is what you're after, the wait will be worth it. **TV**

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Escape Trailer Industries got its start when founders Reace and Tammy Harma-
tuik began purchasing fiberglass trailers and repairing them. People began asking if the trailers were for rent, and in 1993, they established Economy Travel Trailer Rentals. In an effort to satisfy rental customers who wanted more features, they began building their own models in 2002 — and Escape Trailer Industries was born.

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Little Wonders

FROM RETRO TEARDROPS TO COMPACT HYBRIDS AND OFF-ROADERS, THESE EASY-TOWING TRAILERS ARE SURPRISINGLY COMFORTABLE AND GO ALMOST ANYWHERE — *by Stephanie and Jeremy Puglisi*

↓ The molded-fiberglass Happier Camper HC1 not only looks charming on the road to Mount Tamalpais in Marin County, California, it makes light work for the tow vehicle.

If you're in the market for a super-lightweight towable RV, the good news is that there are more options than ever. For the past few years, manufacturers have scrambled to provide hip, fun little trailers for those who want the comforts of RV travel while remaining nimble and adventurous.

This roundup of innovative tiny trailers includes 15 models with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) between 1,800 and 2,900 pounds that can easily be towed with a properly equipped SUV or crossover. This segment of the market is particularly appealing to anyone who isn't interested in a truck

as a daily driver and would prefer to tow, for example, with their Subaru Outback or Jeep Wrangler.

Besides allowing for a smaller tow vehicle, lightweight RVs are easier to store, and many of the featured models can fit in the average garage. If you are planning to keep your trailer under cover, carefully measure the height of the garage's entrance before making your purchase. Also be sure to note the additional height of a roof-mounted air conditioner.

With a nod to outdoor adventurers, most of these trailers come equipped with off-road features, or they are



offered in optional packages with upgraded tires and raised axles. You'll also see many with solar-prep and solar-panel options, along with a variety of 12-volt DC appliances that will run off the RV's battery. You'll want to make sure the trailer can haul all the toys you want to bring along, so look for roof-rack and hitch-receiver options that will suit your needs, and confirm that the trailer is rated to carry the added weight.

While it's easy to find a trailer in this segment that will support your off-road and off-grid adventures, it's also important to note what these ultra-lightweight rigs don't have. For the most part, you will have to forgo gray- and black-water tanks to stay under 2,500 pounds GVWR. If carrying water is important to you, look carefully at the freshwater-tank capacity, which varies greatly within this roundup of trailers.

Now let's figure out which of these tiny trailers is the perfect match for your future adventures. The road is calling, and with a lightweight towable in the rearview mirror, it's easier and more comfortable than ever to answer it.



Rockwood Geo Pro G12SRK

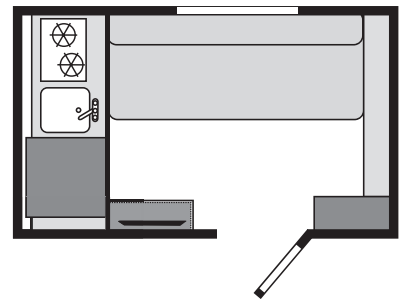
This trailer from Forest River's Rockwood division offers an important amenity not available in the other featured models: a gray-water tank. It's hard to find waste tanks in trailers of this size, but the Geo Pro G12SRK shows up with a 6-gallon gray tank and adds a 20-gallon freshwater tank as well.

Another luxury that stands out in the tiny-trailer sector is the pair of 5-gallon LP-gas cylinders that come standard. A 13,500-Btu roof-mounted air conditioner is available as an upgrade. Add the Chill Chaser heat strip if you plan on camping in cooler temperatures.

The GVWR is a bit high compared to most of the other options in this article, coming in at 2,898 pounds. However, the unloaded vehicle weight (UVW) is 1,763 pounds, giving a solid 1,135 pounds of cargo-carrying capacity. Careful packers can stay below a 2,500-pound threshold.

Like many trailers in this category, the Geo Pro G12SRK has a rear hatch that lifts to reveal a well-outfitted kitchen to include a sink, microwave, two-burner cooktop, three-way refrigerator, 120-volt AC outlets and USB ports. A Coleman grill completes the cooking setup.

The interior is unique in that it contains a gauchó couch that transforms into a bed. This will be immensely appealing to folks who prefer a transformed living space during the day. The sofa bed also allows for more storage cabinets than one usually finds in a trailer this size. Light cabinetry brightens up the cozy interior.



| | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Exterior Length | 12' |
| Exterior Width | 7' |
| Interior Height | 4' 10" |
| Exterior Height | 7' 6" |
| Freshwater Cap. | 20 gal. |
| Black-Water Cap. | NA |
| Gray-Water Cap. | 6 gal. |
| LP-Gas Cap. | 10 gal. |
| UVW | 1,763 lbs. |
| Hitch Weight | 258 lbs. |
| GVWR | 2,898 lbs. |
| MSRP, Base | \$16,442 |

www.forestriverinc.com



nüCamp TAG XL

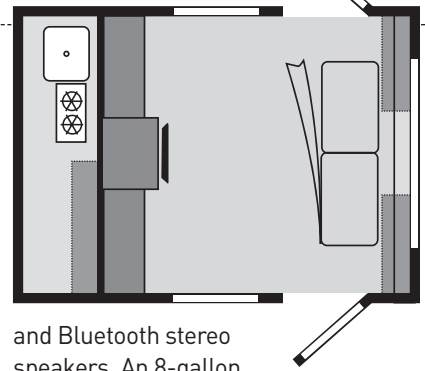
The TAG XL takes the teardrop design and puts a fresh, modern spin on it. The exterior base can be white or silver, but the fun really starts with mixing and matching the trim colors and graphics. Many owners take advantage of these options to coordinate their TAG with their tow vehicle.

At the rear, a hatch opens to give access to the well-appointed kitchen. Savvy shoppers will note the inclusion of a Yeti cooler, claimed to offer ice

retention for up to seven days, in lieu of the 12-volt DC refrigerator often seen in smaller RVs. This will appeal to many folks who camp off the grid. However, others who take advantage of the standard solar prep might prefer a battery-powered cooling option.

The kitchen's ash-colored cabinetry is modern and fresh, with streamlined hardware and storage hooks and baskets. It also houses a two-burner stove, sink, microwave, LED lighting

Exterior Length13' 7"
 Exterior Width7' 9"
 Interior Height3' 7"
 Exterior Height6' 4"
 Freshwater Cap.8 gal.
 Black-Water Cap.NA
 Gray-Water Cap.NA
 LP-Gas Cap.5 gal.
 UUV1,418 lbs.
 Hitch Weight133 lbs.
 GVWR2,200 lbs.
 MSRP, Base\$20,220
www.nucamp.com



and Bluetooth stereo speakers. An 8-gallon freshwater tank comes standard and will feed into the kitchen sink and outdoor shower.

Inside, the queen bed sleeps two, with upper storage cabinets at the head and foot of the mattress. You'll also find a 19-inch TV, a wall-mounted air-conditioning unit, USB ports and 120-volt AC outlets.

The Boondock Lite and Boondock Edge packages will appeal to those planning to camp without hookups. Extra features include upgraded off-road tires and a heavy-duty axle.

Jayco Hummingbird 10RK

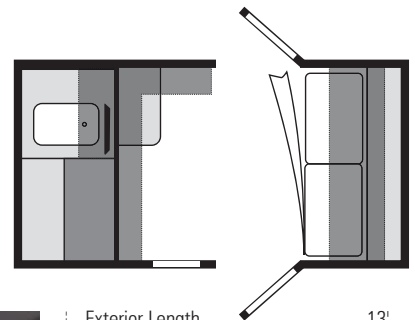
The smallest offering in Jayco's Hummingbird lineup nods at the traditional teardrop design but supplies more interior space and amenities normally found on larger travel trailers, such as a power A-frame jack and dual battery mount. Other notable standard features include Goodyear 15-inch radial tires with self-adjusting electric brakes, Dexter rubber torsion axles and an enclosed underbelly with a layer of Astro-Foil insulation.

The rear hatch opens to reveal an outdoor kitchen complete with a two-way refrigerator, two-way television, microwave, sink, counter space and drawer storage. The quick-connect faucet is easily swapped out with a hose for cleaning the toys or dogs. An exterior storage compartment can fit the grill that comes with the trailer, but this is also a great place to store a Porta Potti away from the living area.

The interior holds a residential 54-by-74-inch mattress, which easily hinges, creating a couch for reading or watching

television. Plentiful interior storage solutions include cabinets, cubbies, cargo nets and a flip-down table. USB ports, 12-volt DC and 120-volt AC outlets are available for charging and powering various devices. The Hummingbird comes standard with a Fan-Tastic Vent fan, but buyers might choose to add the 8,000-Btu side-mount air conditioner if they hook up to shorepower and need the cooling.

The 30-amp electric service, 7-gallon (30-pound) LP-gas cylinder and roof-mounted solar prep, paired with two-way appliances, make this trailer versatile for those who plan to enjoy both boondocking and traditional campgrounds.



Exterior Length13'
 Exterior Width6' 8"
 Interior Height4' 5"
 Exterior Height7' 7"
 Freshwater Cap.25½ gal.
 Black-Water Cap.NA
 Gray-Water Cap.NA
 LP-Gas Cap.7 gal.
 UUV1,545 lbs.
 Hitch Weight180 lbs.
 GVWR2,000 lbs.
 MSRP, Base\$12,927
www.jayco.com



Taxa Outdoors Tigermoth

The Tigermoth allows adventurous folks to camp in comfort while still enjoying the beauty of the outdoors by offering innovative windows and a side hatch that maximizes ventilation and views. With an exterior height under 7 feet, the trailer can be stored in a standard garage. It comfortably sleeps two adults and a small child, and an optional rooftop tent will sleep two more.

The exterior is designed to offer a variety of options for transporting and storing gear. The rooftop cargo rack will hold up to 200 pounds, and optional Thule racks can be added for bikes or kayaks. There's also an A-frame-mounted tool box for additional storage and room for add-ons like a 12-volt DC refrigerator. An outdoor kitchen slides out from the rear, providing 5½ square

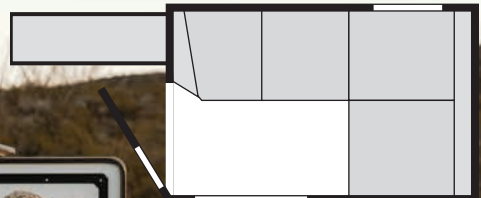
feet of counter space and compartments for cookware.

The Tigermoth has a 120-volt AC shorepower connection, but the real selling point is the promise of getting off the grid for up to seven days. To this end, you'll find 12-volt DC accessory outlets on the interior and exterior of the rig. There are also 12-volt DC LED lights, USB ports and a roof exhaust fan. Adding the optional solar panels will keep the batteries charged and the Tigermoth performing at full capacity, even in the middle of nowhere.

Taxa Outdoors, manufacturer of the Tigermoth, eschews the term RV when referring to its models, preferring to call them "mobile human habitats." And they are, indeed, about as mobile as it gets when it comes to tiny trailers.



➔ **Top:** Designed to go off the grid, the Tigermoth has sleeping space for two adults and one child. **Above:** A slide-out drawer in the rear reveals an optional camp kitchen. **Below:** Towable by many four- and six-cylinder vehicles, the Tigermoth is the smallest offering from Taxa Outdoors.



| | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Exterior Length | 12' 5" |
| Exterior Width | 6' 7" |
| Interior Height | 4' 7" |
| Exterior Height..... | 6' 10" |
| Freshwater Cap. | 5 gal. |
| Black-Water Cap..... | NA |
| Gray-Water Cap..... | NA |
| LP-Gas Cap. | NA |
| UVW | 1,360 lbs. |
| Hitch Weight | 44 lbs. |
| GVWR | 2,200 lbs. |
| MSRP, Base | \$13,900 |

www.taxaoutdoors.com

inTech Flyer Explore

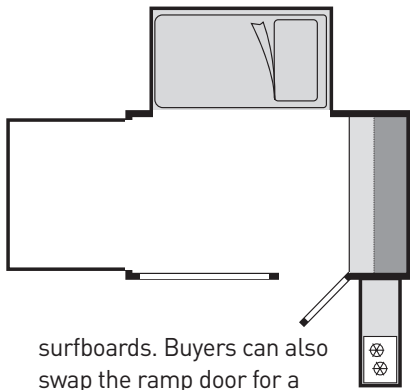
This super-lightweight toy hauler is practical for folks who want to bring their favorite gear along on their RV adventures. Designed for the outdoor enthusiast, the Explore offers rugged off-road tires and an all-aluminum, fully welded cage frame. The trailer can comfortably sleep up to six people, depending on how it is configured. It comes with a tip-out bed, rated to hold up to 1,100 pounds, and a second tip-out can be added. Floor space can be converted to fit another bed, if needed.

