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WIRELESS SIGNAL
BOOSTER

PREMIUM WATER-
FILTER SYSTEM

PORTABLE TRAILER-
BRAKE CONTROL

APP-CONTROLLED
AIR SUSPENSION

GARAGES TO GO

16 FIFTH-WHEEL TOY
HAULERS RAMP
UP THE FUN

Page 46

First Road Test

FORD'S F-150 DIESEL MAKES
THE GRADE TOWING LANCE'S
LONGEST TRAVEL TRAILER

DAVE & KRISTY CHOSE LANCE QUALITY. MEANING, THEY ALWAYS TAKE ANTHONY WITH THEM.

Anthony Parker is a welder at Lance Camper. His obsession for precision and strength has helped make Lance Camper number one in travel trailer sales* and the recipient of the *Trailer Life Reader's Choice Gold Award*. Anthony's never met Dave and Kristy, but over the next couple decades of vacations, weekend getaways, and exploring too many hiking trails to count, he'll be with them. Visit your nearest Lance Camper dealer and experience Anthony's passion for yourself.



lancecamper.com



*In the 14'-23' segment.

Lance Campers, Circle 127 on Reader Service Card

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39 DIFFERENT STROKES FOR ALL FOLKS
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66 CONSTANT CONNECTION
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MILLION-DOLLAR VIEW
One of the most-photographed scenes in all of Canada, the Valley of the Ten Peaks and its centerpiece, Moraine Lake, have graced the back of Canadian \$20 bills. Page 12

COVER PHOTO: TREVOR TALLMAN, FORD



Tech Support

From an onboard air system to online connectivity, we help you keep pace with the latest advancements

Isn't our world an amazing place? Last December, Richard Overton, the then-oldest U.S. World War II veteran, died at the age of 112. He was born in 1906. There were almost no motor vehicles or national roads until the founding of the Lincoln Highway Association in 1913, and telegrams were the fastest way to communicate across the country.

Overton was born into a largely horse-driven and steam-powered world. Think of all the new technology that was introduced over the course of his life: artificial intelligence, computer-controlled vehicles, LEDs, lithium batteries and global internet connectivity, and that's just for starters. In 1906, you got fresh air and a tent when you went camping.

A 2018 outdoor-industry report showed that RVers, tent campers and other visitors to national parks consider internet connectivity a necessity.

In this issue, we celebrate some of the latest innovations. Managing Editor Donya Carlson tests the all-new Lance 2465 (page 22), the company's longest travel trailer to date. Lance has been building highly regarded RVs since 1965, and this design extends the tradition. We mated the 2465 with the 2019 Ford F-150 diesel,

and Chris Hemer puts it through the paces (page 32).

We also cover air, water and internet in this issue. We installed a Pacbrake Amp onboard air system in a 2017 Ford F-350 (page 60). This system, which includes rear air springs, a compressor and a 2½-gallon air tank, has no equipment inside the cab of the truck. It's controlled via Bluetooth from a smart device. It even has a quick-connect port for inflating tires or whatever else needs air.

Water is the stuff of life, and we like to have clean water in our RVs. If you're looking to have the ultimate in clean water coming out of the tap, a high-end filter solution may be the answer. The *Trailer Life* and *MotorHome* team had the opportunity to test some of the Clearsource systems, and Bob Livingston provides a full account (page 55).

Regarding the internet, a 2018 outdoor-industry report showed that RVers, tent campers and other visitors to both private campgrounds and national parks consider online access a necessity instead of a luxury, and they expect to have it wherever they go. This concept is bolstered by the number of us who live and work in our RVs. To that end, WiFiRanger's SkyPro repeater system can connect to networks as far as 1½ miles away.

WiFiRanger units are included in many new RVs, but they're pretty easy to install in the aftermarket as well. We set up the SkyPro in a travel trailer to see if it passes muster (page 66).

Speaking of national parks, Emily and Mark Fagan tow their fifth-wheel to four of Canada's finest in Alberta and British Columbia (page 12). Wherever your travels take you, we'll see you down the road! 📺

— **Chris Dougherty, Technical Editor**



DIESEL TOWING Q&A

To complement *Trailer Life's* RV Clinic column, we've launched an online question-and-answer section devoted to diesel tow vehicles. Topics cover all aspects of diesel vehicles from gearing to fuel economy and tires to turbos. If you have a question about maintenance, repairs or upgrades to your diesel truck, SUV or van, submit it online at www.trailerlife.com/tech/qa/diesel.



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RV
MAKEOVER

ONE-OF-A-KIND HIDEOUT

Regarding "Hello, Lola!" in the January issue, about Brooke Daniels' RV Makeover of her family's Keystone Hideout: Love it!

Deanna Pankey, Winter Garden, Florida

Have you modified your RV? We want to hear about it. Email a detailed description and high-resolution photos to info-tl@goodsam.com. If we publish your project in RV Makeover, we'll send you a check for \$50. To read the extended version of January's RV Makeover, go to www.trailerlife.com/rv-makeover/one-of-a-kind-keystone-hideout. — Editors



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.



Ⓢ Micro Minnie to the Max

We have the Winnebago Micro Minnie featured on your January cover and love it! We agree with Stephanie and Jeremy Puglisi that the rear of the 2306BHS is too low for the setup of the sewer pipe as delivered and the off-road kit should be standard. A call to Winnebago revealed that it's possible to lift the rear by moving the placement of the spring-hanger bolts.

I don't believe Winnebago is using Azdel on the Micro Minnies, as mentioned in the article. You may need to double-check that.

The biggest problem we have with the rig is the placement of the Dometic digital thermostat. It's placed on the wall within inches of the top bunk. Our six-year-old has kicked it off the wall a number

f POLL RESULTS: ESCAPE PLAN

WHAT IS YOUR MAIN REASON FOR OWNING AN RV?

67% See the country 33% Spend time with family

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of times. All it takes is a sleepy kid to move and put her feet out, and then the face plate is detached from the thermostat. Fortunately, it's just a matter of putting it back on, but until you do, the climate control is offline. I'm looking to get a thermostat "cage" like you see in some offices. That should solve that shortcoming. Other than that, we love it!

Sean Henriques

Hackettstown, New Jersey

You're right, Sean. Winnebago does not use Azdel panels in its products. — Editors

Undiscovered Silver

I have been an avid reader for the past 10 years. A lot of good information on RVing is available in your magazine. In the January issue, I noticed that the Readers' Choice Awards gave the silver medal for tires to Michelin, which is not a surprise. However, in "Get a Grip," the same issue's tow-vehicle tire guide, there is no mention of Michelin. It would have been appreciated to get a complete, unbiased article on all tire models, including the tire that won the silver medal.

Roch Giguere, Kingston, Ontario

Regrettably, Michelin did not respond to numerous inquiries for information. — Editors

Out Like a Light

I am happy to see so many *Trailer Life* articles either written by or acknowledging women RVers. Women definitely bring a different perspective to camping and the rigs we occupy.

On the maiden voyage in our well-appointed fifth-wheel, we camped at gorgeous Skidaway Island State Park in Savannah, Georgia. As we were discussing all the features we liked about our fifth-wheel, I noted that the only thing I personally didn't appreciate were the many harsh LED lights found throughout the trailer. To prove my point, I flipped on every light, which lit up the interior like a spaceship from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. My niece and I looked at each other in horror, while my husband and brother declared LED lighting the best invention since the printing press.

The next day, my husband converted the pendant lights above the sink to incandescent. Harmony was restored.

Sarah Miller

Avondale Estates, Georgia

POSITIVE ROTATION

Regarding "Watch Your Back," Bruce W. Smith's December 2018 article about tire-pressure monitoring systems for trailers, we purchased one from TireMinder, and it has saved us twice so far with tire-pressure warnings. The customer-service reps are well-versed and take their time explaining any issues. These people make it so easy to install and set up — they actually walked us through the procedure. Now that is what I call customer service.

Joe Del, Danbury, North Carolina





OE PUCK SERIES Super 5th

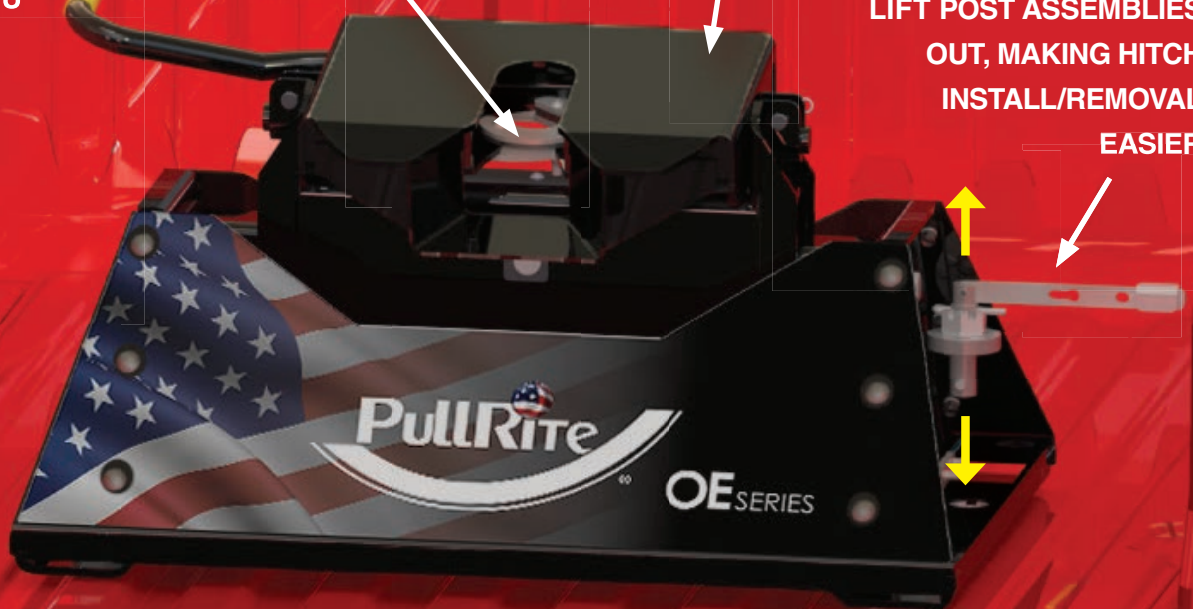
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SOUTHEASTERN QUEBEC

Enchanted Forest

Across North America's longest pedestrian suspension bridge, an otherworldly walk in the woods awaits in Quebec's Parc de la Gorge de Coaticook — by *Terri Peterson Smith*

When night falls, a magical mood overtakes Quebec's Parc de la Gorge de Coaticook, located just north of the Vermont border. Lights twinkle, music wafts through the air, and ethereal creatures appear. This is the amazing Foresta Lumina, a multimedia nighttime show that winds along a 1.6-mile trail through the park. As visitors walk through the mysterious forest, they experience stories inspired by myths and legends of this region.

Brainchild of the Montreal company Moment Factory, Foresta Lumina artfully blends video, lighting, animation, sound and special effects into the natural environment. Moment Factory honed its international reputation with multimedia displays for Cirque de Soleil, Madonna's Super Bowl halftime show, and rock bands such as Muse and Arcade Fire.

Now, the company also translates its technology to park and natural venues, creating what it calls a "digital campfire that draws people to a central place by telling stories with light."

Foresta Lumina includes perforated-metal panels resembling ancient manuscripts, lighting units designed to look like fairies, and video projection on natural elements, integrated seamlessly with the surroundings to create an all-encompassing sense of magic. The experience takes place in 11 different zones including the Fairy Trail, Garden of Wishes and Forest of Illusions. Visitors may walk the trail at their own pace, which typically takes an hour or two.