The rear door opens as a ramp, allowing campers to easily load the 97-by-69-inch cargo space with an ATV, motorcycle, kayak or



LITTLE LEAGUE

TEN MORE TINY, ULTRA-LIGHTWEIGHT TRAILERS TO TRY ON FOR SIZE



surfboards. Buyers can also swap the ramp door for a double door when ordering. Have even more gear to bring? The standard 2-inch hitch receiver is rated at 200 pounds for an RV-approved bike carrier. Plus, you can add an optional roof rack.

The inside offers gear storage, comfortable sleeping and a USB/Bluetooth stereo, but not much else in the way of amenities. However, an exterior slide-out kitchen can be added with a two-way refrigerator, two-burner LP-gas stove and storage space. A removable side table attaches to the trailer, providing an additional food-prep area.

If you are going to be camping with shorepower, consider adding the 11,000-Btu Dometic rooftop air conditioner, which also has a 5,000-Btu heat strip for cooler temperatures. Boondockers might instead opt for the MaxxFan, which circulates air using 12-volt battery power.

Of course, you'll want to watch your weight numbers closely if towing with a smaller vehicle. Adding these options can bring the uww of the trailer from a light 1,400 pounds to a much heavier 2,050 pounds and limit capacity for carrying gear.

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Exterior Length..... | 13' 9" |
| Exterior Width..... | 6' |
| Interior Height..... | 5' 6" |
| Exterior Height..... | 7' 11" |
| Freshwater Cap..... | NA |
| Black-Water Cap..... | NA |
| Gray-Water Cap..... | NA |
| LP-Gas Cap..... | NA |
| UWW..... | 1,400-2,050 lbs. |
| Hitch Weight..... | 290-390 lbs. |
| GVWR..... | 2,990 lbs. |
| MSRP, Base..... | \$18,802 |

www.intechrv.com



Aero Teardrops Steel HC

These trailers are built in Portland, Oregon, and are fully customizable. They start with a 5-by-10-foot aluminum teardrop on a welded custom frame. Add your choice of A-frame storage, roof rack (including an optional tent) or even a child's bunk in lieu of interior cabinets. An under-floor storage compartment comes standard, as do interior and exterior LED lights and a Bluetooth stereo system.

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| Exterior Length..... | 14' |
| GVWR..... | 2,500 lbs. |
| Base MSRP..... | \$15,499 |

www.aeroteardrops.com



Aliner Classic

Made in Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania, the Classic A-frame trailer is as easy to tow and store as a traditional pop-up camper but a whole lot simpler to set up and break down. An 11-gallon freshwater tank, sink, microwave and outside shower are just some of the standard features that will make camping trips feel downright luxurious.

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| Exterior Length..... | 15' |
| GVWR..... | 2,500 lbs. |
| Base MSRP..... | \$18,250 |

www.aliner.com



Armadillo

British Columbia's Armadillo is building trailers with two-piece fiberglass shells from the rescued molds of Boler and L'il Bigfoot trailers. The attention to quality can be seen in the use of marine-grade materials and sealants. Radius-corner cabinetry creates a roomy feel in the tiny interior. The kitchen is outfitted with a two-burner stove, stainless-steel sink and Nova Kool refrigerator.

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| Exterior Length..... | 13' 6" |
| GVWR..... | 2,500 lbs. |
| Base MSRP..... | \$19,500 |

www.armadillotrailers.net



Camp365

According to its Minnesota manufacturer, the Camp365 is "the world's first fold-out cabin." When set up, the 4-foot-wide, 7-foot-long trailer pod offers a surprising amount of living space, a ceiling height that's over 7 feet and sleeping room for six. Folded, it easily fits in a garage or shed. With a two-burner stove, 12-volt DC refrigerator, heating, air conditioning and solar prep, this cabin on wheels is comfortable no matter where you park it.

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| Exterior Length..... | 7' |
| GVWR..... | 2,200 lbs. |
| Base MSRP..... | \$23,449 |

www.camp365.com



Coachmen Clipper Express 9.0TD

Built by Forest River's Coachmen division, this unique hybrid trailer combines some of the best features of a teardrop trailer and a pop-up camper. An air conditioner, furnace, refrigerator, Bluetooth stereo and grill are all standard, along with a 54-by-74-inch bed. The V-Package adds off-road tires and a roof rack. An optional screen room is available to expand the outdoor living space. Cargo capacity is a robust 1,042 pounds.

Exterior Length 13'
 GVWR 2,122 lbs.
 Base MSRP \$8,293
www.coachmenrv.com

Colorado Teardrops Canyonland

A small Boulder-based family business, Colorado Teardrops has been building teardrop trailers since 2014. The rugged Canyonland is crafted for off-road camping with an aluminum-welded frame, full skid plate, heavy-duty torsion axle and all-terrain tires. An optional solar-power package is available to extend time off the grid.

Exterior Length 12' 4"
 GVWR 2,200 lbs.
 Base MSRP \$15,500
www.coloradoteardropcamper.com



Happier Camper HC1

This double-hulled fiberglass trailer can sleep up to five, with an interior that is customizable using Happy Camper's modular-furniture system. The large rear hatch makes it easy to haul gear, and wide windows allow panoramic views from inside the trailer. A contoured solar-power panel will appeal to off-grid RVers. The Los Angeles manufacturer offers the two-tone HC1 in white and five standard colors or multiple custom hues.

Exterior Length 13'
 GVWR 2,500 lbs.
 Base MSRP \$24,950
www.happiercamper.com



Little Guy MyPod

With a sprightly uww of 630 pounds, this tiny molded-fiberglass teardrop comes in white, silver, black, blue or red from Ohio-based Little Guy Worldwide. It fits all the creature comforts into a very small space, including an entertainment center, mounted air conditioner, three-speed Fan-Tastic Vent, and 12-volt DC and 120-volt AC power. Add-on accessories include an attachable screen room and roof rack.

Exterior Length 11' 7"
 GVWR 2,200 lbs.
 Base MSRP \$10,995
www.golittleguy.com



SylvanSport Go

Manufactured in North Carolina, the Go is the ultimate gear hauler in the tiny trailer market. It's able to carry a surprising number of bikes, boards or boats while in tow mode and then transform into a comfortable tent trailer at camp. The aluminum frame is rust-free, and the 220-denier ripstop nylon tent fabric is waterproof and seam-sealed to keep everything dry, no matter what's happening outside.

Exterior Length 12'
 GVWR 1,800 lbs.
 Base MSRP \$10,995
www.sylvansport.com

Timberleaf Classic

This Colorado-built teardrop offers a fully insulated cabin with custom queen-size mattress and interior cabinet storage. The rear hatch opens to a well-appointed outdoor kitchen with a sink, faucet and 12 gallons of onboard water storage with an electric pump. Space is provided for a cooktop, cooler or 12-volt DC refrigerator. Upgrades include all-road and off-road packages.

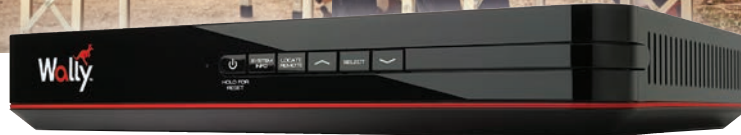
Exterior Length 14'
 GVWR 2,100 lbs.
 Base MSRP \$19,750
www.timberleaftrailers.com





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TOWABLE TAGALONGS



INSTALLING A CURT UNIVERSAL HITCH RECEIVER ON A TRAILER OR FIFTH-WHEEL MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO ADD A YAKIMA LONGHAUL BICYCLE RACK

Owners looking for just a little more storage space often turn to hanging trays and racks on the RV's back bumper or ladder, which have limited capacity. A better choice is to use accessories connected to a hitch receiver that's bolted to the frame, but the majority of fifth-wheels and trailers leave the factory without such hardware. In some cases, the 4-inch box bumper, which provides valuable space for sewer hoses, is omitted to make way for the hitch receiver.

Curt's universal Adjustable RV Trailer Hitch allows owners to have both pieces of equipment, and the 2-inch receiver can be installed in relatively short order using common hand tools.

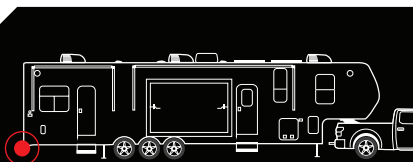
Curt's hitch receiver is designed to bolt up to a C-, I- or box-beam chassis as long as the frame is no more than 72 inches wide, which covers just about all towables. Since it's designed for a universal fit, modifications will likely

be needed, but nothing more complicated than drilling holes if the provided bolt-pattern misses the mark. The receiver, at about 100 pounds, has a nice-looking powder-coat black finish and is protected by a liquid Bonderite coating that inhibits rust.

It's rated to handle 3,500 pounds and 350 pounds of hitch weight, which makes it practical for hooking up a lightweight trailer in states where triple towing is legal. The receiver can easily handle the weight of bicycles on the Yakima LongHaul rack (as long as the trailer is capable), which was the second







1) Sealant was scraped away from the box frame on the test fifth-wheel to allow the frame brackets to seat properly. 2) The main body tube is fitted in the square holes in the frame brackets so the receiver can be held in place using a floor jack (3) to determine proper positioning. 4) Frame brackets are butted up to the box bumper, and the brackets are held in place with C-clamps to allow for drilling holes (5).



UPGRADES

UNIVERSAL HITCH RECEIVER

Product Curt Adjustable RV Trailer Hitch

Difficulty    





Time to Install 1 hour

Cost \$272.84

www.curtmfg.com

RV-APPROVED HITCH BIKE RACK

Product Yakima LongHaul

Difficulty    

Time to Install 30 minutes

Cost \$329

www.yakima.com/longhaul

part of this project.

Reading the product description about the receiver might confuse some people because it's earmarked toward motorhomes, but the universal configuration makes it suitable for trailers and fifth-wheels. The end plates will likely hang down to a point where owners might worry about dragging on driveways and dips. The receiver was installed on a fifth-wheel for this evaluation, and only twice during 17,000 miles did the brackets drag on very steep driveways, and then only slightly. The benefits of having the receiver far outweigh the potential dragging issue.

Seasoned do-it-yourselfers can install the hitch receiver in about an hour, but it's best to have a helper, especially when lying on your back, because the parts are bulky and heavy. A floor jack will facilitate the installation, which is optional if your buddy is a body builder. Once the ends of the box frame on the fifth-wheel were cleaned up (to remove sealant), the frame brackets were positioned to determine where additional holes were needed. Clamps were used to temporarily secure the brackets to the frame, butted up against the box bumper. Brackets can be reversed if needed.

There's definitely a prescribed order for assembling the three components since the main body tube has to fit through the square openings in both frame brackets, approached from inside the brackets. After measuring and marking the center point of the trailer, one frame bracket was bolted in place and the main body tube pushed through the square hole in the bracket tube mount and stabilized with the floor jack. The second bracket was then installed, the main body tube centered, and holes drilled to allow the set bolts to secure the main body tube.



6) Center point on the bumper is determined using a tape measure and marked with tape stuck to the outer surface. 7) A cordless impact driver makes easy work of tightening bolts for attaching the frame brackets to the box tube. A ratcheting wrench makes it easy to hold nuts while driving bolts. Provided fish wire (not shown) will be needed to place nuts on bolts in the bracket tube mounts. 8) The receiver is earmarked for motorhome frames, but its universal design allows use on trailers and fifth-wheels. 9) Frame brackets extend rather low, and may get scraped when negotiating steep driveways or dips.

Provided fish wires were used to hold the nuts when tightening the bolts, and an electric impact wrench was used to tighten the bolts before torquing to specification.

RACK 'EM UP

Hanging bicycles on a trailer or motorhome is not as simple as it looks. Owners who prefer a more stout arrangement than those afforded by the aforementioned ladder and/or bumper racks generally look at products commonly sold in bike shops or online. While these racks work well among riding enthusiasts, use on RVs can lead to damaged or even lost bicycles because of rough roads and less-than-forgiving suspensions. That's why the majority of bicycle-rack manufacturers prohibit use on RVs, and will void the warranty and accept no responsibility

TOOLS NEEDED

RECEIVER

- Drill and bit
- Socket wrench and sockets
- Impact driver
- Open-end wrench
- Tape measure

BIKE RACK

- Two wrenches



10) Cradle positions are too close for carrying four bikes. Trying to carry four bikes will likely result in damage. The rack is best suited for two bikes, although three will fit with cradle repositioning. 11) It's best to space out the cradles to prevent damage to the bike's frame from pedals or other components. 12) U-shaped ZipStrips are used to snug the bicycle frame to the cradles. 13) A ratcheting mechanism holds the ZipStrips tightly.

for damaged bikes. Yakima's LongHaul rack is approved for trailers and motorhomes when used with Class 3 or 4 hitch receivers.

The LongHaul is designed to handle four bikes, but that is somewhat optimistic. Nevertheless, the four available positions provide versatility when hauling two or three bikes, depending on type and size. The upright configuration has two arms with four sets of cradles that can be adjusted for specific spacing. Once the upright mast is bolted to the stinger, the rack is inserted into the 2-inch receiver and pinned in place with a locking bolt.

A welcome feature allows the arms to fold down when not in use, making it practical to leave on the back of the trailer or tow vehicle when running solo. A large button is used to release the arms, which works smoothly without binding. Integrated into the mast is a retractable cable lock that can be used to secure the bikes. It's not exceptionally strong, but it will discourage amateur thieves.

While the use of dual arms and cradles is common, Yakima has put some thought into its system to prevent excessive movement of the bicycles while on the road. Any method used to hold bikes secure has a twofold purpose: to keep the bikes solid in the cradles and to make the process of mounting and removing the bikes uncomplicated while requiring little effort. Yakima nailed it on both fronts.

Cleverly designed ZipStrips are pushed into the cradles via a ratcheting mechanism that keeps the bike frame seated tightly. Two cradles on the arms secure the top tube, and a third keeps the seat tube rigid to prevent sway. Once all

three ZipStrips are in place properly, the bike cannot come off the rack. To remove the ZipStrips, a button is pushed to release the ratcheting mechanism. While the system works well and builds confidence that the bike will not be launched on the road, it's easy to lose the ZipStrips, as we did when leaving them on the bumper and driving off. It's best to return the ZipStrips into the cradles

⚠ ON THE RACK

The optional TubeTop is needed when the bicycle top tube is sloped. When attached to the handlebar stem and seat post, the TubeTop keeps the bike level in the cradles.



14) Cleverly positioned cradles hold the seat tube in place, which prevents the bikes from rocking back and forth while on the road.

15) The retractable cable lock can be pulled out from the mast and routed through the bikes to help prevent theft. The cable is lightweight, so it's really only a deterrent to amateur thieves.

16) Twin arms with cradles can be folded against the mast while the bikes are off the rack. 17) A large button on the top of the mast is pushed to release the arms, which will lock in place when raised into position for loading bikes (18).

immediately.

Bikes with large frames (mountain bikes, for instance) and the heaviest models must be loaded first to reduce the leverage on the arms. Also, the bikes must be loaded in a level attitude. Models with sloping top tubes will need the Yakima TubeTop (\$49) device that attaches to the handlebar stem and seat post to keep the bike level.

We tried loading four bikes, but as mentioned previously, it wouldn't work without the risk of damaging the bikes. Three works OK after repositioning the cradles, but two can be carried perfectly. When in the hitch receiver, the rack has plenty of road clearance and can be fitted with a number of covers that are easily obtainable online or at bicycle shops. A Front Wheel Strap is used on the first-loaded bike, and a safety strap is threaded through each wheel and around the mast.

The entire process of loading and unloading is very fast, and acclimation comes quickly. I would be remiss not to mention the bottle opener on the end of the arm for those who need a cold one after a day on the trail.

Using a wrench, the LongHaul can be quickly removed from the trailer hitch receiver and moved to the tow vehicle for added versatility when set up in an RV park. It can also be mounted in a higher position on the back of a motorhome to clear the dinghy vehicle with the use of a dual receiver.

Although the two-page "Read Me First" flyer packaged with the LongHaul can be a little disconcerting to the uninitiated, the part about the lifetime warranty to the original owner makes it a good read. The best part is the confidence owners will gain knowing that the LongHaul can handle adverse treatment from a noncompliant trailer suspension and rough roads — and the bikes will make it to the intended destination safely. **TV**

POWER SHOT

THE BANKS DERRINGER TUNER IS A SMALL BUT POTENT WAY TO ADD HORSEPOWER AND TORQUE TO 6.7-LITER POWER STROKES

Truck owners who tow trailers often appreciate the power boost offered by aftermarket tuners. Few other modifications offer comparable power-per-dollar gains. The potential trade-off is that aftermarket tuners can stress power-train components. In late-model trucks, this can create warranty headaches.

Banks Power, one of the most-enduring names in diesel performance, recently released its compact Derringer under-hood tuner for 2017 to 2019 Ford Super Duty trucks equipped with the 6.7-liter Power Stroke turbo-diesel engine. Banks' approach

is to create the maximum possible safe power via a nonpermanent system that doesn't reflash the ECU or otherwise leave a warranty-voiding footprint. The company accomplishes this by optimizing signals for both fuel-rail pressure (FRP) and manifold absolute pressure (MAP). Further, the Derringer interfaces

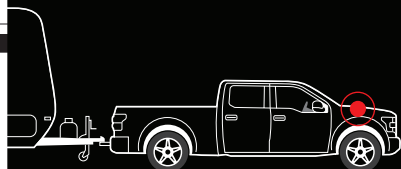
↑ The full Banks Power Derringer system with optional iDash monitor provides six levels of adaptive power.

with the vehicle's OBDII port and is able to offer on-the-fly adaptive tuning based on ECU data.

Real-world benefits include the ability to adjust for conditions

1) Consistent with auto electrical service/modifications, the process begins by disconnecting the negative battery cables and tucking them away from the battery posts. Next, use a fish wire or straightened coat hanger to route the Derringer's MAP harness and four-pin plugs along the intake tubing to the MAP sensor, which is located under the cowl on top of the intake manifold. Cable ties or electrical tape can be used to secure the harness to the wire. 2) After unplugging the factory harness from the MAP sensor, the fished-through Derringer harness plugs into the sensor (female connector) and the OEM harness (male connector). 3) The FRP sensor is harder to locate; it's on the driver's side of the engine block under the intercooler tubing's blue coupler. The Derringer harness is fished along the intake. The FRP sensor is unplugged and piggy-backed by the three-pin Derringer plugs (again, female to sensor and male to OEM harness). Hand access is between the throttle-body inlet and the upper radiator hose.






UPGRADE

POWER STROKE TUNER

Product Banks Power Derringer with iDash

Difficulty 

Time to Install 1 hour

Cost \$869

www.bankspower.com/derringer

4) A small incision must be made in the grommet on the driver's side of the firewall. The fish wire is pushed through this slit from the engine compartment. Then the Derringer's starter and iDash harness plugs are taped to the wire in the cab and fished back into the engine compartment. 5) The Derringer tuner unit is compact. The system's sensor harness plug connects to the bottom of the Derringer, and the iDash connector goes to the round port. 6) Lock rings ensure positive engagement between the Derringer and its in-cab harness. Rotating the rings from the 12- to the 5-o'clock position locks the harness and terminator cap to the tuner. (The terminator cap protects a port that can be utilized for additional Banks bus-network sensor modules.) 7) The Derringer can be easily mounted under the cowl with cable ties. The unit's status LED should be positioned facing the fender for easy visibility.

such as high altitude, detonation from bad fuel and torque-converter slippage, thanks to the incoming OEM data. Also, air-fuel ratio is monitored, and the Derringer is programmed to retain the OEM mix, switching to a leaner ratio under low-load/cruise conditions to maximize fuel economy. When the Derringer is upgraded with the optional Banks iDash DataMonster digital monitor, more than 100 power-train parameters can be monitored and logged to the provided SD card.

Concerning power gains, Banks Power's dyno data showed an increase of 44 horsepower and 79 LB-FT with the basic three-level Derringer tuner system. Upgrading to the optional iDash unit adds three more power levels, raising the gain to 59 horsepower (443 maximum) and 106 LB-FT (892 maximum).

SAFETY FACTORS

Late-model diesel truck owners have substantial investments in their vehicles and often hesitate to

do any modifications that could compromise durability. Banks Power addresses this with a three-part approach.

First, a feature the company calls AutoRate uses OBDII data. Perhaps most critical here is exhaust gas temperature (EGT).

The Derringer is programmed to follow the factory safeguard of 1,450 degrees Fahrenheit and automatically go into bypass/back-to-OE calibration should the EGT reach 1,500 degrees. Coolant temperature is also monitored so no additional Derringer power is added below 120 degrees (during warm-up), while power gains default to the OE calibration at 240 degrees.

Other AutoRate features include altitude compensation: the Derringer increases boost as ambient air pressure decreases. The system also monitors diesel particulate filter (DPF) regen cycles and accelerator position to further optimize tuning.

TransCommand is Banks' oversight safeguard to prolong gearbox life. The Derringer monitors transmission-gear and torque-converter performance to optimize shift speeds and modulate slip within safe levels.

Finally, ActiveSafety is the fail-safe feature that works in

⚠️ The Banks Power Derringer kit for 2017 through 2019 6.7-liter Power Stroke engines includes the compact tuner unit, wiring harnesses, installation instructions, cable ties and fender badges. This installation was upgraded to the iDash DataMonster digital monitor and optional suction-cup mount (not shown).



TOOLS REQUIRED 🛠️ 10mm wrench or socket | coat hanger or rigid wire | electrical tape | razor blade or trim knife | wire cutters



conjunction with the AutoRate and TransCommand features. The company says that power-train parameters and Derringer self-diagnostics are monitored more than 50 times per second. If faults occur or the Derringer loses power for any reason, the system bypasses itself and returns the vehicle to factory calibrations.

DIY PLUG-AND-PLAY

One of the Derringer's other primary benefits is that it can be installed by Power Stroke owners who have basic hands-on aptitude. The base Derringer kit has a three-level power switch and plugs in at three locations: to the MAP and FRP sensors under the hood and the OBDII port under the dashboard.

Routing and securing the Derringer harnesses are

8) In the cab, the side dash cover and A-pillar weatherstripping are removed temporarily. Then the kit's six-pin starter and four-pin OBDII harness/plugs can easily be routed to the iDash mounting location. 9) For this job, the two harnesses are then routed through the iDash windshield mounting pod and plugged into the back of the digital monitor. 10) Finally, the kit's OBDII plug connects to the factory port. Finishing details include coiling and cable-wrapping any excess under-dash wires, re-installing the side dash panel and door weather-stripping, cable-tying all under-hood Banks harnesses a minimum of 6 inches away from any hot or moving parts, and reconnecting the battery cables. The Derringer is powered through the OBDII port, and the tuner's LED indicator should illuminate green.

the most time-consuming parts of the job, which

can still be accomplished by most people in an hour or less. Adding the iDash digital monitor increases installation time slightly. Additional harnesses are routed to the iDash unit, which

SIGNATURE TUNES



Banks Power's new Derringer tuner for 2017 to 2019 6.7-liter Ford Power Strokes was in the CARB emissions-compliance certification process at press time. Older Derringer applications have undergone testing and are legal in 50 states. Like the Power Stroke application, they offer three standard power levels, AutoRate on-the-fly tuning, TransCommand gearbox safeguards, ActiveSafety self-diagnostics and automatic bypass mode, and the optional iDash DataMonster, which adds three power levels and monitoring of more than 100 power-train parameters.

- 2017 to 2019 GM 6.6-liter Duramax L5P Manufacturer-tested gains of up to 61 horsepower and 112 LB-FT of torque
- 2014 to 2018 Chrysler 3.0-liter EcoDiesel (Ram, Jeep Cherokee) Gains of up to 40 horsepower and 63 LB-FT
- 2011 to 2015 Ford 3.5-liter EcoBoost Gains of up to 90 horsepower and 138 LB-FT

Additional Derringer systems are in development for popular applications.



iDASH DIGITAL MONITOR 11-15 11) The iDash here is secured by the optional Banks windshield suction-cup mount. Home-screen boot-up with the key turned on indicates that the installation was successful. 12) Main features of the iDash digital monitor include alerts, configurable gauges, data logging, speed-sensor recalibration for non-stock tire diameters and/or axle gears, and diagnostics/Check Engine code reading and clearing. An included USB port allows downloading future upgrades. 13) One of the prominent features is choosing up to eight power-train parameters to monitor.

14) For optimal safety, alerts can be set for multiple parameters, with the user selecting alert-level thresholds. 15) This real-world four-parameter iDash display monitors RPM, MPH, EGT and Derringer power level.

can then be mounted per preference to an available windshield suction cup (used here), an optional A-pillar pod or on the dash.

Following the installation, we did a test run through a twisty canyon towing a 22-foot, 5,320-pound travel trailer. With the Banks Derringer set on Level 6, the trailer was barely perceptible. EGT remained consistent throughout, indicating that fueling and power were added only when needed.