"We also want to preserve the natural heritage and to protect

nature," says park spokesperson Josée Petit. "When daylight comes, all that technical equipment blends perfectly into its surroundings, and visitors can still appreciate the site's beauty." That's important because, long before Foresta Lumina, the 650-acre park was famous for its breathtaking gorge and the pedestrian bridge suspended over it, the longest in North America. Visitors come for activities — hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding and feeding farm animals, with snowshoeing and ice climbing in winter — that make the park a magical place, day and night.

www.forestalumina.com/en

IF YOU GO

Parc de la Gorge de Coaticook Campground caters to RVers with 112 full- and partial-hookup sites and another 42 dry sites. Free evening shuttle service from the campground to Foresta Lumina runs every 15 minutes from June 16 to October 8 this year. www.gorgedecoaticook.qc.ca/en

↓ Just north of the Vermont border, Quebec's Foresta Lumina takes hikers on a multimedia nighttime experience that blends nature with mind-blowing lighting and an original soundtrack.

INTO THE
OUTBACK



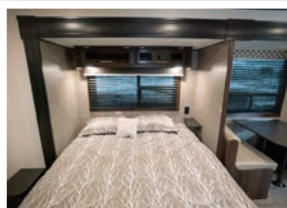
Little Trailer, Big Tent

Targeted toward backcountry adventure seekers, the new 1610 pop-up tent trailer from Crux Expedition Trailers is nimble and light, coming in at just 1,900 pounds (dry). At the campsite, the tent opens to provide 211 square feet of living space.

The outer shell is waterproof, UV-protected and mildew-resistant, as well as double-stitched with rubber backings to prevent leaking. "Velcro and zippers are on every piece so that everything closes up tightly," says Lorrie Francis, cofounder of the Denver, Colorado, company with her husband, Sam.

The 1610 has an independent suspension and can carry up to 18 gallons of freshwater. It comes with Zamp Solar power capability and power inlets on each side of the trailer. Other features include a European queen bed with nontoxic memory foam, a private shower/potty room, refrigerator/cooler compartment, double-burner Dometic stove and a sink. MSRP is \$19,250. — *Ben Quiggle*

www.cruxexpeditiontrailers.com



Offbeat Bunkhouse

• When purchasing our first travel trailer, my family was willing to sacrifice interior space to stay with a shorter, lighter rig. However, as our two young sons transform into towering teenagers, the search is on for a roomier upgrade. So far, the 2019 Jayco Jay

Flight SLX 8 244BHS bunkhouse has topped our list.

The most striking feature of the 28-foot, 8-inch travel trailer is the queen bed and bench dinette that share a slideout and are separated only when the privacy curtain is drawn. Giving up a walled-off bedroom allows the 244BHS to offer a more spacious floorplan in a small footprint. The interior feels larger than it is, thanks to the 6-foot, 9-inch ceiling height, abundant windows and light-colored decor.

The rear bunks will especially appeal to families with teenagers, with wide, thick mattresses and ample headroom. When the lower bunk is latched up, a generous storage space that accommodates bulky gear is easily accessible through an exterior door. With plenty of room for both people and gear, and an affordable base price of \$26,514, this compact bunkhouse is a serious contender in the search for our family's next RV. — *Kerri Cox*

www.jayco.com

6,750

The Jay Flight SLX 8 244BHS has a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 6,750 pounds, making it towable by a wide range of SUVs, vans and pickups. Read Kerri Cox's full review of the family-friendly bunkhouse at www.trailerlife.com/rvgear/rvs/jay-flight-slx-8-244bhs.

LIGHTER FIVERS

Three manufacturers roll out new fifth-wheels for pulling with half-ton pickups



Flagstaff Super Lite

For 2019 Forest River added a rotating Turning Point pin box to Flagstaff's Super Lite fifth-wheels so owners of four-door shortbed trucks don't need a slider hitch. The 32-foot, 5-inch 527BHS, one of nine new Super Lites, has rear bunks and a bedroom up front with a wardrobe slideout. Another slideout houses a sofa and U-shaped dinette. GVWR: 10,080 pounds. MSRP: \$47,692. www.forestriverinc.com



KZ Durango Half-Ton

All seven floorplans in KZ's Durango Half-Ton line have GVW ratings below 12,000 pounds. The 33-foot, 2-inch D256RKT comes with a long list of standard upgrades, starting with Corian countertops in the U-shaped galley. A slideout houses the bench-style dinette and theater seating, with an adjacent sofa sleeper. An opposing slideout is home to the entertainment center. GVWR: 10,500 pounds. MSRP: \$50,743. www.kz-rv.com

Prime Time Crusader

With its 320DEN, Prime Time took a floorplan that's been successful in the luxury fifth-wheel market and brought it to a more attainable price and weight. Measuring 36 feet, 10 inches, the 320DEN offers a bar-height dinette with a restaurant-style bench and residential barstools. Opposing slideouts with a sofa-sleeper and theater seating face the rear-wall entertainment center. GVWR: 11,725 pounds. MSRP: \$62,858. www.primetimerv.com



Movable Feast

For Bart Cops, cooking and RVing go hand in oven mitt

While passing through Nevada, my husband, Chad, and I had the opportunity to camp out with Bart Cops, who goes by the title Camper Chef on YouTube and Facebook. With his 1983 Avion trailer and our 1976 Airstream Argosy, we found the perfect meeting spot at the back of Nevada's Red Rock Canyon Campground, not far from Cops' home in Las Vegas.

A self-proclaimed hobby chef, Cops not only has a passion for cooking, he is equally delighted to share

his gourmet culinary talents with fellow RVers eager to cook meals beyond the typical campground fare. His journey to Camper Chef began after a family vacation when he realized that eating out every day with three young boys was no longer feasible. As a single dad, he had to become creative and learn to cook himself.

Cops and his family are originally from Belgium, where it's customary to directly source food. While traveling, he'll seek out local farmer's markets or drop by the docks for fresh fish.

During our campout, Cops taught us how to make pasta from scratch, and shared cooking tips for the road and, above all, the importance of home cooking. "Camping is a social experience, and going



CAMPER CHEF



At Red Rock Canyon Campground, Bart Cops browns beer-soaked chicken and teaches author Cate Battles to make homemade pasta.

to restaurants takes you away from camp," he explained. "By cooking together, you're savoring your time without the distractions of modern life."

— Cate Battles

MORE ONLINE

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

ARGOSY PASTA

Bart Cops shares his RV-friendly homemade fettuccine recipe ("Camper Chef").

DIESEL DELETES

Bruce W. Smith fields questions about EGR "deletes" in diesel pick-ups ("Diesel Tech Q&A").

SMALL STUFF

A new monthly series showcases conventional, expedition and teardrop trailers with GVW ratings under 4,000 pounds ("Tiny Trailers"). **TL**



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NATIONAL
PARKS OF THE
CANADIAN
ROCKIES

ROCKY MOUNTAIN ROAD TRIP

Tag along on a breathtaking RV tour of Banff, Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho, four Canadian national parks that exceed all expectations for eye-popping scenery

— by *Emily Fagan*

The Canadian Rockies are a breathtaking must-see destination, and the wonderful thing for RVers is that four national parks in Alberta and British Columbia lie adjacent to each other, packed with campgrounds and anchored by two very special towns. My husband, Mark, and I started our journey into Canada at the Roosville Border Crossing, about 8 miles north of Eureka, Montana, on U.S. Route 93.

KOOTENAY NATIONAL PARK

After driving nearly 150 miles north from the border with our fifth-wheel in tow, we were greeted by a group of bighorn sheep lazily crossing the highway at the entrance to Kootenay National Park in southeastern British Columbia. Although we had come to Canada's Rocky Mountains to see snowcapped



GEM OF THE ROCKIES

Kayakers glide across glacier-fed Emerald Lake, a jewel in the crown of Yoho National Park.

alpine scenery, one of the biggest highlights of the trip was our many wildlife sightings. The unhurried bighorns we first glimpsed were just the beginning.

Another surprise as we entered the park was the outdoor pool at Radium Hot Springs. Although it looked like a swimming pool nestled between towering mountain peaks, the water felt like a hot tub. It was early May, and the air temperature, under gloomy skies, was in the 40s Fahrenheit. But after soaking in the naturally heated mineral water for a while, we had to get out and cool off. Steam rose from our bodies, and we couldn't wipe the grins off our faces.

Driving the Kootenay Highway, B.C. 93, which runs through the national park, we spotted a black bear in a field of dandelions eating flowers for

breakfast by the side of the road. There were no pullouts to stop and admire the bear, but we were rewarded with another sighting just a few miles further on, and more after that.

At Numa Falls we found wildly rushing water that crashed over cascades of rocks. A hike to the Paint Pots took us through the woods to a bright orange swampy area. Dipping a finger in the "pots" of orange mud, we painted a heart on the bark of a tree, good until the next rainfall.

At Marble Canyon we hiked up to a pretty viewpoint where we found a couple of bright red Adirondack chairs just begging us to take a load off and enjoy the view. Later, we learned that pairs of chairs like these are scattered throughout Canada's national parks. Visitors look for them and post selfies sitting in them.

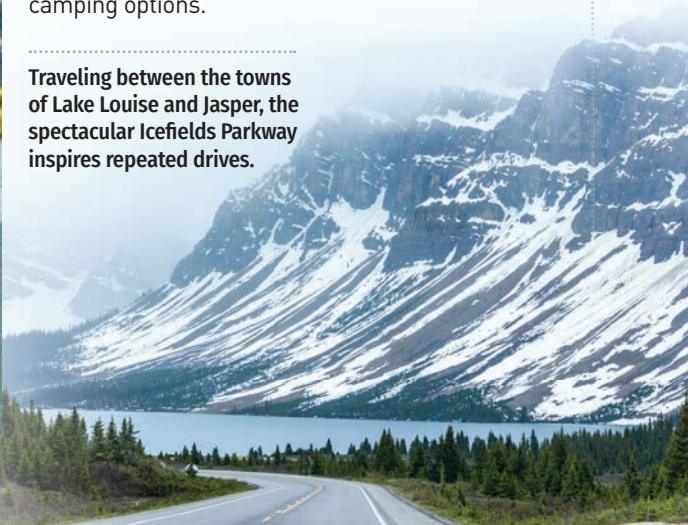


BANFF NATIONAL PARK

Right next door to Kootenay National Park, Banff National Park is across the provincial border in Alberta. The town of Banff lies at the heart of the park, and it is as quaint and charming as the Rockies are towering and stately. Horse-drawn carriages take tourists on sightseeing trips through town, and the graceful stone turrets and leaded-glass windows of the historic Banff Springs Hotel evoke an earlier time. Just 25 miles southeast is the much quieter town of Canmore where we rode our bikes on a delightful paved path. Both communities offer a variety of camping options.

A trail from Lake Louise leads to Lake Agnes, where ice floated on the surface during the author's May visit. A lakeside teahouse that opens in early June has served hikers hot drinks since 1905.

Traveling between the towns of Lake Louise and Jasper, the spectacular Icefields Parkway inspires repeated drives.





Once the snow melts, the Icefields Parkway is easily driven with any size RV. The Fagans had no trouble with their 36-foot fifth-wheel.

Gorgeous Lake Louise lured us to the water's edge at dawn where we joined other photographers capturing the sunrise as the distant peaks slowly lit up. Kayaks lined the shore waiting to be rented, and people from all over the world strolled along the path that embraces the lake.

We hiked a nearby trail on a steep route to the Lake Agnes Tea House. The floating slabs of ice in Lake Agnes were chilly reminders that winter was not long gone and we were too early in

the season to get a cup of hot tea there. During the summer, staff workers stay up at the teahouse all week and hike down on weekends. Everything necessary to serve guests is hiked in.

As we ambled back down the trail, we caught glimpses of the vivid turquoise water of Lake Louise between the trees. Thick silt in many of the glacial lakes in the Canadian Rockies turns the water brilliant shades of blue. Aquamarine-tinted Moraine Lake is next to Lake Louise, and during the earliest

AS WE DESCENDED, THE JAGGED PEAKS GREW EVER LARGER. WE CLIMBED UP ON THE MORaine AND GAZED AT THE FAMOUS VIEW THAT HAS APPEARED ON CANADIAN \$20 BILLS.

CANADIAN ICON

Nestled in the Valley of the Ten Peaks, Moraine Lake is so lovely that its image has been printed on everything from currency to travel brochures. At sunrise, the mountains glow pink.