Next-stage 6.7-liter Power Stroke upgrades from Banks that are not shown here include a Monster Exhaust kit. Testing was being finalized at press time, but preliminary data

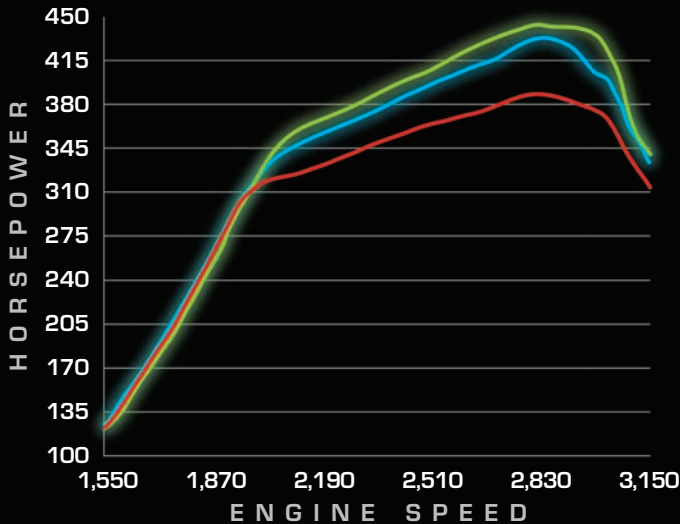
shows about a 2-psi reduction in post-DPF back-pressure. This improves exhaust scavenging. The main benefit is less load on the turbocharger, allowing it to produce more boost using less energy.

The Derringer kit includes the compact tuner unit, wiring harnesses, a supply of cable ties and installation instructions. Upgrading to the iDash DataMonster adds the digital monitor and wiring harness. The optional iDash suction-cup mount was also used for this installation. Price is \$499 for the Banks Power Derringer with an included three-level switch, and \$869 for the upgraded kit with the iDash DataMonster. **TR**



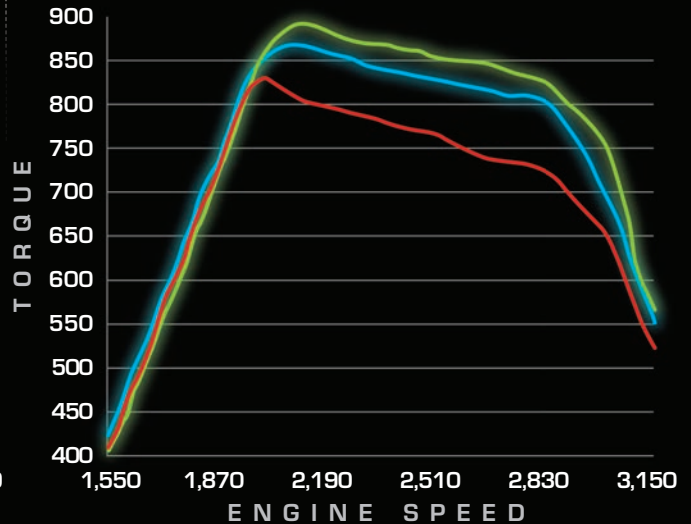
HORSEPOWER GAINS

Banks Power's Mustang dyno logged a baseline of 389 stock horsepower on the test-mule 2019 Ford F-250 with the 6.7-liter Power Stroke turbo-diesel (red line). The basic Derringer kit with three-position switch added 44 horsepower (blue), and upgrading to the iDash monitor with its three additional power levels showed a 59-horsepower gain (green).



TORQUE GAINS

Off-the-line torque is more telling for people who tow. Banks' dyno-testing revealed stock rear-wheel output of 829 LB-FT (red), a base Derringer increase of 79 LB-FT (blue) and a total improvement of 106 LB-FT with the system's optional iDash unit (green). Improvement in the peak 2,100-RPM range was 63 LB-FT.



— STOCK BASELINE

— DERRINGER TUNER

— DERRINGER iDASH LEVEL 6

YEAR-ROUND
ADVENTURE

HEART OF MOHICAN COUNTRY

Central Ohio's unique and colorful natural region offers RVers a world-class wilderness and recreational experience with hiking, biking, fishing and boating

— by Dan Zamostny

Ohio has coined itself the Heart of It All, and at its center is beautiful Mohican State Park. This area is the canoe and camping capital of Ohio, and paddling on the Mohican River is the most popular activity in the summertime. You can splash down the river on weekends with the crowds or go during the week and enjoy the scenery and wildlife.

Hiking, fishing, boating, horseback riding, zip lining, mountain biking and cycling on rail trails are among the many other outdoor activities in Mohican Country. The area is known for its Amish population and year-round lineup of festivals, such as Oktoberfest at the Wolf Creek Grist Mill (September 28 this year), January's Mohican Winterfest and April's Mohican Wildlife



Weekend. It is also home to the annual Mohican Bluegrass Festival (September 12 to 14 this year), the Great Mohican Pow-Wow (September 20 to 22), and Landoll's Mohican Castle with haunted history tours nightly in September and October.

Once the hunting grounds of the Delaware Indians, Mohican State Park covers 1,110 acres and is developed with trails, campgrounds, cabins and a lodge. The lodge stages various events that are open to the public, including an 18th-century colonial trade fair, Christmas festivities and an up-close birds-of-prey presentation on Saturday evenings. Adjacent Mohican-Memorial State Forest offers another 4,525 acres with more trails, waterways and natural beauty open to equestrians, hunters and fisherfolk.



FALL SPLENDOR

Mohican State Park's main campground sits in the valley of the Clear Fork of the Mohican River. The surrounding hills turn vibrant colors in October.

MALABAR FARM STATE PARK AND THE SHAWSHANK TRAIL

A short drive away is Malabar Farm State Park, home of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Louis Bromfield, who was born in Mansfield, just a short distance away. Bromfield left for a vacation in France in 1925 and stayed for 13 years until war threatened Europe again. In 1939 he returned to the Mansfield area and bought 1,000 acres, which he called Malabar Farm.

Many celebrities visited him at Malabar Farm, and Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall were married there in 1945. Tours are available of the Big House where the wedding was celebrated. Wagon tours are offered in the summer where you can see farm animals and vegetable gardens. One of the hiking paths, Butternut Trail, goes through a cave and loops around the top of a wooded ridge. Visitors can fish for bluegill and catfish in the ponds.

A short drive up nearby Mount Jeez to the overlook gives a great view of the area where portions of the 1994 movie *The Shawshank Redemption* were filmed. The Shawshank Trail is a driving route that features many of the 25-year-old film's iconic locations, including the Shawshank Oak Tree, which figured prominently in the movie but is no longer standing. The tree was about 180 years old when it was struck by lightning in 2011. In 2016 it was blown down in a storm and has since been removed.

Other sites on the Shawshank Trail include the Ohio State Reformatory, also known as the Mansfield Reformatory, where Tim Robbins' character Andy Dufresne was incarcerated. The historic prison



is about 13 miles from Malabar Farm. During the busy season, daily tours are available.

TRAILS, RIVERS AND SCENIC DRIVES

Mohican State Park has more than 9 miles of hiking trails and 8 miles of mountain-biking trails that connect to a network of 24 miles of mountain biking in the surrounding state forest. A number of paved rail trails are a short drive from the park, including the Kokosing Gap Trail, Holmes County Trail (reportedly the first trail in the country to accommodate Amish buggies), Heart of Ohio Trail (HOOT) and the Richland B&O Trail.

Hiking is a wonderful activity to enjoy in the park, particularly in autumn with the changing leaves. The Hemlock Gorge Trail is a beautiful 2-mile walk along the Clear Fork of the Mohican River between the park's two campgrounds. The Hog Hollow Trail is a scenic hike from the covered bridge to the fire tower.

A favorite of many park visitors is the Lyons Falls Trail. It starts near the covered bridge and passes two waterfalls, although they may be just a trickle in

Top: South of Perrysville, the Mohican State Park covered bridge spans the Clear Fork of the Mohican State Scenic River. Above: Numerous animals make their home in the park, from white-tailed deer and red fox to wild turkeys.



STAY AND PLAY

MOHICAN STATE PARK

Located along Ohio routes 3 and 97 near Loudonville, Mohican State Park has two campgrounds on the Clear Fork of the Mohican River that are open year-round. Campground A offers 153 campsites (100 with electricity and 51 with full hookups), showers, flush toilets and a pool that is open in the summer. Campground B is more suited to small trailers and tents, with 25 dry sites and vault toilets. parks.ohiodnr.gov/mohican
www.reserveamerica.com

GLENMONT

Mohican Wilderness
www.mohicanwilderness.com

LOUDONVILLE

Camp Toodik
www.camptoodik.com

Mohican Adventures
www.mohicanadventures.com

**Mohican Reservation
Campgrounds and Canoeing**
www.mohicanreservation.com

**River Run Campground
and Canoe Liveries**
www.riverrunfamilycampground.com

Smith's Campground and Cabins
www.3smiths.com

Wally World Riverside Resort
www.wallyworldresort.com

PERRYVILLE

Pleasant Hill Lake Park and Campground
pleasanthillpark.mwcd.org

the fall. The trail continues to the dam that forms Pleasant Hill Lake. Across from the dam, you can pick up the Pleasant Hill Trail and hike along the Clear Fork of the Mohican River back to the covered bridge. The 8 miles of mountain-bike trails are also open to hiking and can be used to make some loop hikes. Hikers should watch out for bikes, especially on weekends.

For horseback riders, Mohican State Park and Mohican-Memorial State Forest offer 22 miles of bridle trails that link to more than 60 miles of trails in Malabar Farm State Park and Pleasant Hill Lake Park.

Pleasant Hill Lake is part of the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District and has boating, fishing, hunting, a beach and trails. Bald eagles nest near the lake. The marina rents fishing boats, pontoons, personal watercraft, standup paddleboards and kayaks. Camping ranges from primitive campsites to full-hookup and equestrian sites.

Bikers will enjoy the Holmes

County Trail, unique in that it has one lane paved with asphalt for cyclists, joggers and inline skaters, and one lane paved with chip seal for horses and buggies used by the area's large Amish population. The trail goes for 15 miles from Fredericksburg to Killbuck and wanders through wetlands, farms and villages.

The Richland B&O Trail is paved and runs for 18½ miles from Butler to Mansfield. The Kokosing Gap Trail runs 14 miles from Danville to Mount Vernon, where you can take a connector trail to the HOOT for another 15 miles of mostly paved bike riding.

Thirty-two miles of the Mohican State Scenic River wind through the area for canoeing and kayaking. Paddlers can propel through history as they cross the Treaty of Greenville line of 1795; south of the line was open to settlers, while Native Americans had the land north of the line. Paddling is a very popular activity during the warm months, so be sure to make plans well in advance of your visit.



Top: Cycling through fall colors on the Richland B&O Trail, a former rail line that traverses more than 18 miles in Richland County. Far left: Dressed up for the season, Landoll's Mohican Castle sits on 30 acres in Loudonville and offers ghost hunts in September and October. Left: RVers decorate for Halloween at Mohican State Park's Campground A.



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Wednesday Arrival - Sunday Departure (March 11-15, 2020)

RV CAMPER PACKAGE 2

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Good Sam Club Member

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Base Price \$159 | **Base Price \$179**

Children 12 & Over \$19 ea. | Extra Adults \$49 ea.

Thursday Arrival - Sunday Departure (March 12-15, 2020)



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South of Loudonville, Wally Road Scenic Byway ribbons past a number of recreational opportunities. Tree Frog Canopy Tours offers zip lining, Big Pappy's River Stop has float tubes, and several RV parks are along the way. A former rail corridor, the paved byway follows the Mohican River and meanders through rolling hills and forests.

TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF

Fall is a great time to visit because Mohican State Park campground celebrates Halloween weekends

with RVers and campers decorating their sites. Arts and crafts and other activities are planned for the kids, and there are parades and costume contests. Park roads close to traffic for an hour just before dark, and the kids go trick-or-treating among the campsites. Trees turn a kaleidoscope of brilliant reds, oranges and golds, and fall leaves cover the campground.

Friends and family, including our son, his wife and our grandson, joined us during an October rainstorm a couple of years ago. Fortunately, it stopped raining, and our Halloween campout turned out to be spectacular with the fall colors at their peak in the beautiful valley. Our grandson enjoyed crafts with other children, and we all had fun watching the costume contest and taking in the various campsite decorations.

The drive to Mohican State Park is especially scenic when the sun is out. This is farmland, and there are some beautiful country roads with



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HELLO, AUTUMN!

A hiker shuffles through the fall leaves over a bridge on Mohican State Park's Hog Hollow Trail. The trail has panoramic views, and wildflowers abound in the spring.