Worth Noting:

If you plan to visit several Canadian national parks, consider purchasing a Parks Canada Discovery Pass, which covers admission fees at Banff, Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho national parks, and many other Parks Canada locations for one year.



CAMPING IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

Campsites are plentiful throughout Banff, Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho national parks, including a few on the Icefields Parkway, but many have no hookups and aren't suited for larger RVs. At Banff National Park's more than a dozen campgrounds, full-hookup campsites can be found at the Tunnel Mountain Trailer and Lake Louise Trailer campgrounds, and electric-only campsites are available at Tunnel Mountain II. Jasper's largest campground, Whistlers, is currently closed for renovations but will reopen in 2020 with full-hookup sites. Jasper's Wapiti Campground offers electric-only sites. Kootenay has both full- and partial-hookup campsites at Redstreak Campground, and Yoho offers dry camping only. Campsite reservations are strongly recommended, especially in Banff National Park.

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part of spring, between avalanche and tourist seasons, the road to the lake is open only to nonmotorized vehicles. What a glorious time to ride a bicycle over the mountain pass and down to Moraine Lake and the Valley of the Ten Peaks.

As we descended, coasting at tremendous speeds, the jagged peaks behind the lake grew ever larger. We climbed up on the moraine (a massive pile of rocks left behind by the glaciers) and gazed at the famous view that has appeared on the back of the Canadian \$20 bill.

Ready to soak in steamy mineral water again, we basked in the thermal warmth of the outdoor pool at Banff Upper Hot Springs.

YOHO NATIONAL PARK

We crossed the provincial border back to British Columbia for a

tour of Yoho National Park. The brilliant colors of the waterways in the Canadian Rockies had transfixed us, so Yoho's Emerald Lake was an immediate draw merely by virtue of its name. Before arriving at the lake, we stopped at the overlook for Natural Bridge, a series of bright blue waterfalls surrounded by expansive boulders.

Emerald Lake turned out to be a dramatic jade hue under cloudy skies and was dotted with bright red kayaks. As we hiked along the shore, our ears perked up when we heard the distinctive cry of a loon. Scanning the water, we spotted a male loon enjoying an early morning bath-and-splash. He repeatedly dunked his head and shook sprays of water out of his wing feathers just a few yards from where we stood.



ICEFIELDS PARKWAY

From the south, the Canadian Rockies follow a northwesterly course, and the 150-mile Icefields Parkway winds along their heart from just outside Lake Louise in Banff National Park to the town of Jasper. This scenic highway showcases one awe-inspiring view after another the entire way, and the southern half is so spectac-

The road to Moraine Lake is open exclusively to nonmotorized vehicles for a short period each year before the summer season. Needless to say, the views are breathtaking.

+ CROSSING THE BORDER

Ports of entry along the U.S. border with British Columbia and Alberta include the Roosville Border Crossing where we entered Canada from Montana. Crossing early in the day usually means shorter lines. Be prepared for questions about where you are going, where you're coming from and how long you plan to stay. A Border Patrol agent may ask to see inside your RV, and, if so, may check the refrigerator for fruit, vegetables and meat, and ask about the quantity of liquor on board. Before packing your RV, check Canada's list of restricted and prohibited goods.

Americans are allowed to stay in Canada for up to six months without a visa. A passport or passport card is required to re-enter the United States. In our experience, crossing into the Lower 48 usually garners closer inspection than crossing into Canada, and the lines are longer.

From kayaking and camping to hiking, biking, wildlife watching and photography, there's fun at every turn in the Canadian Rockies.



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Seeing bighorn sheep and black bears were among the highlights of the author's trip. Moose, elk, deer, caribou, mountain goats and even grizzlies populate the alpine area.

ular that we drove it several times.

Scenic overlooks and places to stop are few, so it is worthwhile to pull over whenever one appears. Starting from the southern end, we came across the first overlook just a few miles in at Herbert Lake. The snowcapped mountains behind the lake reflected perfectly in the mirror-like water, and the fast-moving clouds played with their shadows on the hillsides.

At Bow Lake we joined dozens of tour buses and rental RVs in the parking area and crept down to the shore where the water's surface was as smooth as glass. Suddenly, we heard the faint roar of a distant avalanche. Grabbing our cameras with their telephoto lenses, we watched the face of an ice wall fall off the mountain. Across the highway from the overlook, we climbed the hillside for a bird's-eye view of the scenery as the morning sun lit the mountain peaks.

But it was Peyto Lake a few miles further on that really took our breath away. The hike to the lake is a short jaunt through the woods, and we picked our way carefully between ice chunks and mud patches in the trail. When the trees finally cleared and the lake came into view, we stopped dead in our tracks and mouthed the word, "Wow!" just like every other hiker before and after us.

In the distance, tucked between towering mountains, brilliant blue Peyto Lake filled a small crevice. It looked like the gods had spilled a can of rich blue paint in a puddle at the base of the peaks. Driving a little further north, we came to Lower Waterfowl Lake where grouse wandered freely along the shoreline and waddled up to us until they were within arm's reach.

The Columbia Icefield is perhaps the most famous and popular tourist attraction on the Icefields Parkway, and we arrived to find ourselves surrounded by dozens of tour buses parked outside a huge and sophisticated visitor center. Throngs of people inside were purchasing tickets for rides on specially

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KOOTENAY CASCADE

Numa Falls is right off B.C. Highway 93. Emily and Mark Fagan were fortunate to visit during the spring runoff when its force was particularly astonishing.

TRAVEL ROCKY MOUNTAIN ROAD TRIP

designed vehicles that drive out onto the glaciers. Videos of the wonders of these glaciers played on TV screens high above, entertaining the crowds and keeping everyone happy as the long lines crept toward the ticket counter. In the end, we decided to skip the lines and save the glacier ride for a future trip.

JASPER NATIONAL PARK

Continuing up the highway, the soaring, craggy peaks on either side gradually diminished in size as we approached the heart of Jasper National Park. The mountains shirked their snowy-white hillsides in favor of the grays and greens of granite and trees. A walking path took us to roaring Athabasca Falls via stairs and scrambles to many pretty viewpoints.

Down by the pebbly banks of the Athabasca River, we found dozens of small rock-pile cairns that resembled people. Each one had a head, legs and outstretched arms. There were big ones and little ones standing around on the rocky shore. We scratched our heads at this odd and obviously man-made treasure. Only later did we learn that these are *inuksuit*, and they have their origin with the native Arctic cultures of North America. People now erect them both in reverence and in fun all over the chillier parts of the continent.

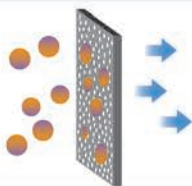
We wound up spending a memorable month in the Canadian Rockies, and at the end of it, all we could think of was that we couldn't wait to come back. **TL**



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Canada's currency is the Canadian dollar, valued at \$.75 of its U.S. counterpart at press time. Most U.S.-issued credit and debit cards use the exchange rate at the time of purchase, although a service fee may be charged for each transaction. Cards that do not charge a fee often use suboptimal exchange rates instead. Let your financial institutions know your planned travel dates in Canada ahead of time so they don't flag purchases as potentially fraudulent.

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Living Large and Light

Lance's new 2465 travel trailer features a king-size bed, split bath and enough windows to bring the outdoors inside

— by *Donya Carlson*

Last year we tested the 1475, Lance's smallest travel trailer, and managed to cram a dozen people in for a breakfast gathering. This time around, our party of only two headed out in the company's longest travel trailer, the 29-foot, 5-inch 2465. Sporting two slideouts on the driver's side, almost 25 feet of interior floor length, a rear bedroom with a king mattress, a split bathroom to keep couples from quibbling over elbow room, and sleeping accom-

modations for three more people, the ultralight 2465 made us wish we were on an extended trip.

We paired the 6,790-pound Lance 2465 (topped off with full propane and water) with the new diesel Ford F-150 Platinum Series 4x4 (see page 32) and headed out on a clear, chilly day in December for a series of adventures. Outings ranged from overnighting at a packed full-service RV park and an almost-empty campground with partial-hookups among pines, oak and cottonwood trees, to dry camping next to farm animals at a winery.

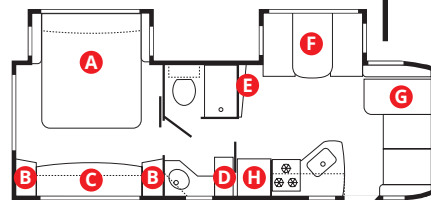
Boondocking alongside farm animals seemed like a charming idea at the time, but when the roosters, which apparently had a lot to talk about, woke us at 4:32 a.m., we wondered why we'd chosen to park next to the critters when the friendly folks at Agua Dulce Winery had invited us to stay the night almost anywhere on the 400-acre vineyard. We discovered the Southern California winery through Harvest Hosts, a network of 600-plus unique places to dry camp. The Lance, with frameless dual-pane windows and its four-season package that includes covers for skylights and vents, kept the heat in when the temperature dipped to 43 degrees overnight, but the fiberglass walls with Azdel substrates and block-foam insulation didn't cut the sound of the nearby roosters' wake-up calls.

✦ The easy-to-tow 29-foot, 5-inch Lance 2465 offers plenty of living space in a bright and well-thought-out floorplan. We paired it with a diesel Ford F-150 Platinum Series 4x4 and set out on various adventures in style.



kitchen into the bathroom and rear bedroom. Four hooks incorporated into the lower cabinetry inside the entry are appreciated by those who set keys down and can't remember where. Switches on panels for the lighting, galley slide and two Carefree awnings are placed high for easy viewing inside the entry door, while panels for battery, solar and holding-tank monitoring, and switches for the water heater and pump are on the wall next to the range. A large analog clock is viewable from anywhere in the living area.

As a side note, the test trailer had manual steel steps, but Torklift's UltraGlowStep is available as a factory-installed option, as is a keyless entry. The entry door opens flush against the trailer, and padding over the radius-door frame is extra



- A) king bed
- B) wardrobes
- C) drawers, counter, TV on lift
- D) linen cabinet
- E) entertainment/fireplace
- F) dinette
- G) J-lounge
- H) refrigerator

insurance for tall folks. We noted that the seams where the interior walls meet the ceiling are caulked for a nice finish.

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

A big plus of this floorplan is the ability to pack up the trailer with the slideouts closed, which can be instrumental for those who have restricted space in storage or in front of their homes. And bravo to

Sunlight spills into the living area and bedroom from every side of the trailer through multiple windows, creating a friendly environment.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Sunlight spills into the living area and bedroom from every side of the trailer through multiple windows (presuming the shades are open), creating a friendly environment that brings the outdoors in. And there's no shortage of lighting with overhead LED fixtures, pendant lamps on a dimmer over the dinette and lovely accent lighting. The focal point is the front curved window spanning more than 5 feet over the J-lounge. Partially visible from the galley and at the opposite end of the trailer is the bedroom's 49-by-43-inch window. The galley's skylight — with accordion-style sliding cover — and three-speed electric fan contribute to interior light. The extensive use of windows is a perk for parents who want to keep an eye on the mischievous goings-on of kids and pets — or a spouse — who are outside while they are inside.

The most frequent comment from folks stepping into the 2465 was that livability and furniture placement were well thought out, starting with a three-seater J-lounge to the right of the entry and the way the floorplan flowed from the



With the flip of a lever on the underside, the dinette table can be pushed down to make into a cozy fireside bed with overhead lighting on a dimmer switch. Under-bench pull-out drawers lock for travel. The J-lounge (partially shown at right) offers front-row seating to the 40-inch TV.



⬇️ The roomy bedroom, with five windows, has plentiful storage and a king-size bed. An expansive countertop houses the TV that is on a motorized lift. Push the wall-mount button once to raise the 40-inch telly; when it's lowered, there's a full view out the window.



WELCOME FEEL

We enjoyed facing the entry door while preparing meals so we could see and greet friends. The kitchen's overhead cabinet is a European-sourced Lite-Ply laminate. Below, the panel doors and drawer fronts are solid wood, like they are throughout the Lance. Interior lighting is superb.

the company for designing the 2465 to be completely livable with the slides retracted. With the bedroom slide in, only about 11 inches of the California king bed's length is forfeited where the 72-by-84-inch mattress tucks in under the cabinetry.