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PLANNING YOUR TRIP

Centrally located between Cleveland and Columbus, just east of Interstate 71, Ohio's Mohican Country is an outdoor lover's paradise. If you go in October, note that the weather is always changing. One day can be chilly and raining with temperatures as low as 50 degrees Fahrenheit, and the next can be sunny and warm with temps as high as 75. The average high for October is 62, so expect some cool mornings and be prepared for rain. Mohican-Loudonville Visitors Bureau www.discovermohican.com

Above from left: A 2-mile loop from the Mohican State Park covered bridge takes hikers upstream along the Clear Fork to Big Lyons Falls, an 80-foot cascade down a sandstone cliff. Wally Road Scenic Byway leads to Tree Frog Canopy Tours with seven thrilling zip lines and two tree-platform rappels. Tours are available of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Louis Bromfield's Big House at Malabar Farm, managed by Ohio State Parks.

picturesque farms set among gorgeous maples that change color in October. Roadside vendors sell pumpkins, cider and apples, along with mums and gourds.

This is Amish country, and there are plenty of shops to wander through where local craftspeople make and sell furniture, clocks, quilts and pottery. Cheese and candy factories, bakeries and pumpkin patches can be found throughout the region.

Once you've spent some time enjoying Ohio's Mohican Country and all there is to experience, you'll want to come back for more. 



“PULLING MY FIFTH WHEEL UP THE GRADE JUST GOT A LOT MORE FUN.”

★★★★★ — Joe N.



The **Banks Derringer**® is the ONLY inline tuner that communicates with your truck's ECU. Unlike others, it tunes dynamically, adjusting for every situation. It's also the only tuner with built-in watchdog features that help keep your engine and trans safe. Emissions compliant and easily removed for warranty work.

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+90 HP/+116 LB-FT

2011-14 Ford F-150 EcoBoost 3.5L
+79 HP/+138 LB-FT

2014-18 Ram 1500 EcoDiesel 3.0L
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SQUEAKY CLEAN

SINISTER DIESEL'S OIL-BYPASS KIT WORKS ALONGSIDE THE FACTORY FULL-FLOW FILTER TO REMOVE CONTAMINANTS DOWN TO 2 MICRONS AND EXTEND ENGINE LIFE

— by Bob Livingston

BYPASS OIL-FILTER SYSTEM

Cost \$299
 Difficulty 
 Setup 3 hours

Keeping oil clean in a vehicle engine is the top priority for performance longevity, and to get there a filter is needed to capture contaminants that can decrease oil life. Owners have been conditioned to change the oil and filter at specified mileage intervals, and for the most part this service

requirement has been extended as technology has driven improvements in viscosity and lubrication properties. Filters for diesel engines play an even more pivotal role, since they have to contend with heavier soot and contaminants. To compensate, and keep change intervals realistic, larger filters are employed, and more oil is kept in the sump.

These filters are designed to flow oil at a prescribed pressure to keep the engine lubricated properly, and generally do a decent job; if they become clogged, a bypass valve opens to keep the flow safe. Most diesel engine full-flow filters will trap contaminants in oil down to around 20 microns in size, depending on efficiency, to provide a level of protection that satisfies the engine manufacturers' requirements for normal use of the engines. Towing heavy trailers and fifth-wheels changes the paradigm somewhat, and although Ram, for example, requires the oil and filter for its Cummins 6.7-liter diesel to be changed every 7,000



miles, those looking for exceptional engine longevity tend to seek out alternative measures that will offset shorter change intervals that may be necessary to compensate for heavy-duty service.

Diesel-powered pickups are a big investment, and adding an oil-bypass filter is a practical and easy way to increase longevity. Sinister Diesel, a company that specializes in aftermarket products to improve diesel-engine efficiency, offers such a kit for the Cummins 6.7-liter engine in the test Ram pickup that promises cleaner oil. Kits are available for 2006-2007 and 2013-2019 Ram trucks as well as applications for 2003-2007 Ford Power Stroke diesel engines.

The Sinister kit must be used in conjunction with the full-flow oil filter and is comprised of exceptional-quality — and good-looking — components that will make any car aficionado happy to open the hood and show off the system. A CNC-machined billet aluminum oil cap and filter block in a cool, blue finish, along with the stainless-steel braided lines are as pretty as they are functional and durable. And the powder-coated CNC-machined steel filter-block bracket also exudes high quality.

Filtration duties are relegated to an Amsoil EaBP90 bypass filter, which uses high-efficiency media to remove contaminants down to 2 microns in size at 98.7 percent efficiency, according to the company. To put that into perspective, a human hair is around 75 microns. Amsoil is a leading manufacturer of synthetic oil and has been serving



1 Removing the air-cleaner box will provide access to the top of the factory oil-filter housing. **2** To install the 45-degree 1/2-inch NPT fitting into the filter housing, the plug in the top will have to be removed. The coolant line near the fitting will need to be opened to allow working room. This should be done before removing the plug in the housing to prevent contamination in the filter. Draining the coolant first will circumvent a big mess. **3** Once the 45-degree fitting is in place, the coolant line is reconnected and the braided line is attached before returning the air-cleaner box to its original condition.

TOOLS NEEDED

- Open-end wrenches
- Socket set with extension
- Catch pan

4-5) Easily accessible bolts are removed so the engine cover can be lifted out of the way. This is done after the dipstick (6-7) is pulled out of its tube.

the automotive community since 1972. The company has a sterling reputation for quality lubrication products designed to prolong engine life.

Sinister's system draws 10 percent of the oil pump's capacity into the Amsoil bypass filter at any one time and traps contaminants beyond the capabilities of the full-flow filter. The ongoing cleansing of the oil removes harmful contaminants that pretty much cover the gamut of impurities that can decrease the longevity of oil efficiency. The Amsoil EaBP90 filter is said to have a practical life of 60,000 miles, 600 hours of engine run time or two years, whichever comes first. That being the case, the bypass filter is not changed along with the full-flow filter at every regular service.

Commercial truckers have been using oil-bypass systems for many years and claim it improves engine life substantially, which can be valuable for vehicles that rack up a lot of miles annually. There are no seat-of-the-pants performance improvements to witness with a bypass system, but a sample of the oil can be sent to a lab for analysis to determine the actual benefits.

Installing the system on the Ram 6.7-liter diesel is relatively easy and requires only simple hand tools. It does take a little more effort to install the 45-degree 1/8-inch NPT



fitting into the factory oil-filter housing because a coolant line will need to be opened to make room to tighten the fitting. To facilitate access to the top of the filter housing, the air-cleaner box will also need to be removed, but that's not a big deal. Draining the coolant first prevents contamination of the oil filter when the plug is removed and will eliminate a big mess. Once this fitting is in place and the coolant line is reattached, the longer braided line is connected to the fitting, and the air-

8) The bracket securing the radiator-hose support is unbolted and pulled out of the way (9), making room to maneuver the filter-block bracket (10). 11) The bracket that holds the wiring loom to the intake manifold must be removed to provide enough clearance to position the filter-block bracket on the manifold (12). Existing holes are used to bolt on the bracket. The radiator-hose support bracket is bolted to the top of the Sinister block bracket (13).





14) Teflon tape is applied to all the fittings before installing in respective locations.

cleaner box can be returned to its original condition.

Mounting the filter-block bracket requires working in tight quarters but was accomplished without knuckle busting. The plastic engine cover and dipstick must be removed first. A wire-loom clamp will need to be removed from the intake manifold to provide clearance; the holes for the bracket are already in the manifold. The bracket securing a radiator-hose support had to be removed to make way for the bracket, and it was reinstalled using a bolt that also held the filter-block

TAMRON A D V E R T O R I A L



Having just visited Glacier, Yellowstone, Grand Tetons, and Devils Tower National Parks, I was excited to finally get to Mount Rushmore. The plan was to travel light, so I decided on just one lens; the Tamron 18-400. This lens covers such a huge range and it's great for any wildlife but also wide enough for landscapes.

Mount Rushmore is a top tourist attraction, so you should always be prepared for a crowd. On this day it was clear and windy. Clouds slowly started to move in and it seemed like I was losing light. But just as the crowd was thinning out and I was about to leave I looked over my shoulder and the clouds warmed up and the light was playing across the faces of the four presidents. With my 18-400mm in hand, I was able to zoom in and get this remarkable close-up shot at 62mm, 1/320 sec, F/9, with an ISO 400. Always be patient with the changing weather, you will be surprised with what you might get.

— Jim Begley, PHOTOGRAPHER

TAMRON

18-400mm F/3.5-6.3 Di II VC HLD (Model B028)
For Canon and Nikon mounts Di II: For APS-C format DSLR cameras



15-16) Before bolting the filter block to the bracket, the 90-degree 1/8-inch NPT fittings are wrenched into place. The braided line from the fitting in the factory oil-filter housing is attached at this juncture. There will not be enough clearance to reach the back fitting once the block is bolted to the bracket (17).



TECH TIP ➤

The Sinister Diesel Bypass Oil Filter System for the Ram is not compatible with dual-alternator/dual-radiator engines.



18) The Sinister filter block fits neatly next to the intake manifold, leaving enough room to install the Amsoil bypass filter after adding a quart of oil. **19)** The new cap is installed, and the braided line is attached to fittings in the cap and filter block.

bracket in place. Before the filter block can be bolted to the bracket, the two 90-degree 1/8-inch NPT fittings will need to be installed using the supplied Teflon tape, and the braided line from the factory filter housing must be attached at that time. There is not enough clearance to do this after the filter block is in place.

The factory oil-filler cap is then removed, and the Sinister counterpart is installed. A larger gasket for the new cap was supplied by the company to compensate for the ridges in the valve cover, which is necessary to prevent oil from leaking. After 5,000 miles on the road, the area was dry as a bone.

Connecting the braided line from the new cap to the filter block is very easy. Finally, a quart of oil was added to the Amsoil bypass filter, the O-ring was lubricated and the filter was screwed onto the housing. Using standard industry protocol, the bypass filter was hand-tightened about a quarter turn after seating on the housing. Once the engine cover is back on (with the dipstick) and the coolant is replaced, the engine can be started for a leak check, and you're done.

Although the Sinister bypass kit doesn't provide instant gratification like other aftermarket performance-improvement products, taking proactive measures to extend engine life is money in the bank. **TD**

➔ **Sinister Diesel**, www.sinisterdiesel.com

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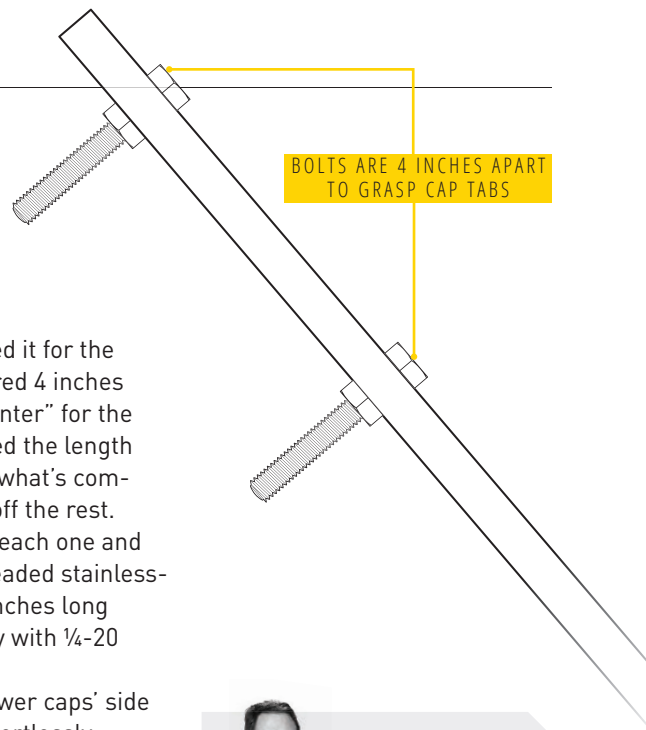
I needed a device to make it easy to remove the sewer caps from my RV. Such tools are available online, but I like to tinker, so I made my own wrench with parts I already had. My homemade wrench fits over the caps, and with a quarter of a turn, the stubborn-at-times caps are free.

I started with a ½-inch-thick polyethylene cutting board and cut off a 2-inch-wide strip. (I use the rest as a cutting board.) The length of the strip is determined by how long a handle you want. I measured 1 inch

from one end and marked it for the first hole. Then I measured 4 inches from that hole to the “center” for the second hole. I determined the length for the handle based on what’s comfortable for me and cut off the rest. I drilled ¼-inch holes in each one and inserted two ¼-inch threaded stainless-steel bolts that are 2½ inches long and secured them tightly with ¼-20 stainless-steel nuts.

The bolts grip the sewer caps’ side tabs so they come off effortlessly.

Leland Patterson, Port Charlotte, Florida



TECH ED TIP

➔ Truma’s AquaGo is one of the best standalone RV water heaters on the market, but like anything else, it needs maintenance and looking after to ensure it will have a long service life.

A visual inspection inside the door should be done monthly to ensure insects haven’t started to nest inside. With the unit off, use a damp cloth to wipe down the components you can see to remove dirt and dust.

Next, with the unit and the water system off, bleed the water pressure, then open the drain lever and allow the unit to drain. Remove the filter and clean as necessary. At least annually, inspect the filter’s O-rings for cracking or damage and replace as needed.