The kitchen is fully functional with the galley slide closed, and there's space to access drawer contents and the stainless-steel-clad 7-cubic-foot refrigerator, and cook and set up a feast at the dinette. Even with the condensed galley, there's more than 2 feet of floor space between the sink side and dinette, leaving room to convert the dinette into a bed pronto, and bathroom access is not compromised.

Extend the dinette slide, which opens up the kitchen to a width of more than 5 feet, and a 40-inch Jensen TV, Bluetooth HDMI DVD player (two speakers are in the ceiling) and 31-inch TruVision electric fireplace with two heat settings come into view. Above the fireplace, a tip-out cabinet houses a hookup for satellite TV, and there's a King broadcast antenna on the roof.

Our favorite place to laze was on the J-lounge with its thick, ultrasoft faux-suede cushions, part of the Mystic Shores decor. The lounge makes into a 49-by-72-inch bed, leaving 16 inches of walk space so the entry door is not blocked. To

convert into a bed, the armrest needs to be removed, which took some practice to put back into place. There's storage underneath the lounge, but there is a height limitation for what goes inside there since the lounge converts scissor-style into sleeping accommodations, and access takes a little work, so it's best to store things here that you don't need frequently.

The J-lounge is in perfect alignment with the TV, though it was pointed out that the person moving between the range and dinette when preparing dinner and setting the table can obstruct the view of the television for the lazy one sprawled on the lounge.

Lying lengthwise on the lounge's 8-inch-thick cushions when it was dark outside, I delighted in watching the night sky through what Lance dubs the "Star View window." The 2465 is clearly designed for RVers who want to see outside while enjoying a cozy nest. And when privacy and dark are needed, two-layer, slow-rise MCD roller shades pull down smoothly. The entry-door window even has a pull-down shade. GFCI outlets, USB ports and 12-volt DC receptacles are at each end of the J-lounge — in fact, these are scattered throughout the trailer, so there was a place to plug something in everywhere we turned. Five-inch shelves, semi-hidden behind the cushions, work great for setting drinks and keeping remotes



+ WHAT WE LIKED

Windows galore including large ones front and rear, well-thought-out livability, king-size bed in spacious bedroom, abundant storage in bathroom and bedroom.

- WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE

Wiring neatly tucked under the front of the trailer by the A-frame, stronger tieback straps to keep the wood pocket doors closed during travel.



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handy. LED fixtures swivel to spotlight reading material without bothering your neighboring couch potato.

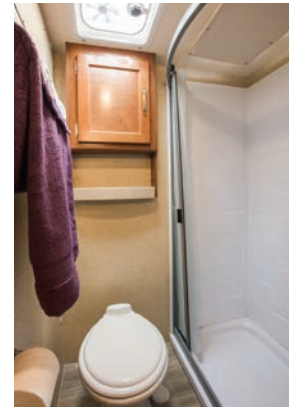
We like that when working in the kitchen we were facing the entry door. The large single-basin sink with pull-down sprayer takes up much of the counter space, leaving limited prep room, but with the sink and range covers in place, the area is transformed into a large flush-surface area where you can spread out. Incorporated in the counter behind the sink is a hidden waste bin.

The High Pointe flatbed microwave eliminates the need for a glass turntable, and the three-burner Dometic range/oven has a cover that doubles as a back-splash. Three soft-touch self-closing drawers with solid-wood fronts and a cabinet with solid-wood doors are below the sink. The only overhead cabinet in the kitchen is the five-ply Lite-Ply-laminate Euro-style one above the sink. Lights come on automatically when the two-shelf cabinet door is opened, and two LED accent lights reside in the wood

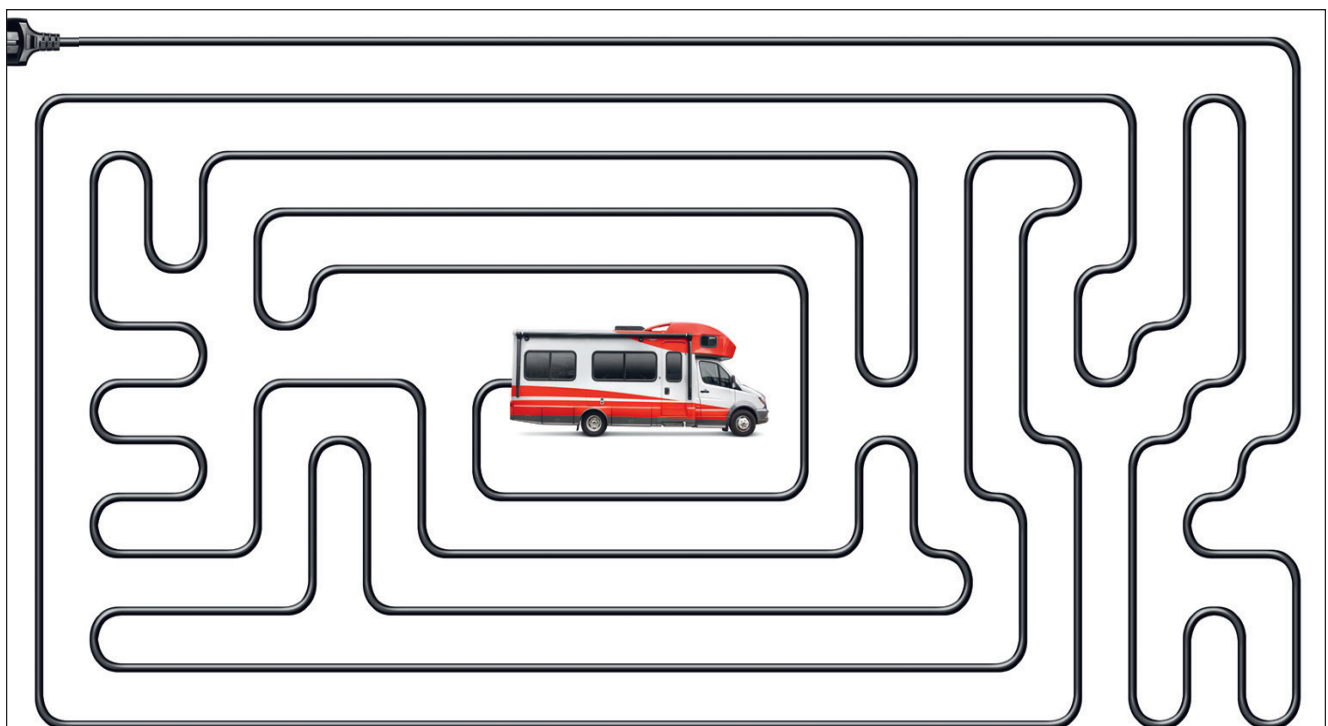
paneling that extends to the ceiling. Boxes of tea on the spice rack over the window stayed put during travel.

The dinette's bench seating has smooth-gliding drawers with sturdy handles that lock for travel. The lock-button portion of the drawers are counterintuitive, but once we got used to them, the 7-inch-deep drawers were great for storing large items with easy access. We were impressed with the feel of the dinette's 4-inch-thick cushions, which are made of a combination of three different materials, including the faux suede for your rump. Opposing windows crank open outward at the base, providing for good airflow, and are garnished with stitched-leatherette padded valances. Converting the dinette into a bed takes just minutes and, when it was set up, we had a 60-by-44-inch mattress with a cushioned headrest from the window valance that placed us front row to the fireplace, TV and a window.

Our winter outing included nights that dropped into the low 40s. The combi-



The split bath is a welcome setup when sharing living quarters; one person can claim their turf curbside with the sink and oversize mirrored medicine cabinet, while the other gets the streetside portion of the bathroom for more private affairs.



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nation of the electric fireplace and 25,000-Btu furnace with three heat registers in the galley warmed up the area within minutes. The bedroom, with just one heat register, was slower to warm up and stayed consistently cooler. Standard are two 13,500-Btu Coleman-Mach air conditioners.

REST AND RELAXATION

The roomy bedroom seems even larger with the big back window (the lower portion opens). Pure relaxation was lying on the 5½-inch-thick mattress on a rainy morning with a view of trees, trees and more trees. Windows grace all three of the bedroom's side walls. The king bed, with almost 2 feet of walking space at the foot and enough room at the sides to make the bed, faces a window that is partially blocked when the hidden 40-inch LED TV on a motorized lift is in the raised position.

Four-across, self-closing drawers are incorporated into the expansive 2-foot-deep-by-7-foot-long curved counter that swallows up the TV. Three drawers next to the bedroom's entrance, three large wardrobes with clothing rods, and overhead cabinets big enough to store comforters add up to a lot of storage capacity. There's no storage under the bed since that area is designated for exterior access.

The padded headboard is about 17 inches high and stops short of the window, so you'll likely want a pillow to buffer your head if you like to sit up fully in bed. An overhead shelf spans the width of the bed, and there are narrow "nightstands" and

pocket-type storage, plus charging ports and LED reading fixtures on each side of the bed.

SPLIT BATH

After spending time in the 2465, I'm a big fan of the split-bath setup, which is especially convenient when sharing with someone who is on the same getting-ready schedule. A fellow RVer remarked enthusiastically that it was the perfect setup because she could be showering while her husband was shaving. Wood pocket doors section off the bathroom from the living area and the bedroom. Tieback straps are in place to keep the doors from closing during travel, but much of the time they didn't work very well. We passed that information along to Lance's design team.

We used the large linen cabinet to stow most of our food since it offered plenty of room and is conveniently located around the corner from the fridge. Additionally, the curbside half of the bathroom has three self-closing drawers, a tilt-out laundry cabinet and a vanity with storage. A spacious countertop surrounds the sink, and a stylish and effective light is hung over a mirrored medicine cabinet that is exceptionally deep. A wall-mounted towel ring is next to the sink, and towel hooks are attached to the wall between the bathroom and galley. There's plenty of room to move around freely, and keeping with the theme, there's also a window in the bathroom.

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Across from the vanity is a bathroom door, behind where the toilet and shower dwell, that has a large mirror and opens outward. Your RV mate will have to remember not to bust out of the bathroom just as you are scrutinizing yourself in the mirror. Heat registers live at floor level by the vanity and below the shower pan, so we had heat at our feet. A porcelain toilet is set 20 inches off the linoleum floor, and the TP-holder is handily located.

The shower's heavy plastic curtain is set on a track that angles outward at the top, adding more room to the already spacious 19-inch-deep-by-33-inch-long shower pan. Shelves for setting shampoo bottles are truly functional, and with the skylight, there's 6 feet, 3 inches of headroom. The chrome handheld showerhead with hose has multiple sprayer settings and a shutoff valve. The bathroom's electric vent for pulling steam out has one setting, and there's a long wall-mounted towel bar.

OUTSIDE MATTERS

The 2465 has two lateral-arm awnings with one over the entry door; between the two, they cover the length of the trailer. Speakers, a bracket attached to the side wall and hookups under lock-and-key allow for the TV to be moved outside. The Lance is set up with 50-amp

Owners' Take

Our original RV aspiration was a Class A diesel motorhome, but complexity, cost, size and the need to tow an additional vehicle led us to rethink our plan, so we decided to look at travel trailers as an option. A visit to the Hershey, Pennsylvania, RV show last September afforded us the opportunity to see hundreds of models and options in the same place. And with the sage input of our family member and *Trailer Life* Technical Editor Chris Dougherty, we were able to better understand what is involved with owning and operating a travel trailer, since our plan was to go full time.

We saw many attractive RVs at the show, but when we visited the Lance pavilion and explored the new 2465, we were immediately drawn to it. The construction quality of the trailer was clearly at the high end of what we had seen, and the king-size bed was a feature we could gladly live with. This travel trailer had the feel of a comfortable studio apartment. We were sold, and right then and there decided to purchase the show-display unit



rather than wait several months in the production queue.

We have been full-timing for about five months now and have traveled from Massachusetts to California. Criticisms? Not many. We wish the trailer had more external-access storage, but we have a cap on our tow truck so that handles our needs. Lance made some design changes to improve this situation after we purchased our early production unit. Our only other critique is that the furnace delivers insufficient heat to the bedroom area, which we remedy with a space heater.

Overall, the 2465 is living up to our expectations, and we look forward to many more miles with it. —Jan and Tom Dougherty

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service, an outside water sprayer, a Lippert SmartJack power A-frame jack with battery-level indicator and hitch-height memory, Dexter Nev-R-Adjust forward self-adjusting brakes, 14-inch Goodyear tires, electric stabilizer jacks, park satellite, a solar-on-the-side plug for portable solar-panel charging and propane hookups. At the lowest point, ground clearance is 10 inches.

Magnetic latches hold up the

exterior doors that access several storage areas including a 22½-by-12½-by-12½-inch carpeted compartment and a 12-by-19-by-5-inch metal storage bin that was lifted from Lance's toy-hauler product. The main exterior storage compartment is 5 feet long, 3 feet deep and 11 inches tall, and had more than enough room for our camp chairs, tables, hoses and electrical cords. Valves for black and gray tanks

are in separate locations, so you'll want a wye connector when hooked up, and there's a black-tank flush.

The Lance's heavy-duty ladder is one of the sturdiest we've seen and has wide supports for good grip. Checking out the rooftop, we noted that Lance uses EternaBond on the roof termination seams, skylights and vents — extra insurance to prevent leaks. Lance offers an optional Load Roof Rack system with a 300-pound capacity for RVers who want to bring along a kayak or other toys. The test trailer had the optional third 5-gallon LP-gas cylinder for those who like to camp away from the crowd.

With the new-for-2019 29-foot, 5-inch 2465 model, Lance has created an easy-living trailer that brings the sunshine inside with multiple windows and provided us with contentment and comfort in our happy place, the outdoors. **TL**

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SPECIFICATIONS

2019 LANCE 2465

Exterior Length	29' 5"
Exterior Width	8' 3/8"
Exterior Height	10' 4" (with A/C)
Interior Width	7' 10"
Interior Height	6' 6"
Construction	Aluminum-framed substructure, laminated fiberglass exterior walls with Azdel substrates and block-foam insulation, one-piece crowned PVC roof and high-gloss TPO front lower section
Freshwater Cap.	45 gal.
Black-Water Cap.	45 gal.
Gray-Water Cap.	45 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	15 gal.
Water-Heater Cap.	6 gal.
Refrigerator	7 cu. ft.
Furnace	25,000 Btu
Air Conditioner (2)	13,500 Btu
Converter	55 amp
Battery	Dealer installed
Tires	ST205/75R14
Suspension	Rubber torsion-bar
Weight (freshwater, water heater, LP-gas full; no cargo)	6,790 lbs.
Hitch Weight	840 lbs.
Axle Weight (2)	5,950 lbs.
GVWR	7,300 lbs.
GAWR (2)	3,500 lbs.
Cargo Carrying Cap.	510 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$47,407
MSRP, As Tested	\$58,044
Basic Warranty	2 years

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www.lancecamper.com/travel-trailers/2465

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Diesel Down

Ford gambles on a half-ton diesel pickup and scores big for RVers

— by Chris Hemer

It was probably about 10 years ago at a media event when we asked one of the big-three marketing types about the viability of a half-ton diesel truck. “It just makes sense,” we protested. “We can’t understand why no one has done it yet.” Our man smiled wryly. “It may be coming sooner than you think.”

We left with high hopes for a full-size truck with V-8 power and V-6 mileage — but year after year, it didn’t materialize. As it turns out, consumers really weren’t as interested as we thought in an alternative powerplant, and bringing a diesel engine to a new market can open a can of worms, something Fiat Chrysler America (FCA) found out shortly after introducing the EcoDiesel-powered Ram 1500 in 2014. Seems that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) raised questions about “alleged excess diesel emissions and undeclared emissions software,” according to a July 6, 2017, story in *Automotive News*. FCA resumed production of the beleaguered engine that same year, awaiting



certification that would allow it to sell EcoDiesel-equipped trucks again. As of this writing, a diesel option currently isn't available on Ram 1500 trucks.

It's safe to assume that the EPA, as well as other environmental agencies, were on heightened alert after Volkswagen's "Dieselgate" drama made global headlines. We are not going to even suggest that there was any wrongdoing on the part of FCA, but one thing is certain: The whole debacle made its competitors stand back and watch before introducing similar trucks of their own.

Ford made its move in the middle of 2018, introducing its segment-leading F-150 with a 3.0-liter Power Stroke diesel V-6 engine and new 10-speed automatic transmission. We were eager to get hold of one to drive, of course, but also learn more about this powertrain and how it can benefit RVers.

UNDER THE HOOD

There's always a little trepidation on the part of consumers when a "new" engine is introduced, but strictly speaking, the 3.0-liter Power Stroke isn't new. It is a derivative of an engine originally manufactured by Ford Motor Company for Jaguar/Land Rover SUVs and has been in use in that market for some 14 years now. Bringing it to the U.S. market in the F-150 was more of a natural progression than a dangerous leap. "Meeting emissions standards is always challenging, but we have a certification-

planning team that sets up the project ahead of time to keep it on track, so we didn't have to face some of the hurdles our competition did," said David Ives, Ford's diesel technical leader.

Given the engine's origin in a luxury SUV application, it had to be strong, quiet and efficient. Built in Dagenham, England, the 3.0-liter Power Stroke employs a compacted graphite iron block with cross-bolted four-bolt mains, steel crank and rods, cast-aluminum pistons and aluminum heads with a double overhead cam layout and four

CREATURE COMFORTS

Platinum-level trim on the F-150 includes conveniences such as heated and ventilated seats (heated rear), heated steering wheel with power tilt/telescoping feature, Bang and Olufsen premium audio, voice-activated navigation and an 8-inch productivity screen.



🔗 Useful features for towing on the Platinum grade include Blind Spot Information System (BLIS) with Cross Traffic Alert, an integrated trailer-brake controller and Trailer Sway Control. An available Max Trailer Tow Package adds a 3.55:1 electronic locking rear axle and a 36-gallon fuel tank.



valves per cylinder. A V-6 engine was chosen over an inline design, not just because it is easier to package, but because it's quieter. "The advantage of a V-6 is that it's closer to a cube or sphere, as opposed to an inline engine," said Ives, "so for a given 3-liter volume, it doesn't have as many noise-emitting surfaces."

The engine employs a 29,000-psi common-rail fuel-injection system and a single, variable-geometry ball-bearing turbo for efficiency and quiet operation. To further reduce Noise Vibration and Harshness (NVH), Ford's research team in Aachen, Germany (the company's European headquarters), focused on areas like the combustion chamber and piston-bowl designs, and spent a lot of time on the cam drive system to keep clicks and rattles at bay. A diecast, structural aluminum oil pan and specific turbocharger tuning/plumbing also contribute to the engine's overall refinement.

The engine generates 250 horsepower at 3,250 RPM, and 440 LB-FT of torque at just 1,750 RPM. Combine that with the new 10-speed automatic transmission, and the drivetrain is ideally suited to effortless towing. "When you have more gears, especially when trailering, it helps keep the engine RPM right in a sweet spot where the customer can use it," Ives explained. "The 10-speed is excellent for



F-150 DIESEL ENGINE

The 3.0-liter Power Stroke diesel V-6 uses one glow plug per cylinder between the intake valves for immediate starts in normal weather, and minimal waiting in temperatures as low as 20 degrees. Interestingly, the engine also employs a mechanical fan with an electronically operated viscous clutch (similar to the one used for Super Duty truck engines), instead of an electric fan, which would seem to go against the quietness objective. "It's one of the things that lead to excellent towing performance in hot weather, as opposed to our competition with electric fans. The mechanical fan delivers superior hot-weather towing performance," said David Ives, Ford's diesel technical leader.

keeping the engine in the optimum RPM range and delivering the best throttle response possible."

BEHIND THE WHEEL

Hitching up the 29-foot, 5-inch Lance 2465 travel trailer and pushing the accelerator for the first time, it felt like there might not be a trailer there at all. Low-speed tractability was superlative, and the engine pulls hard all the way to its shift point. We



The 3.0-liter Power Stroke is so quiet that we had to remind ourselves that we were actually testing a diesel. In fact, one of Ford's unofficial benchmarks is what is called "the McDonald's Test," or how much the engine can be heard when a wall is right alongside the truck.

recorded 9.3-second zero-to-60-MPH times driving solo, and 18.31 seconds with the 6,790-pound trailer in tow.

You might recall that in the September 2018 issue we presented an article headlined "Diesel Versus Gas" that underscored the costs and efficiencies of both engine types. Not surprisingly, we found that it makes financial sense to opt for a diesel only if you believe its greater initial cost will eventually be offset by better fuel economy. In the F-150 Power Stroke, this will theoretically happen more quickly than a comparable F-250/350 Super Duty diesel-versus-gas comparison, but there's a caveat: Unlike Super Duty trucks, where the 6.7-liter Power Stroke can be had at even the base XL trim level, the 3.0-liter Power Stroke is available only when you opt for a Lariat trim level or higher, which can make for an expensive proposition.

The test truck, a 2019 F-150 4x4 SuperCrew in Platinum trim, rang in at \$69,570, but even an F-150 Lariat with no options other than the 3.0-liter Power Stroke will cost just shy of \$50,000. So, if you were thinking of purchasing an F-150 XLT, for example, you'd have to spend roughly \$7,000 more for a Lariat to get to the \$4,000 3.0-liter Power Stroke option. It's worth mentioning that you can get a nicely equipped Super Duty F-250 Lariat, with a 6.7-liter Power Stroke, higher tow rating and more capability for \$58,685.

Clearly, though, the Platinum trim



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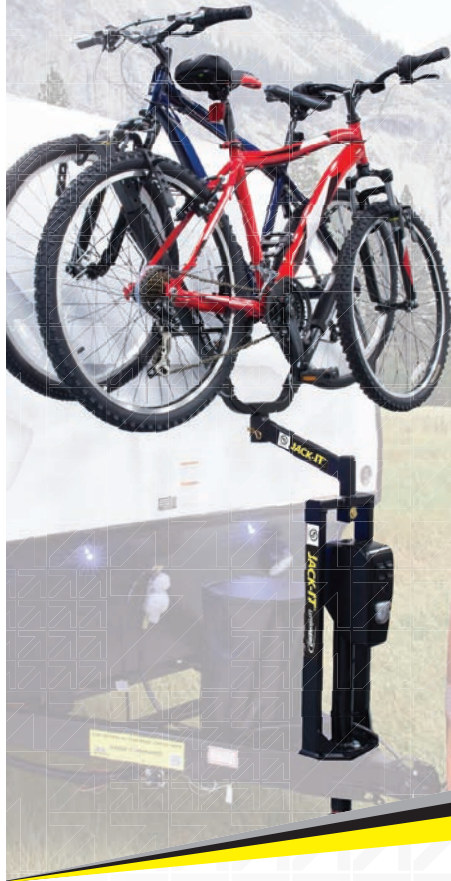
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For more information on Jack-IT and Bump-IT products, please visit lippertcomponents.com



F-150 Power Stroke is designed for a buyer who is used to premium automobiles or SUVs and wants his or her truck to behave like one. In that regard, this truck delivers. Even when you know it's a diesel, you can't detect any characteristic clatter, and on the highway, it's as quiet as a tomb. The heated leather seats, part of the Platinum package, were soft and supportive, and the ride was good, whether towing or not. Some other nice features of the Platinum package include adjustable pedals with memory, a power tilt/telescoping steering wheel, Voice-Activated Navigation, Blind Spot Information System (BLIS), remote start and much more.

Functionally speaking, the test truck also came loaded with features that make towing a trailer an effortless proposition, even for the inexperienced. The rearview camera with Dynamic Hitch Assist lets anyone back straight to the hitch the first time, and once you're hooked up, the Pro Trailer Backup Assist system lets you intuitively

⚡ An abundance of low-speed torque, combined with a 10-speed automatic transmission specifically calibrated for the diesel application, results in an effortless towing experience. The engine pulls strong from idle all the way to its 3,500-RPM redline.



tively maneuver your trailer. To operate, turn the system on by pushing a button in the center of the dash-mounted knob, then simply take your hands off the steering wheel and turn the knob the direction you want the trailer to go. The vehicle's rearview camera reads the position of a target sticker that the owner places on the A-frame, giving the system a reference point. As you turn the knob, the steering wheel turns on its own in relation to your inputs, and you're backing like, well, a pro.