The inside switch will indicate when decalcification is required. Truma sells a decalcification tablet specifically for this simple process.

Lastly, you should always filter incoming water to prevent foreign substances from entering the freshwater system, including silt and rocks from wells, which can destroy an instant water heater.

—Chris Dougherty 



Rod-and-Reel Rack

• Our fishing poles were taking up valuable floor space, and the lines were getting tangled, so we created a way to keep the rods up and out of the way in our RV’s pass-through storage compartment. They are suspended from the frame, each via two safety-cup hooks, with clips that are screwed into the beam.

Selecting the proper drill size for the thread pattern was the tricky part and

involved a bit of trial and error, so we started with a drill bit that was smaller and worked up to the right size. Once the hooks were screwed in tightly, each one got a dab of Gorilla Glue for good measure.

Now our fishing rods are tucked up out of the way, easy to get to and always ready for use.

Tom and Kelly Christiansen, Olive Branch, Mississippi



Take the Edge Off

• Our Heartland Bighorn fifth-wheel had a rough edge on the bed platform. I found that drywall J-channel trim fit the edge of the ½-inch oriented strand board (OSB) base perfectly. I cut the pieces to fit, and the platform now has smooth, finished edges. I bought the J-channel in 10-foot lengths for \$2.40 at Home Depot.

Lee Merchen, Rives Junction, Michigan



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

CALIFORNIA RV SHOW



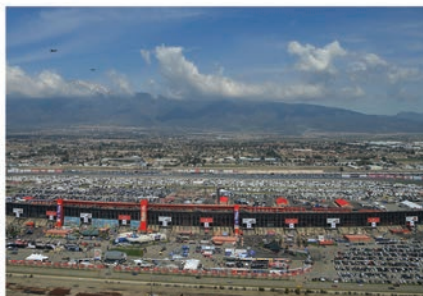
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MAKE THE BED

SCALING DOWN THE MATTRESS SIZE IN HIS FIFTH-WHEEL TOY HAULER HELPED A UTAH RVER REST EASY

INVESTMENT ⤵ **Cost:** \$1,057 | **Time:** Two hours

Last October I purchased a 2019 KZ Sidewinder 3214DK fifth-wheel toy hauler. The front bedroom had an RV-king mattress that was an unusual size and not particularly comfortable. I wasn't able to find a sheet and blanket to fit, and the space between the bed and the wall on the curb side was so narrow that I wasn't able to get by to make that side of the bed.

To remedy that, I decided to get rid of the original mattress and replace it with a smaller one. After buying a good-quality residential queen-size mattress, mattress cover and bedspread set, I cut the bed's plywood platform down to queen size.

Although the new mattress is smaller than the old one, it's heavier. The original bed-lift kit would assist in lifting the mattress but wasn't able to hold it up while accessing the storage compartment underneath.



I purchased a heavier-duty bed-lift kit and replaced the 80-pound hydraulic lifts with 120-pound ones. It works great!

Now I have a very comfortable bed with sheets and a spread that fit, and enough room on both sides to get by to tuck in the sheets. The project cost about \$800 for the mattress, \$200 for the sheets, cover and bedspread, and \$57 for the bed-lift kit.

— Gary Peterson, South Jordan, Utah 📺

DEEP SLEEPER

Gary Peterson likes his fifth-wheel toy hauler (below) but didn't like the RV-king bed (far left), so he trimmed the plywood platform and downsized to a queen mattress (left). He upgraded the bed-lift kit to raise the smaller yet heavier mattress and access the under-bed storage (top).



RV RENOVATIONS

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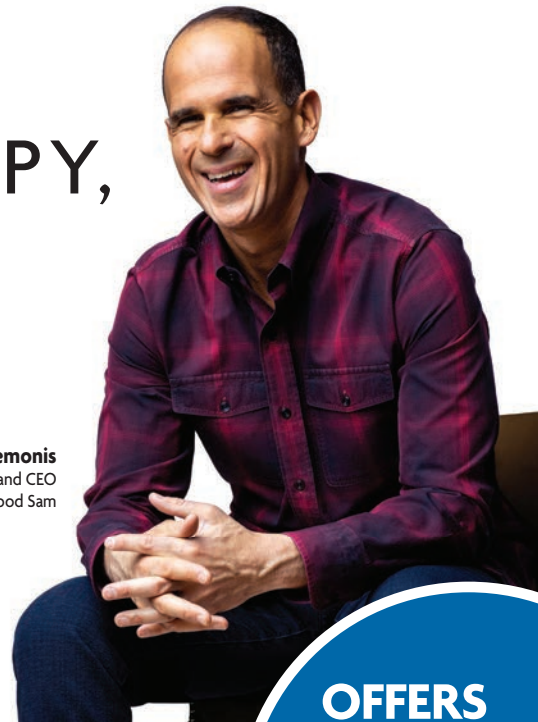
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| 2019 | Coleman COLEMAN LIGHT 263BH | 1651032 | Tallahassee, FL | TT | \$32,396 | \$21,995 |
| 2019 | Heartland MALLARD M26 | 1594837 | London, OH | TT | \$31,977 | \$22,995 |
| 2019 | Coleman COLEMAN LANTERN 300TQ | 1651559 | Lake City, FL | TT | \$31,158 | \$24,995 |
| 2020 | Dutchmen ATLAS 2732RB | 1679826 | Sherman, TX | TT | \$43,234 | \$28,995 |
| 2019 | Heartland PIONEER 251 | 1615790 | Tampa, FL | FW | \$44,860 | \$32,995 |
| 2020 | Heartland FUEL 250 | 1659414 | Wichita, KS | TT | \$53,123 | \$32,995 |
| 2020 | Dutchmen ATLAS 3172RLKB | 1668061 | Cleburne, TX | FW | \$62,642 | \$39,995 |
| 2019 | Heartland FUEL 352 | 1594597 | St. Augustine, FL | FW | \$84,167 | \$49,995 |
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JACK-IT DOUBLE BIKE CARRIER SYSTEM

\$242.95

A couple of months ago, my husband, Ron, and I started looking for an easy-to-use bike rack that would work not only on our trailer but also on our truck when we weren't towing. We found the Jack-It Double Bike Carrier System from Let's Go Aero and Lippert Components.

As the video on Lippert's website shows, the Jack-It is easy to assemble and use. We started by installing the optional Bump-It accessory (\$51.95) on the

truck's hitch receiver, then attached the Y-shaped BikeWing carrier on top of it. Within 30 minutes we were off on a test drive with a pair of bikes securely attached to the back of the truck.

Then it was on to the trailer, where the Jack-It really shines. After loosening three screws on the A-frame jack, we attached the tower base on the A-frame. We removed the BikeWing from the pickup and loaded it on the tower using the same pins. It wasn't long before we were ready to roll with two bikes racked up in front of the trailer where they were visible in the rearview mirror.

The Jack-It bike carrier weighs 25 pounds and is claimed to transport up to 80 pounds. According to Lippert, it won't void the trailer's chassis warranty.

www.lci1.com/lets-go-aero



STAFF PICK ✨ Unlike racks that go on the back of the trailer, the Jack-It goes up front so we can keep tabs on our bikes when we're on the road. When we aren't towing the trailer, the rack easily transitions to our truck with the hitch-receiver adapter. Pretty cool, huh? — *Lorisa Pierson, Marketing Manager*

ACTIVE RV UPHOLSTERY SERVICE

Specializing in RV-furniture repair, Active RV Upholstery Center offers made-to-order cushion covers. If the covers on the dinette or sofa cushions are in good shape but simply need the foam replaced because it's lumpy or uncomfortable, the covers can be shipped to the Yuma, Arizona, shop, and an upholsterer will measure, cut and insert new foam in one of three quality levels. High-density foam cushions run about \$60 to \$75 each, and cover replacements range from \$95 to \$135. Shipping both ways is free.

www.activervupholstery.com



BAUER LP TANK LOCK \$9.99

The LP Tank Lock from Bauer Products keeps a pair of LP-gas cylinders secure using a simple latching system made from two zinc-coated steel hasps that replace the regulator bracket. The lower hasp is positioned on the crossbar, allowing the wing nut to be tightened, and the upper hasp slips in place above it. Bauer offers a keyed-alike padlock (\$24.99) that can be used to secure the two hasps, keeping the wing nut from being rotated and deterring thieves, or you can use your own padlock.

www.bauerproducts.com



ICON COMBO SHOWER PAN \$153

Whether upgrading the wet bath in a small RV or rebuilding a vintage trailer, the 21-by-35-by-7½-inch Combo Shower Pan from Icon Technologies is designed for use where space is at a premium. The drain is conveniently molded into the ABS-plastic pan and ready to be drilled, and the stepped design allows for a small black-water waste tank to be installed underneath the toilet. Icon also sells a number of standard replacement shower pans for RVs.

www.icondirect.com



TORKLIFT CANNON HITCH EXTENSION \$419.99

RVers who pull a trailer behind a 2017 to 2019 Super Duty laden with a truck camper will find the Cannon Hitch Extension from Torklift a practical addition to the Ford 3-inch factory hitch receiver. Available in 36-, 42- and 48-inch lengths, the Cannon moves the hitch point rearward (end of camper) while providing an extension that will not break or bend, according to Torklift. The 36-inch weight-carrying extension is rated to tow up to 3,600 pounds and handle 360 pounds of hitch weight, and the weight-distributing version can tow up to 7,200 pounds and 720 pounds of hitch weight.

www.torklift.com

SECURE-FILL FRESHWATER-TANK FILLER \$20

The Secure-Fill from Valterra Products locks onto any gravity feed inlet for a convenient, hands-free refill. The heavy-duty filler connection on one end of the Secure-Fill twists and attaches to the drinking-water hose, and the fill spout on the other side locks on the RV's freshwater-tank hatch. A handy shut-off valve controls the flow and prevents tank pressurization. According to Valterra, the design reduces back pressure, cutting fill time in half. www.valterra.com



STEELE RUBBER PRODUCTS

The new Roof Mounted A/C and Heat Pump Gasket kit (\$29.60) from Steele Rubber Products is one of more than a 100 replacement rubber seals the company supplies for RVs, from entry doors to drip rails, slideouts and windows. Steele Rubber's latest offering is a one-piece peel-and-stick gasket claimed to prevent leaks and provide better weather resistance and UV and ozone protection than the factory seal. The kit includes the EPDM gasket and two adhesive-backed leveling blocks made from the same sponge-rubber material. It fits most rooftop air conditioners, including those made by Dometic and Airxcel.



Another product from Steele Rubber, the Lock-N-Seal replacement slideout seal (\$7.99/foot) has a universal design that fits almost any slideout-seal configuration. A hinging section with a self-adhesive backing allows the seal to be used on varying surfaces including right angles and thin lips. The super-flexible section for slideout wiper seals works for replacing most wiper lengths. www.steelerubber.com



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SAME-DAY SERVICE

After shopping around for a new travel trailer and driving nearly 400 miles round trip to get a good deal, a Southern California couple had trouble finding a dealership closer to home for their service needs:

FF My wife, Sue, and I were in the market for a new travel trailer last year. We searched the local dealerships in San Diego County and found a Lance trailer that would satisfy our needs and provide extras and the exceptional quality we were hoping to find. The salesman said the sticker price was final, take it or leave it. We tried calling the sales manager to negotiate, left a voice mail and never got a call back.

Determined to find what we wanted and could afford, we went online to search outside our area. We

located a 2018 Lance model 1985 with even more extra features at Barber RV in Ventura, about 200 miles from our home. We drove up and were treated with integrity and knowledge about Lance trailers. We made an offer that was accepted — no runaround, no frustration and a sales manager that was available to meet with us.

A few weeks later, we got a follow-up call from the San Diego dealership. We told the salesman we had purchased a Lance trailer at Barber RV, and were extremely satisfied with the trailer and the service we had received. He was irate, saying not to bring the trailer to them for service or warranty work. He also “wished us luck” finding anyone nearby to service the trailer.

Later, we received two recall letters from Lance. One was to replace the electric tongue jack, and the second was to provide straps to hold the batteries in place. We took the letters to a different Lance dealer that was also nearby. After weeks of no response, the dealership contacted us to say they had the jack and would get to it when they had time, if we wanted to drop off the trailer. We picked up the jack and installed it ourselves.

The dealership also said they had received the straps for the batteries, but they couldn't find them in their shop. We devised our own method to fix the problem.

While picking up the jack, we asked about replacing the broken stove-cover hinge. The service person said they had no way of finding part numbers and we should get them from Lance. We felt the dealership should handle that.

We did call Lance in an effort to get the information, and

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the phone rang for a really long time. Finally, a young lady answered and said she would get us to the right person to talk to, and then hung up on us.