The optional 701A Equipment Group (\$2,540) brings with it a 360-degree "bird's-eye view" camera, Active Park Assist, adaptive cruise control and a tailgate step, while the Tow Package (\$995) adds a four-/seven-pin wiring harness, auxiliary transmission cooler, Class IV hitch receiver, the aforementioned Pro Trailer Backup Assist system, upgraded front stabilizer bar and other features. Power folding/telescoping towing mirrors are a \$250 option.

For a pickup that can tow up to 10,300 pounds (as equipped), the F-150 Platinum is a remarkably well-furnished

and well-mannered truck that is as at home on the morning commute as it is on weekend RVing trips with the family. If you've been searching for one vehicle that can do it all, and the budget allows, the F-150 Power Stroke Platinum SuperCrew 4x4 is your truck. **TR**

SPECIFICATIONS

2019 F-150 PLATINUM SUPERCREW 4X4

Fuel Economy, Solo	25.64 MPG
Fuel Economy, Towing	14.77 MPG
Engine	3.0-liter Power Stroke diesel V-6
Horsepower	250 @ 3,250 RPM
Torque	440 lb-ft @ 1,750 RPM
Transmission (speeds, type)	Electronically controlled 10-speed
Axle Ratio	3.31:1
Fuel Cap.	26 gal.
Tires	275/55R20
Suspension, Front	Independent double-wishbone with coil-over shocks
Suspension, Rear	Leaf spring/solid axle with heavy-duty gas-pressurized shocks
Brakes	Antilock vented disc
Tow Rating	10,300 lbs.
GVWR	7,100 lbs.
GCWR	16,100 lbs.
Length	20' 3"
Wheelbase	157"
MSRP, Base	\$58,210
MSRP, As Tested	\$69,570
Warranty, Basic	3 years/36,000 miles
Warranty, Powertrain	5 years/60,000 miles

Ford Motor Company

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Hitching up the 29-foot, 5-inch Lance 2465 travel trailer and pushing the accelerator for the first time, it felt like there might not be a trailer there at all.



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DIFFERENT STROKES FOR ALL FOLKS

Whether you row, row, row your boat or balance atop an SUP, playing in the water keeps you in shape while reveling in the fresh air and communing with nature

— by Jack Ballard

In Mark Twain's colossal classic of American literature, Huck Finn uses a canoe to escape on the Mississippi River from his drunken, abusive father. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* proceeds with the young Huck engaged in an outlandish sequence of experiences, eventually adding a raft and a partner (Jim, a runaway slave) to his canoe. Throughout the tale, the canoe and the raft represent the means of escape from the tangles of human civilization to a life of freedom and ease on the river.

Should the adolescent adventurer of Twain's novel make a similar run to the river in current times, his options in hand-powered watercraft would span far more options than a traditional canoe. Scores of modern paddlers take to the water each spring and summer, often motivated by the same feelings of health, independence and communion with nature that continually lured Huck Finn back to the Mississippi. Some paddle canoes, but others hop in kayaks or glide across the water standing atop an SUP (stand-up paddleboard).

Muscle-propelled crafts have increased in popularity over the past decade for their

fitness benefits, portability and outright fun. For RVers they represent an escape to the water without the logistic headaches often accompanying motorized watercraft. With a canoe, kayak or SUP, there's no gas to buy, boat ramp to worry about or towing hassles. Simply select the craft that best fits your RV setup and hit the water.

Here's a quick rundown of the options.

FUN IN THE SUN

For ease of transport, fitness and absolute fun, there's nothing on the water better than a hand-powered craft. And it's a great way to spend time with family.



CANOES

Despite the popularity of modern competitors in the form of kayaks and SUPs, a traditional canoe remains an ideal hand-powered craft for a number of reasons. Most models accommodate two paddlers, with enough room on board for gear, a couple of children and even a well-behaved dog.

My kids' earliest introduction to paddling came when my two boys were yet to enter kindergarten. I secured two small stadium seats to a length of plywood nestled in front of the center crossbar on our broad-beamed Old Town canoe. There they rode in style on many floats down lazy rivers and angling excursions on quiet lakes where they caught their first fish.

At the present time, one of my favorite paddling activities includes multiday camping and floating trips on rivers in New York's Adirondack Park. For those, my wife and I invariably take to our sleek, 17-foot canoe that paddles quite easily on lakes yet maneuvers nimbly enough to navigate area rivers. It carries all the gear necessary for a comfortable camp and the family dog. What's not to like about a traditional canoe?

Prior to purchasing my own boat, I figured canoes were canoes. Once I started doing research before buying my own craft, I learned that there's an almost overwhelming number of options related to length, width, material, construction and shape — all of which greatly affect the usefulness of a particular design.

WITH A CANOE, KAYAK OR SUP, THERE'S NO GAS TO BUY, BOAT RAMP TO WORRY ABOUT OR TOWING HASSLES. SIMPLY SELECT THE CRAFT THAT BEST FITS YOUR RV SETUP AND HIT THE WATER.



At the danger of oversimplification, let's start by noting that long, narrow canoes are generally easier to paddle on lakes and ponds. However, they're more prone to tipping and are harder to maneuver on streams. In addition, the paddling characteristics of a canoe are affected by its "rocker," which means the shape of its bottom. Canoes with rockers have a slightly wedge-shaped bottom (deeper in the center than the front and rear), which make them easier to turn but harder to paddle.

Other buying considerations include weight, material and load capacity. Generally speaking, more expensive canoes boast less weight and greater durability. A low-priced family canoe may weigh 90 pounds and cost \$700. A \$1,200 model may be constructed of lighter, long-lasting material and balance the scale at just 70 pounds. Is 20 pounds worth \$500? If you plan to use the canoe on trips that require portaging (carrying the craft from

SAFETY FIRST: **PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES**

Every user of a canoe, kayak or SUP should be equipped with an appropriate PFD. Because paddling requires unrestricted arm movement that's not required with recreational motorized boating, be sure to try on your PFD before you buy. It should fit snugly but allow the arms to move freely. If it rides up under the armpits, beware. A poorly fitting PFD can quickly become as annoying and uncomfortable as shoes that are a size too small.



Canoes can handle a fishing party and a dog (top), ferry a family and gear on a multiday river trip (above) or be paddled solo (left).

one waterbody to another or around river hazards such as waterfalls), it certainly is. Otherwise, that's a question best answered after you've hoisted your boat on and off the top of your vehicle a couple dozen times.

For my first purchase, I chose a mid-priced canoe that was very wide and relatively short. The width made it safe and stable for my preschool kids and easy to turn. However, it was certainly tougher to paddle on flat water (lakes). But we tended to spend most of our time on calm rivers, so the craft suited us just fine.

Juggling considerations of intended use and load capacity (which is primarily a function of width and length) are all part of the equation when making an intelligent canoe choice. Learning to handle the craft is the next step. Instructional books and trial-and-error have guided some adroit canoeists, but a few hours of coaching via a class or experienced mentor are the quickest ticket to gaining the essential skills.

Of the three types of crafts, a canoe is perhaps the most difficult to transport. If you have a toy-hauler camping trailer, a shorter canoe may stow inside. Otherwise the easiest means of transport is to put it on the rooftop of the towing vehicle or trailer, ideally on a roof rack.



The popularity of kayak fishing has given rise to many new designs and models.

KAYAKS

Kayaks have been around for at least 4,000 years, their origin tracing to the aboriginal peoples of the far north. Quiet, efficient to paddle and capable of handling rough seas, kayaks were used by Inuit and Aleutian peoples primarily as hunting vessels, but also for general travel. Early kayaks were comprised of animal skins stretched over a wooden frame. Nowadays, plastics, fiberglass and other high-tech materials have replaced hide and wood in kayak construction.

Designs have also proliferated. From sit-on-top to traditional sit-inside

⊕ Manufacturers such as Forest River offer racks for carrying canoes and kayaks like the one on this No Boundaries 16.5 with the Overlander Package. Aftermarket companies also offer toy racks that fit on RVs.



➔ RV RACK PACKS

Toy-hauling trailers with garages make it easy to take kayaks, canoes and SUPs along, but lately, manufacturers have been coming out with optional rack packages for mounting them on the roof or side of the RV, whether the RV be big or small. On some adventure-oriented models, racks come as standard equipment. Forest River's Flagstaff Sports Enthusiast Package (shown above) is one example. Permanently mounted crossbars on SE folding trailers secure a wide range of recreational gear.



models, kayaks come in a dizzying array of size, shape and color. The choices are also expanded by the many inflatable kayaks that are perfectly serviceable yet store in a corner closet or storage compartment in an RV.



The same principles of propulsion efficiency in the world of canoes also apply to kayaks. Shorter hulls are more maneuverable but lack the gliding efficiency of longer models for paddling on lakes. In relation to hulls, sit-on-top kayaks (where the paddler is not seated in the craft but on top of its molded construction) are inexpensive and great for casual paddling on lakes and easily navigable rivers.

Angling aficionados with a penchant for paddling should take a hard look at kayaks. Numerous companies make fishing-specific kayaks with astonishing capabilities for targeting everything from small ponds to oceans. While kayak fishing, I've caught perch, pike, bass, trout and numerous saltwater species, including an 8-pound trout that came to net after an epic battle on Henrys Lake in Idaho.

Inflatable kayaks are an excellent choice for those who don't want the transportation hassles of a rigid hull. My wife and I frequently use a Hobie

Inflatable watercraft, like this kayak, are completely functional and fit easily in an average RV's exterior storage compartment. Setup time goes quickly, and you'll get better with practice.

WHERE TO PADDLE

Hand-powered crafts are capable of tackling nearly any type of waterbody if properly chosen. However, you'll have a more satisfying experience if you're not constantly on the lookout for motorboats and personal watercraft. The wakes from these can easily capsizes smaller craft, not to mention the extreme hazard of a collision.

Ideal locations for lake paddling are those with restrictions on speed and/or motor size for powerboats. Some lakes open to all types of boating are not popular with the motorized crowd, perhaps due to a rough road to the boat launch or other factors, which

make them great for paddling.

If you find yourself at a destination with lots of motorized use, paddle at sunrise before the vast majority of motorized users hit the water. Beaches and seashores can also be attractive places to launch with little interference from motorized crafts.

Rivers, especially smaller streams, tend to see far less motorized use. However, even placid streams sometimes contain dangerous features such as diversion dams for irrigation. Make sure you research the segment of river you plan to paddle beforehand.

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★★★★★ Carl Verified Reviewer

After installing the Six-Gun, I hit the road to set the power levels. Holy crap, I couldn't believe how much more power the truck had going through the power levels and this tuner is CARB APPROVED! I'm stoked on this setup and wish we had put in this tuner years ago!

★★★★★ David A. Verified Reviewer

I have a 8,000 lb. truck with a 12,000 lb. trailer and I have never had this much peace of mind when descending a steep grade. If you tow a heavy trailer this is a must for controlling your downhill speeds and creating more safety. I love my Banks SpeedBrake.

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inflatable for fishing while camping from an RV. We also have two other inflatables residing in the garage. Though inflatables are not as efficient to paddle as rigid hulls with similar dimensions, their portability makes them our favored option when transportation space is limited.

Kayaks with rigid hulls are typically transported on a roof rack. Short kayaks can sometimes be stacked on a hitch-

mounted platform attached to the rear of a camping trailer or motorhome.

STAND-UP PADDLEBOARDS

The stand-up paddleboard is a relatively new creation. In a rough sense, it's nothing more than an oversize surfboard with tracking fins on its underside that is propelled with a long paddle. When my brother-in-law showed up at our lakeside retreat in

TO PADDLE OR PEDAL?