We still love our Lance trailer, but the frustration is immense due to not having anyone competent to do service work. The warranty period is over, and we have attempted to repair the items we can. Obviously, this is difficult to do with no way to get replacement parts.

Ross Piper, Lakeside, California

THE COMPANY RESPONDS

RV Resolutions forwarded Ross Piper's letter to Lance and heard from the manufacturer's national service manager:

I apologize for the service, or lack of service, from the two dealerships that were mentioned in the customer's letter. The dealers that we have are under an agreement that states all Lance dealers must service all Lance products under warranty. The Smart Jack recall is being handled by Lippert Components, the

manufacturer of the jack, and recalls need to be taken care of in a timely fashion. I contacted both of the dealers, reviewed the Pipers' experience and reminded them of Lance's dealer agreement.

I also called the Pipers and invited them to bring their trailer to Lance's corporate facility in Lancaster, and we would address the two concerns they had under the warranty. We scheduled a service appointment for June 15, 2019. The Pipers arrived for their appointment with six additional items to address. We replaced the tongue jack, installed the battery straps and performed the other six items at no cost to the customer. The repairs were done that day, and the Pipers were on the road heading home that afternoon.

Thank you for your involvement and

for watching out for our Lance family. **Mike Williams**, National Service Manager
Lance Camper, Lancaster, California

After the RV was serviced at Lance's Southern California headquarters, Ross Piper sent a follow-up letter:

“We are extremely happy with the work done at the Lancaster facility. Every issue was addressed to our satisfaction. We were impressed with every Lance employee we came in contact with. Audra was amazing. She listened to our concerns and made sure the shop knew everything that needed repair or adjustment. Sue and I would like to thank Lance Camper for renewing our faith in Lance. We are customers for life. **R.P. 🇺🇸**”

NEED HELP RESOLVING AN RV ISSUE 🇺🇸

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

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ADDITIONAL INSULATION



Q While camping in our 2018 Livin' Lite QuickSilver 8.0 tent camper, we ran into 32-degree wet weather at night for three days. We purchased an electric heater for the inside of the trailer. It was too small for the volume of space inside our trailer. We also stocked up on blankets. After arriving home from that trip, we found a better heating option that now stays in the RV.

What else can we do to add some insulation or other protection from the colder weather? Do you have a manufacturer you can recommend to help us out? Is it possible to add something lightweight to throw over our tent trailer to help insulate and protect at the same time?

Chris Tromel, Oregon City, Oregon

A There are no aftermarket add-on insulation kits designed for fold-down tent trailers, Chris. When you camp in a fold-down, you're still largely in a tent due to the marginally insulating side walls and end-bed-platform fabric surrounds. Even with a built-in furnace or portable auxiliary heat source, you'll need to sort of live with the environment.

However, you might want to try contacting Canvas Replacements (www.canvasreplacements.com), as that company manufactures new fabric parts for tent trailers of all ages. They can make a whole new fabric set based on the ragged remains from a really old trailer, for example. They know their stuff. They may be able to assemble some type of insulating liner layer that you could install using hook-and-loop fasteners. It might be a bit of a job to install or remove, but it might be a partial answer to your dilemma.

You could also check into warm sleeping bags as an alternative to blankets to make the nights more comfortable in the trailer. RVSuperbag (www.rvsuperbag.com), for example, offers large two-person bags designed for RV use, and many heavier-duty conventional sleeping bags can be zipped together if a two-person sleeping arrangement is what you need.

Bumps in the Road: Porpoising Tow Setup

Q We have a 2016 Ram 2500 6.7-liter diesel truck and pull a 2019 34-foot

Grand Design fifth-wheel. Ninety-nine percent of our travels are awesome, but from time to time we will encounter a few bumps in the road that cause the truck and trailer to seesaw back and forth. It can be a bit scary as it can happen quickly. Is there any aftermarket product you can recommend that could be installed to help with this problem?

Tommy White, Allen, Texas

A The seesawing effect, also called porpoising, usually happens with travel-trailer setups but under the "right" circumstances can affect almost any RV. Sometimes you just can't avoid it. The porpoising severity depends on a lot of factors including road condition, speed, tow-rig wheelbase, trailer length, vehicle mechanical condition and so on.

To start, make sure the tires are properly inflated and the rest of your setup is mechanically sound. There are no guarantees, but you might try adding airbags to the truck's rear axle, as this provides more weight support and can firm up the suspension out back somewhat, making it a bit less porpoise-prone. Check

the shock absorbers and upgrade to a top-quality model like Bilsteins. The shocks can reduce the severity of the oscillation in some cases.

Cracked Water-Tank Fitting

Q I typically maintain my own trailer and enjoy doing the maintenance. Recently, I pulled the trailer out to wash and inspect it and discovered that the threaded drain fitting in the base of the tank has cracked and the female protruding threaded fitting is broken in half, vertically. I have successfully hunted down the plastic part and want to install it properly. Camping World stated I have to replace the whole tank.

Patrick Carey, Valencia, California

A Those fittings are typically spin welded to the tank, and that's not a process the average person can do at home. I'm sure you've discovered that it's nearly impossible to find an adhesive that works with a typical RV freshwater tank. You can't reliably attach a flanged fitting with screws because the tank plastic is too thin for that kind of service.

An alternative for a shop would be to spin weld a patch in place of the fitting that is cracked, plug it, then spin weld a new properly sized fitting for connecting the plumbing next to the

💡 READER'S TIP: SCREWS BACKING OUT, PART 2

➔ In response to Gerald Odor's July letter about screws backing out of his trailer, years ago when snow skis had wooden cores it was standard to use a good exterior wood glue on mounting screws to keep them from backing out. As a secondary attribute, the glue hardened the wood and made any removal and return of screws less likely to strip out.

R. Crawford, South Lake Tahoe, California

Your solution to keeping the screws from backing out is right on the money. A bit of non-water-soluble glue in the hole will help lock the screw in place. The glue helps secure the screw, yet the screw can be removed later as needed, and it also helps reinforce the wood where the screw is installed. While locking the screws in place with glue is a partial solution, it would be good to figure out why those screws are coming loose and repair that problem, rather than just using the added glue as a Band-Aid approach to the situation.

patch, if there is sufficient clearance to the edge of the tank.

There are companies that advertise they can do plastic welding on things like holding tanks; an internet search for such a company might be your best bet. Depending on the cost of welding on a fitting, this type of repair might save you a bundle over the cost of a full replacement tank. Changing a freshwater tank may be something you can do yourself, and www.icondirect.com may be a reference for you.

Spongy Floor

Q My 2008 Jayco Eagle has developed an area in front of the kitchen sink that “gives” when walking on it. It is an area about 3 square feet in size. The plywood underneath must have rotted. My dealer wants \$3,000 to repair it. I would like to repair it myself. Do you have any suggestions?

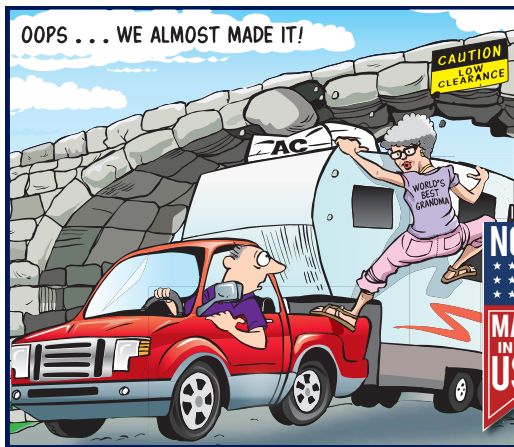
Bruce Siemsen, Holyrood, Kansas

A Due to the way RVs are built, it’s difficult and complicated to remove a section of rotted flooring and replace it with new solid wood. You need to remove large pieces of interior cabinets or built-in furniture, for starters, along with the flooring material to access the bad floor section and cut it back to match the new subfloor. You can search RV manufacturer websites and see photos or illustrations showing how their rigs are built, which may give you an idea of what you’d be up against. Or better yet, take an RV factory tour to see firsthand how it’s done. Unless you’re really skilled and enthusiastic about this kind of job, this is definitely the type of project best left to a professional.

Saggy Aft End

Q My ready-to-camp-in Keystone Cougar 26RBS trailer weighs 7,800 pounds. The hitch weight on our 2018 F-150 four-wheel-drive with the trailer package is 1,200 pounds, and the rear end sags even though the trailer is level. The weight-distributing (WD) hitch has been adjusted. A local tech says I need to get airbags.

Robert Kenny, Colorado Springs, Colorado



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A Your WD hitch may be adjusted, Robert, but it's probably not tight enough. The spring bars need to be surprisingly tight to properly help support the hitch weight and transfer some of that weight to the tow vehicle's front axle. It's also possible the spring bars are the wrong size. Each WD hitch manufacturer offers spring bars in a range of ratings to accommodate different trailer sizes and weights.

Twelve-hundred pounds is a hefty hitch weight for a 1500-series truck, and if the bars are not rated for that weight, they won't provide the needed support, regardless of how tight they're adjusted. Check the specifications on the bars, and you may find you need to upsize for proper WD hitch performance.

Lastly, the amount of weight in the truck (cargo and passengers) makes a big difference in how the truck sits,

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and can lead to overloading. Going to a multi-platform truck scale or a rally where they weigh by wheel position would be beneficial; adding airbags can help level the tow vehicle, but not fix an overloaded situation.

COMMENTS: HEAVY-LIFT TOY-HAULER DOOR

➔ I understand Teresa Chandler's issues with lifting the heavy toy-hauler door in their 2013 Forest River Vengeance (August RV Clinic), as we are putting big money into repairs of our 2011 Dutchmen Voltage. We, too, need to use the garage as a garage. Many of the floor layouts in newer toy haulers make the garage more of a party room than a place to carry needed equipment.

MORryde makes the Zero-G ramp door for toy haulers. As I understand it, the lift would have to be installed at the MORryde factory by its technicians.

Randy Schatz, Robbinsdale, Minnesota

Although that would be a terrific solution to a heavy ramp-door problem, according to MORryde, the Zero-G door is available only as original equipment and is not for an aftermarket installation. We'd like to hear from readers who have employed other methods of addressing the heavy-door problem.

Most toy haulers today include foldaway or drop-down seating or sleeping facilities in the garage area so the owner can make multiple use of the garage space while the "toys" are unloaded and being used. This is smart use of the space, and the extra hardware employed to transform the area into a party room is always planned with the original garage area use in mind. You'd need to inquire with the manufacturers, but it may be possible to delete the garage-area furniture when ordering a new toy hauler to provide a big empty garage when the toys are unloaded.

➔ I read in RV Clinic about Teresa Chandler having trouble lifting her toy hauler's ramp door, and your answer is incorrect. We own a 2015 Grand Design Momentum, and this

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| 51747 | 50 qt, Orange 151/White |
| 51751 | 30 qt, Red 186/White |
| 51752 | 30 qt, Red 200/Gray 424 |
| 51754 | 30 qt, Green 356/Yellow 107 |
| 51755 | 30 qt, Red 200/White |
| 51756 | 30 qt, Orange 1595/Purple 268 |
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LIBATC Shirt, Ice Blue



| Part # | Description |
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| 53335 | Palm Tree, S |
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| 53337 | Palm Tree, L |
| 53338 | Palm Tree, XL |
| 53339 | Palm Tree, XXL |

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ramp-tailgate is too heavy for older RVers to lift, and can be addressed by looking at the 2016 Grand Design and later model years. There is also a problem with lowering the ramp from a horizontal position to the ramp position. We solved the problem by installing a small electric winch at the top of the door in the center and attaching the cable to a ring mounted to the floor of the ramp.

We have been using this method for the past four years with zero problems, no extra springs or cables. We load and unload a Honda Gold Wing trike motorcycle.

Jim Dorko, Burleson, Texas

While there are usually several ways to fix a problem like this, and your method is just one such alternative, our suggestions are valid. We appreciate your passing this information along as it can help some readers with similar problems.

Odd Trailer-Tire Wear and Axle Shape

Q We own a 2013 Jayco White Hawk Ultra Lite 28DSBH. We've owned it since new and never had a problem with it until last summer driving back to Illinois from Wyoming. We had two blowouts in the same day, a very stressful situation. We've been towing trailers since 2002 and never experienced that. The trailer had original tires on it with no evident issues. I always check tire pressure and unusual wear patterns, of which there were none.

When we were almost home, we stopped for fuel, and I did my normal inspection and found that one of the new tires was wearing very badly on the inside edge. We stopped at the next rest area and changed it out for the spare.

After getting home, I started doing some inspection of the rear suspension to find that the rear axle was now straight instead of arched like it should be. I did some research, bought a new axle and replaced it. The old axle was about 1½ inches lower than the new axle, with the arch completely gone. Since then we have taken two short trips of about 1,600 miles total, and the rear axle is straight once again. The trailer has a gross load limit of around 7,500 pounds, and it scales at around 6,800 pounds with an 850-pound tongue weight.