A handful of companies (Hobie, Jackson Kayak, Native Watercraft, Old Town and Riot Kayaks) make kayaks and pedal boards that are propelled by pedals instead of, or in addition to, a paddle. These are perfect for individuals with shoulder or wrist injuries or issues that may prevent sustained paddling, and are ideal for fishing. They also offer flexibility for moving over a distance. When your upper body gets tired from paddling, switch to the pedal drive, and vice versa.



New York's Adirondack Park with an SUP a few years ago, I was skeptical. It's now one of my favorites for paddling.

Our dog loves it even more. Percy tears down to the shoreline every time the SUP comes out, hopping on when it hits the water in hopes of a ride. He balances perfectly on its prow, scanning the water for ducks or just enjoying the view.

SUPs offer more than just a delightful experience on the water. Their locomotion also provides a whole-body, low-intensity workout that promotes core strength and balance. It takes a little more practice to become comfortable on an SUP than a kayak, but once the basic skills are acquired, the boards are super fun and surprisingly



SUPs (above) offer a full-body workout, while pedal-powered watercraft (top) are easy on the arms and perfect for fishing.

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From seashores to alpine lakes, stand-up paddleboards (aka SUPs), have become the go-to craft for an increasing number of paddlers of all ages for an experience that comes as close as you'll get to walking on water.

seaworthy, as attested by their surging popularity.

Inflatable SUPs are the ultimate when it comes to stowable watercraft. Many take up about the space of a duffel bag. Rigid SUPs are also very light-weight in relation to other watercraft, and their slim profile makes them easy to transport. They're easily placed on a roof rack. Some smaller models may fit inside an RV for travel.

Camping lakeside? Be it a canoe, kayak or SUP, a hand-powered watercraft is just the ticket to more fun, better fitness and a boatload of treasured family memories. **TV**

GEARING UP

The following is a sampling of manufacturers that produce useful products for paddling.

Boardworks – SUPs and accessories
www.boardworkssurf.com

Earth River SUP – inflatable SUPs and accessories
www.earthriversup.com

Grumman Canoes – canoes
www.marathonboat.com/grumman-canoes.asp

Hobie – kayaks, SUPs and accessories
www.hobie.com

iRocker – inflatable SUPs and accessories
www.irockersup.com

Isle – SUPs and accessories
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Ramp 'n'

Loaded with the latest features, the new fleet of fifth-wheels with rear garage

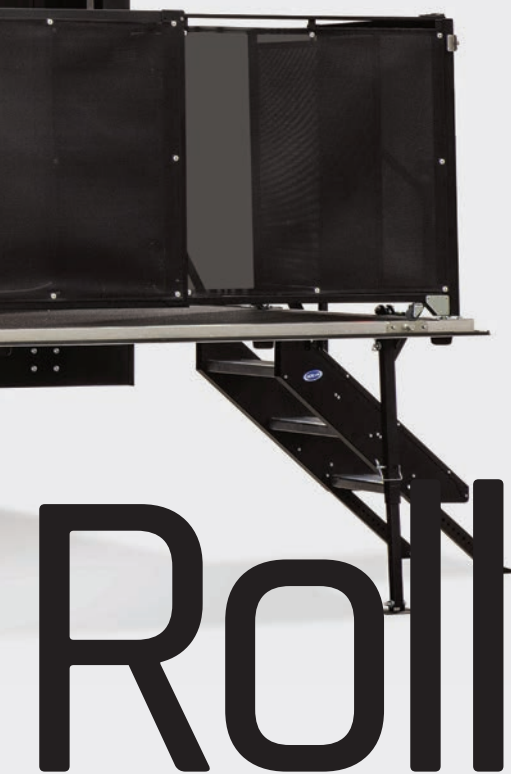
For most buyers, choosing a fifth-wheel toy hauler starts with the garage and the recreational toys. After all, the requirements for hauling a dirt bike in the back are very different from traveling with a side-by-side UTV. Once the toys roll down the ramp, the garage can double as a workshop, studio, bedroom or living room, depending on the design of the trailer and the needs of the owner.

When shopping for a new toy hauler, the foundation is the most important consideration. A good-quality frame, axles, suspension and tires are essential. Weight and carrying capacity are other critical factors.

Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) and hitch weight are key because the tow limits of the truck and hitch must match or exceed the toy hauler's GVWR. For those who will be towing with a full

freshwater tank, the GVWR minus the unloaded vehicle weight (UWV) must be more than the weight of the water (8.3 pounds per gallon), plus everything you'll carry, from food, tools and appliances to RV upgrades and toys in the garage.

Size also matters. Long fifth-wheels can't be accommodated at some campgrounds, and large truck-and-trailer combinations are difficult to maneuver in tight spaces, including many fuel stations.



freestanding chairs or optional theater seating. A loft bed above the walled-off garage opens into the living area, keeping it free from fumes.

Slideouts allow some access to the kitchen, bedroom and bathroom when retracted, which is important for quick stops. The fridge door opens just enough to grab a bite with the slides in travel mode. However, the hydraulic slideout mechanisms cannot be operated independently via wall-mounted switches and instead rely on an electronic touchpad or mobile-app interface coupled with slideout selector switches on the exterior of the trailer.

The easily lifted MORryde Zero-G ramp door converts to a patio with an optional railing and three-season door, extending the living space. A Happijac package in the garage with a power bed, two sofas and a table is an appealing option. Three E-track tie-downs anchor the toys, while 30- and 40-gallon fuel tanks keep the onboard generator and toys gassed up.

KZ Venom 3911TK

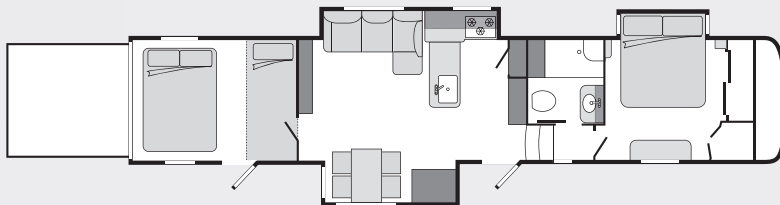
The Venom 3911TK combines comfortable living with a garage that is large enough for a wide trail-style side-by-side. The G-rated tires and three 7,000-pound-rated Dexter axles can support 21,000 pounds, although the GVWR is 19,000 pounds.

Built on a traditional fifth-wheel drop frame, the toy hauler has voluminous basement storage. Water is in good supply with a 112-gallon tank, and the sizable black and gray tanks will support many days between visits to the dump station.

The bedroom houses a king bed in a slideout and ample closet and drawer space. Windows face three directions, a nice feature for watching wildlife wander through the campsite before dawn. The bathroom has a shower with a sliding door and a linen closet.

The U-shaped kitchen offers plenty of counter space and shares a slideout with a convertible sofa. An opposing slideout holds the 18-cubic-foot refrigerator and wall-mounted dining table and

Exterior Length	42' 7"
Exterior Width	8' 5"
Garage Length	11'
Exterior Height	13' 4"
Interior Height	8' 6"
Freshwater Cap.	112 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	53 gal./93 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	14 gal.
UVW, Base	14,050 lbs.
GVWR	19,000 lbs.
Hitch Weight	3,070 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$94,533
www.kz-rv.com	



ages takes the toys in style — by Emily Fagan

Then there's the style of the garage to consider. An open-box trailer, which combines garage and living space, allows for a shorter overall length or a longer garage, while an enclosed garage helps keep dirt and fumes from entering the living area. A reliable ramp door and strong tie-downs for securing the toys are crucial, and an onboard fueling station can also be a plus.

Before buying any toy hauler, it is essential to check the length, width

and height of the garage with a tape measure to make sure your toys will fit. Many toy-hauler garages are not a simple rectangle but have narrower and shorter areas due to a half bathroom, side-patio wall recess or items placed against the walls. On some models the garage floor is angled for about a foot inside the ramp door. Power sofas raised to their highest position may make the ceiling height too short for loading some toys, and three-season

patio doors and railings can shorten the length by as much as 16 inches. You'll also want to confirm that there's room to exit any drivable toy after parking it in the garage.

With these considerations in mind, we profiled four of the latest toy-hauling fifth-wheels, and spotlighted a dozen more, ranging from just over 31 feet and \$30,000 to longer than 47 feet with a price tag north of \$180,000.

ATC Aluminum Toy Hauler

ATC earned its stripes building aluminum-sided trailers for hauling cars, motorcycles and snowmobiles. The company's fifth-wheel toy hauler offers a massive 9,700 pounds of cargo capacity and has a GVWR of 21,000 pounds, towable by most properly equipped late-model one-ton trucks. The 25-foot-plus open-box garage can handle a Jeep Rubicon, or a four-seat and two-seat UTV, as well as kayaks, bikes, folding boats or other toys. An optional wall encloses the garage.

ATC builds its own aluminum frames, cabinetry, and exterior, interior and ramp doors. Some modifications of the basic floorplan are possible, as well as interior and exterior color choices, and there's a wide array of options. Standard features include an 8-cubic-foot two-way refrigerator, a two-burner cooktop and a queen bed with a pillow-top mattress.

The ramp is rated for 4,000 pounds, and an optional all-weather ramp-door patio enclosure adds 64 square feet of living space. An optional "escape door" on one side makes it easy to exit the garage after loading a wide vehicle in the garage. Airline-track tie-downs recessed in the extruded floor ensure the toys are secure in transit.

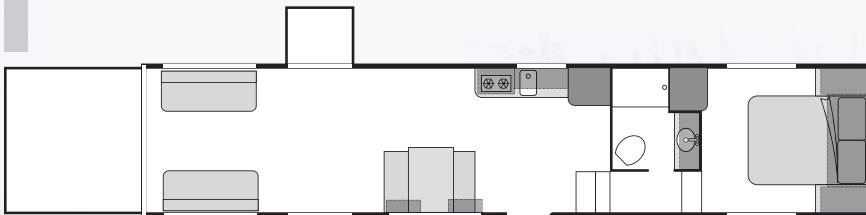
Construction is all-aluminum, eliminating the risk of wood rot. Cabinetry and drawers are painted aluminum, and the entire floor can be power-washed, which comes in handy after a rainy weekend on muddy trails. The 200-gallon freshwater tank and optional outdoor shower make it possible to wash down the toys while dry camping, and the 36-gallon fuel tank keeps them on the go.

Although ATC's current fifth-wheel toy hauler has no slideouts, which makes for a lighter trailer, future models with slides are in the works.



Exterior Length	41' 3"
Exterior Width	8' 6"
Garage Length	25' 5"
Exterior Height	13'
Interior Height	8' 10"
Interior Bedroom Height	6' 2"
Freshwater Cap.	200 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	45 gal./45 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	14 gal.
UVW, Base	11,300 lbs.
GVWR	21,000 lbs.
Hitch Weight	3,000 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$93,940

www.aluminumtoyhauler.com

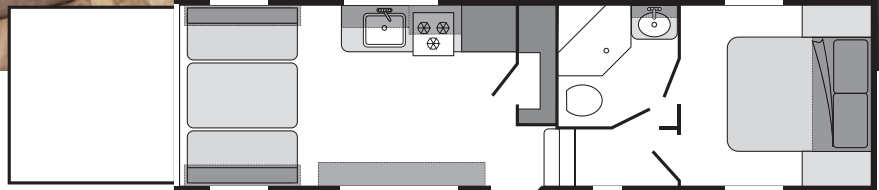




Forest River Cherokee 255RR

Taking your favorite toys out camping doesn't mean you need a big diesel tow vehicle. With a GVWR of 11,615 pounds and no slideouts, the Cherokee 255RR can be towed by most three-quarter-ton pickups and a few half-tons. The aluminum-sided toy hauler accommodates a four-seat side-by-side in its 14-foot-plus garage and can carry up to 4,771 pounds, all for a modest base price around \$30,000.

All the vital amenities found in larger, more expensive toy haulers are present in this more basic open-box model. Up front, generous closet space and overhead cabinets flank a walk-around queen bed, and two large windows make the bedroom light and airy. The bathroom features a radius-stall shower, and a skylight and roof



vent with a large exhaust fan bring in plenty of natural light.