Since this all started with the blowouts, I purchased all new tires with a heavier load rating, just in case, and now I'm considering pulling all the bushings out of the rear suspension to check for wear. The trailer probably doesn't have 9,000 miles on it and never had a problem until the blowouts. Am I looking in the wrong place, or is there something I'm missing?

Paul Colucci, Monmouth, Illinois

A I presume you've had the trailer on a public scale, per your comment about "it scales out at around 6,800 pounds" and so on. First, please take a look at our *Trailer Life* website and check the RV Clinic FAQ (www.trailerlife.com/tech/rv-clinic-faq) for information on understanding gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) and gross axle weight rating (GAWR). This information is also readily available online from many



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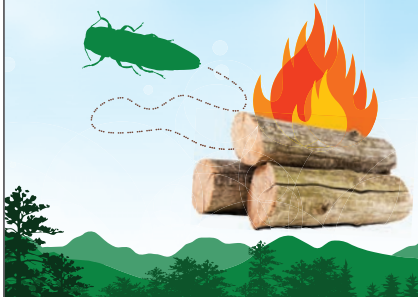
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different sources. Once you understand those terms, you can better judge your trailer's load capacity.

It sounds as if the trailer may have a weight imbalance at its aft end. Take the trailer, fully loaded for a trip, to a public scale and weigh the axles individually. On a multipad scale, place one axle on each of two adjacent pads. If it's a single-weight scale pad, you'll need to position the trailer near the end of the pad to check each axle individually. Place both axles near the end of the pad and note the weight. Roll ahead so just one axle is on the pad and note the weight again. Deduct the single axle weight from the combined weight to arrive at each axle's weight. Alternatively, if you can get to a rally where someone is weighing by wheel position, that would be even better.

If the back axle is significantly heavier, you'll need to move heavy cargo forward in the trailer to try to remove some imbalance. Does the trailer sit level when traveling? If the aft end is lower,

that, too, can transfer extra weight to the back axle. Lower the hitch height to even out the trailer's ride configuration.

It's also possible that the suspension bushings are badly enough worn to allow the axle to go out of alignment with the other axle, but that wouldn't explain how that back axle gets straightened out. Check the bushings to be sure, anyway, as a preventive measure, as most new ones are typically made of neoprene and wear out quickly. Replace them with bronze bushings and wet bolts, which can be greased via a Zerk fitting.

Two-Way Fridge

Q We purchased a 2019 Heartland Mallard M25 travel trailer to replace our 1999 Mallard, another 25-footer. Our habit is to plug in and make sure we have a fully charged battery and cooled refrigerator before leaving on a trip. We stopped for lunch, got a few things from a grocery store and went to put them in the fridge. We

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

RV CLINIC

discovered that the ice was melting and the temperature had risen dramatically. It turns out the Dometic unit is a two-way refrigerator and runs on LP-gas or 120-volt AC power. For some unknown reason, the 12-volt DC function was not included.

DOT regulations specify that the LP-gas cylinders be shut off during movement on public streets. Are owners expected to break the law or have a useless refrigerator while under way?

John Federspiel

Hendersonville, North Carolina

A I don't believe there's a specific DOT regulation that requires all LP-gas cylinders to be shut off when moved on public streets, John, so you and your RVing brethren aren't breaking the law when using LP-gas en route. That said, each state has some of its own regulations about transporting LP-gas cylinders, and there are places where they're strictly not allowed, such as some tunnels in the East, so it's best to check with each state as needed.

The use of propane-fueled devices while on the road has been covered in RV Clinic many times, so you might check the Tech Q&A section on our website, www.trailerlife.com, to read more past discussions on this.

When buying an RV, it's best to check the specifications on each of the vehicle's appliances to ensure the device can be operated according to your preferred RV procedures. The three-way refrigerators with 12-volt DC powering capability have fallen out of favor and are hard to find nowadays.

You can run the refrigerator on LP-gas when driving, although you'll hear a lot of personal preferences for and against this process per the above-mentioned Tech Q&A list, online forums and from other resources. Personally, we use LP-gas on the road and have no problems, although we shut everything off each time we stop to take on fuel.

Ram Brake-Control Voltage

Q I have a 2012 Ram 3500 that is supplying only 3.4 volts to my 40-foot fifth-wheel toy hauler's brakes



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RV CLINIC

through the brake pedal, but supplies 12 volts through the hand-brake control. This problem became apparent last March when we were headed home from Arizona. The few RV service techs I talked to said that the truck manufacturers have had problems with the integrated-brake-control systems.

Further frustrating the issue is that I took my truck to the local Ram dealer with my concern, only to find out, after an hour and a half, that they do not have the equipment to test this condition unless they also have the trailer. I will be returning to the dealer with the trailer in tow next week for further fault-finding.

Have you heard of this problem? I'm wondering if it's rare or commonplace. Is it mainly a Ram problem or occurring with several manufacturers?

John Eaton, Seaview, Washington

A There is no system-wide problem with the integrated brake controls on any of the pickup manufacturers' products. The only chronic problem, so to speak, is that not all of these brake controls are compatible with electric-over-hydraulic trailer-brake systems. The auto manufacturers have addressed this situation and have provided solutions for RV owners. Your trailer uses conventional electric brakes, so the problem doesn't pertain to you.

Naturally, any product can fail or not perform up to specifications, which calls for having the brake control repaired. The main reason yours is supplying only 3.4 volts DC, measured, we presume, at the brake plug near the rear bumper, would be that it is a proportional brake control and is only sending power enough to the brakes for the braking conditions, based on the gain that is set, how level the truck is, etc. The fact that it supplies the full 12 volts using the manual "emergency application" lever would indicate that there is not a problem in the wiring. **TR**

HAVE A TECH QUESTION

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

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3500 WATT SUPER QUIET INVERTER GENERATOR

| | | |
|----------|---------------------|----------|
| 3500 | MAX. STARTING WATTS | 3000 |
| 3000 | RUNNING WATTS | 2800 |
| 100 LBS. | WEIGHT | 131 LBS. |
| 2.6 cu. | TANK SIZE | 3.4 cu. |
| 4 | OUTLETS | 4 |
| YES | OVERLOAD PROTECTION | YES |
| 212 cc | ENGINE SIZE | 196 cc |
| YES | LOW OIL ALERT | YES |
| YES | PARALLEL CAPABLE | YES |
| YES | POWERSAVER | YES |

PREDATOR 3500 **HONDA EU3000iS1A**

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ITEM 63878/63991 64005/69567/60566 63601/67227 shown

66956112

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NOW \$19.99 **SAVE 50%**

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66961204

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AVAIL. IN SM, MED, LG, XL, XXL

Customer Rating ★★★★★

SAVE 66%

COMPARE TO VALEO \$14.99 **MODEL: 25521**

NOW \$4.99 **SAVE \$5.00**

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

66965282

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| SLANT LEG | STRAIGHT LEG |
| DURABLE CONSTRUCTION | HEAVY DUTY CONSTRUCTION |
| \$54.99 SAVE \$44 | \$79.99 SAVE \$48 |
| COMPARE TO \$99.98 | COMPARE TO \$128 |
| Z-SHADE MODEL: ZS1001TW19 | Z-SHADE MODEL: ZS1001LTL |

ITEM 62899 69456/62897 **Customer Rating** ★★★★★ 62384/62898 shown

ITEM 56410

66968419 **66972926**

LIMIT 2 - Coupon valid through 1/17/20

HaulMaster **SUPER COUPON**

40" x 72" MOVING BLANKET

Customer Rating ★★★★★

SAVE 60%

COMPARE TO PRATT RETAIL SPECIALTIES \$9.98 **MODEL: HMMOVBLAN**

ITEM 69504/62336/47262 shown

66973977

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30", 5 DRAWER MECHANIC'S CARTS

700 lb. capacity

Customer Rating ★★★★★

SAVE \$630

COMPARE TO Snap-on SLIP-POINT \$830 **MODEL: R830T005**

NOW \$199.99 **YOUR CHOICE OF COLOR**

NOW AVAILABLE IN WHITE **\$229.99**

Item 56429, 64031, 64033, 64059, 64721, 64722, 64720

66974736

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HaulMaster **SUPER COUPON**

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

Customer Rating ★★★★★

400 lb. working load

NOW \$6.99 **SAVE \$12.99**

ITEM 63094/60405 63056/63057/63150 56668/61524 shown

66975157

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 1/17/20

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC **SUPER COUPON**

3 GALLON, 100 PSI OIL-FREE AIR COMPRESSORS

Customer Rating ★★★★★

YOUR CHOICE \$39.99 **SAVE \$59.99**

HOT DOG ITEM 69269 97080 shown

PANCAKE ITEM 61615/60637 95275 shown

COMPARE TO PORTER-CABLE \$98.62 **MODEL: PCFP02003**

SAVE 53% **Air delivery: 0.6 CFM @ 90 PSI**

66975764

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 1/17/20

CENTECH **SUPER COUPON**

2/10/50 AMP, 12 VOLT BATTERY CHARGER AND ENGINE STARTER

Customer Rating ★★★★★

NOW \$29.99 **SAVE \$54.99**

COMPARE TO SCHUMACHER ELECTRIC \$59.77 **MODEL: SE-1250**

ITEM 60581/3418 66783/60653 shown

66980831

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HaulMaster **SUPER COUPON**

150 LB. CAPACITY ROOF-MOUNTED STEEL CARGO CARRIER

38-3/4" L x 34-1/4" W

Customer Rating ★★★★★

NEW

NOW \$69.99 **SAVE \$99.99**

SAVE 22% **ITEM 64101**

66981412

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 1/17/20

SUPER COUPON **3 PIECE DECORATIVE SOLAR LED LIGHTS**

Customer Rating ★★★★★

NOW \$6.99 **SAVE \$8.99**

ITEM 60561/69462 shown

COMPARE TO ASTRAEUS \$15.99 **MODEL: EL-07378**

SAVE 56%

66982746

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 1/17/20

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100 WATT SOLAR PANEL KIT

Customer Rating ★★★★★

2X MORE POWER

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COMPARE TO SUNFORCE \$292.44 **MODEL: S0180**

SAVE \$142 **ITEM 64335/63585 shown**

66985754

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Customer Rating ★★★★★

LIFETIME WARRANTY • Reversible

| DRIVE | ITEM |
|-------|------------------------|
| 1/4" | 61277/63881/2696/94738 |
| 3/8" | 61276/63880/807 |
| 1/2" | 62431/63882/239/94850 |

Item 239 shown

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SAVE 88% **YOUR CHOICE \$19.99** **NOW \$9.99**

66987091

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ITEM 56618/56619/56620/56617 shown

66990063

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 1/17/20

luminar **SUPER COUPON**

OUTDOOR 250 LUMENS POP-UP LANTERN

Customer Rating ★★★★★

NOW \$49.99 **SAVE \$6.00**

ITEM 64110

COMPARE TO GO GREEN POWER \$14.99

SAVE 66%

66992190

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 1/17/20

drill master **SUPER COUPON**

80 PIECE ROTARY TOOL KIT

Customer Rating ★★★★★

SAVE 69%

COMPARE TO PROFESSIONAL WOODWORKER \$2276 **MODEL: S1832**

SAVE 66% **NOW \$6.99**

ITEM 63235/63292/97626 shown

66996204

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📍 **HEAVENLY HUES**
Colorful leaves scattered along a bridge over the Baker River welcome hikers to Mount Moosilauke in New Hampshire. Stunning fall foliage engulfs the ascent, then carpets the view from the summit.

Chasing Rainbows

Fall foliage colors vary across the country, ranging from mild yellows and golds to brilliant oranges, reds and purples

— by Lisa Ballard

After moving to Montana from New Hampshire a decade ago, I convinced myself that the West has an equally beautiful fall show. Then I revisited my old Northeastern haunts.

There's nothing more refreshing than standing atop a New England mountain on a crisp, clear autumn day and peering at the blushing landscape. The way up isn't bad either. The forest engulfs a hiker

with colorful leaves beside the trail, overhead and on the ground. I reveled in the rich hues, especially the red maple leaves.

When the days get shorter and the nights get cooler, deciduous trees stop producing green chlorophyll, allowing other colors — usually yellow — to emerge that were masked by the chlorophyll. Maples have something that western aspens do not, anthocyanin,

a pigment that also makes reds and purples in fruits and vegetables.

Though locals in New England claimed that last fall wasn't a particularly vibrant year, it sure wowed me. Even "average" fall foliage is worth the trip there. 🍁

➔ **Autumn in America**
The *Farmers' Almanac* lists peak fall-foliage color dates by state: www.farmersalmanac.com/peak-fall-foliage-dates.

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