The kitchen has a surprisingly large walk-in pantry with floor-to-ceiling shelving. The two-way refrigerator supplies 6.3 cubic feet of chilled storage (an 8-cubic-foot upgrade is available) and is accompanied by a three-burner cooktop, a standard RV-size oven, a microwave and a range hood. A residential faucet with a spray nozzle tops the large single-bowl sink. Countertops are solid surface, and a folding table adds more dining and food-prep space once the toys roll down the ramp.

Twin opposing sofa seats fold down in the garage and are backed by good size windows with snap-on

blackout covers. Modest freshwater-tank capacity is easily replenished from jerry jugs with a gravity-fill freshwater intake, and toys are held securely with welded D-rings screwed into the floor. The ramp-door patio takes the fun outside.

Exterior Length	31' 1"
Exterior Width	8' 1"
Garage Length	14' 3"
Exterior Height	13' 5"
Interior Height	8' 6"
Freshwater Cap.	46 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	38 gal./38 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	10 gal.
UVW, Base	6,844 lbs.
GVWR	11,615 lbs.
Hitch Weight	1,415 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$30,253

www.forestriverinc.com

BEFORE YOU BUY

Use a tape measure to check the length, width and height of the garage to verify that your toy(s) will fit. The dimensions given by manufacturers are nominal and may be off by a few inches or more.





Keystone Raptor 427

A new model for 2019, the Raptor 427 features a substantial living space and a practical garage underneath the large 68-by-76-inch bed frame in the rear master bedroom. A wardrobe slideout opens up the bedroom, and the bed raises to provide ample headroom in the enclosed garage that fits a motorcycle, ATV, golf cart or bicycles.

For DIYers, the garage space could easily house a freestanding workbench with drawers for tools, a better solution than storing them in hard-to-reach places in the basement. D-ring tie-downs are rated for 1,500 pounds each, and two 30-gallon fuel tanks keep the generator and motorized toys running.

The inviting galley is situated upstairs in the fifth-wheel overhang. For those on kitchen duty, the front cap contains a picture window made of automotive glass that gives a bird's-eye view of the outdoors. Counter space is immense, ideal for cooking or entertaining. The elevated kitchen

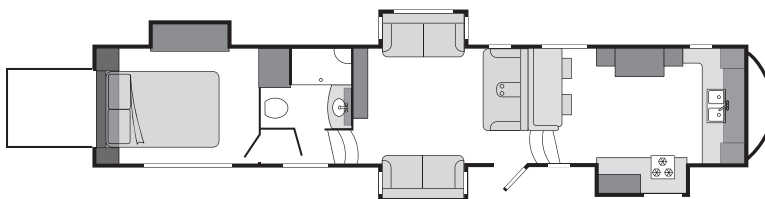
Exterior Length	43' 11"
Exterior Width	8' 4"
Garage Length	9' 2"
Exterior Height	13' 6"
Interior Height	8' 7"
Freshwater Cap.	106 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	38 gal./76 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	14 gal.
UVW, Base	15,025 lbs.
GVWR	19,000 lbs.
Hitch Weight	3,725 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$114,917

www.keystonerv.com

is open to the living room below, and a cleverly positioned dining counter overlooks the downstairs.

The comfortable living area has ample seating for three couples with convertible loveseats in opposing slideouts and a pair of recliners opposite the entertainment center.

Three Dexter 7,000-pound-rated axles and G-rated tires provide a solid foundation.



Fifth-Wheel Toyland

From production-line models to custom builds, the latest toy-hauling fifth-wheelers offer more than a ramp door and a place to park recreational toys



DRV Full House JX450

A triple-tube steel frame reinforces the fifth-wheel overhang joints on DRV's luxuriously appointed fifth-wheel. Safety and durability are enhanced with disc brakes, three Dexter 8,000-pound-rated axles, 17.5-inch wheels and MORryde's Zero-G ramp door.

Exterior Length	46'
Garage Length	10'
GVWR	24,000 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$138,866

www.drvsuites.com



Dutchmen Voltage 4185

L-shaped seating and a TV that lowers to reveal the window behind it make the living area comfortable without sacrificing garage space. The kitchen sports a huge pantry, and the Zero-G ramp-door patio is a plus.

Exterior Length	44' 5"
Garage Length	13'
GVWR	20,000 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$90,461

www.dutchmen.com/voltage

Genesis Supreme 28CR

With a short but spacious open-box layout, the wide-body 28CR offers two optional slideouts, a nearly 16-foot garage and a 100-gallon freshwater tank. At just 12 feet, 11 inches high, it is more streamlined than most toy-hauling fifth-wheels.



Exterior Length	31' 6"
Garage Length	15' 10"
GVWR	13,800 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$53,396

www.genessupremerv.com

BEFORE YOU BUY

Many of the fifth-wheel toy haulers shown here exceed 40 feet. Be sure to check state laws where you will be traveling to verify that you can legally tow such a long trailer for private use.

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Grand Design Momentum 350G

A generous enclosed 14½-foot garage in just under 40 feet of overall length and a modest price tag are standout features for the 350G, one of two fifth-wheels in Grand Design's new lighter-weight Momentum G-Class lineup. A HappiJac power bed in the garage and a loft bed join the queen bed up front (a king is optional). Living space is traded for the convenience of a second bathroom.



Exterior Length 39' 9"
 Garage Length 14' 6"
 GVWR 16,995 lbs.
 MSRP, Base \$56,541
www.granddesignrv.com



Heartland Road Warrior 4275

A long toy hauler with a 13-foot enclosed garage, the 4275 supports comfortable living with rear and side patios, and rides on Dexter 7,000-pound-rated axles and G-rated tires. A clever half-bathroom wall in the garage folds back for wider toys.

Exterior Length 44' 1"
 Garage Length 13'
 GVWR 20,000 lbs.
 MSRP, Base \$90,418
www.heartlandrvs.com



Highland Ridge Highlander 383H

Ideal for big toys and big gatherings, the 42-foot-plus 383H offers a 15-foot enclosed garage, a bath and a half, and a sizable 5,525 pounds of claimed cargo capacity at a relatively modest price.

Exterior Length 42' 2"
 Garage Length 15'
 GVWR 18,000 lbs.
 MSRP, Base \$67,418
www.highlandridgerv.com



Jayco Seismic 4113

Sporting rear and side patios, two bathrooms and a raised kitchen with extensive counter space, the 45-foot-plus 4113 offers plenty of living space to go with its 12½-foot enclosed garage. Triple 7,000-pound-rated axles help carry the load.

Exterior Length 45' 7"
 Garage Length 12' 6"
 GVWR 20,695 lbs.
 MSRP, Base \$105,450
www.jayco.com

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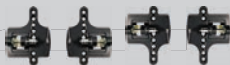
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New Horizons Summit S41IKT3S

Built on an in-house frame with individually controlled hydraulic slides, the elegantly appointed, four-season S41IKT3S has a 10-foot garage, Dexter axles and a 30-gallon fuel station. MORryde independent suspension and disc-brake upgrades are available.

Exterior Length 43' 8"
 Garage Length 10'
 GVWR 23,000 lbs.
 UVW 18,100 lbs.
 Base MSRP \$174,400

www.horizonsrv.com



The RV Factory Luxe Toy Hauler

Luxurious and very long, the Luxe boasts 3-inch insulated walls, upgraded frame specs, Dexter 8,000-pound-rated axles, H-rated 17.5-inch tires and disc brakes.

Exterior Length 47' 3"
 Garage Length 14' 5"
 GVWR 24,000 lbs.
 UVW 18,600 lbs.
 Base MSRP \$183,707

www.luxefifthwheel.com



Sundowner 2286 SGM

Sundowner builds its own frames, doors and ramps. At just 10½ feet tall, the 2286 SGM has a streamlined gooseneck design. Buyers can customize a standard floorplan or design one from scratch.

Exterior Length 38' 6"
 Garage Length 16'
 GVWR 15,210 lbs.
 MSRP, Base \$78,889

www.sundownertrailer.com

FULLY CUSTOM TOY HAULERS

Dune Sport

Dune Sport offers budget-friendly custom toy haulers that stretch from 24 to 46 feet, including wheelchair-accessible models. Each floorplan is uniquely crafted for the individual customer. Average price per linear foot is \$1,400. www.dunesport.com



Space Craft

Design possibilities are limitless on Space Craft's custom high-end toy haulers, built on an in-house frame. Lengths range from 28 to 57 feet; larger models are beyond the towing limits of light-duty trucks. Pricing averages \$5,100 per linear foot. www.spacecraftmfg.com



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H₂O ON TAP



DESIGNED FOR RV USE, THE CLEARSOURCE WATER-FILTER SYSTEM, BUILT INTO A HEAVY-DUTY METAL HOUSING, REMOVES UNWANTED CONTAMINANTS

Water is the lifeblood of any RV. Without this precious resource, it would be impossible to offer self-containment, and even though most owners take water for granted, and love the convenience, it can lead to acrimonious feelings. While water seems to be fairly unobtrusive, underlying factors can lead to bad taste, odor and even system failures, not to mention serious human illnesses.

Outside of water softeners to control total dissolved solids, many owners resort to filtering water that is fed via a campsite hookup or when filling the onboard tank. Most common are 10-inch canisters that use replaceable filters. Shade-tree mechanics typically resort to Rube Goldberg-style "engineering" when it comes to building suitable supports for these canisters. It's not unusual to find milk crates and buckets modified to hold the canisters upright. They work, but Clearsource, a Southern California company that specializes in water filtration, has turned this process into an art form.

The company builds and markets premium water systems designed specifically for RVs. Single-filter systems for RVs are helpful, but the use of two cartridges offers much more protection.

Handling two connected filters can be cumbersome, which encouraged Clearsource to house them in a stout chassis that's practically bulletproof, and to complement the system with high-end fittings and solid canisters.

Two oversize 10-inch canisters are mounted in a powder-coated, 15-inch-tall by 14¼-inch-wide by 7½-inch-high metal chassis that exudes strength, which makes it somewhat bulky and seemingly heavy to manage. There's no flex to the chassis, and it can be positioned on the ground with total stability. After only a few uses, and transferring from the storage compartment to the ground, it became apparent that this heavy-duty system will undoubtedly last as long as the RV, and was actually easier to handle than expected.

1) The kit includes sediment- and coconut-shell-activated carbon-block filters. A plastic wrench, supplied with the system, is used to remove canisters and access filters. 2) The filter must be seated in the bottom of the canister for proper operation and to prevent leaks.



UPGRADE

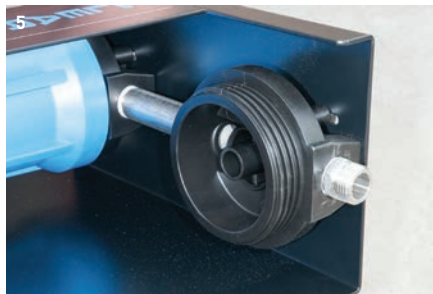
WATER FILTRATION

Product Clearsource Filter System

Difficulty 

Cost \$275-\$350

www.clearsourcecv.com



NUTS AND BOLTS

The anatomy of the Clearsource system is impressive. Stainless-steel fittings mate the two canisters and offer corrosive-resistant connections to the water hoses. Buttress threads and large O-rings offer a leak-free environment for the canisters, which can be tightened and removed with the provided plastic wrench. It's not necessary to over-tighten the canisters, and the filters must be seated properly to prevent leaks.

Two high-quality filter cartridges are preinstalled in the system, which can be ordered directly from the company and shipped in rugged boxes. The leading filter is formed by a thermal-bond process

3) Standard-size 10-inch filters will fit in the canister. Here, a new sediment filter is placed in the canister. Filter packs that include a sediment and carbon-block cartridge are available from the company for \$29.95. Filters are rated at 2,000 gallons, which should serve casual RV travelers for a year. 4) Heavy O-rings provide a tight seal, but they can drop out easily when the canister is turned upside-down or on its side. The canisters will not seat properly and leak profusely if the O-rings are not in place. Replacement O-rings are available from the company. 5) Buttress-thread canister housings are mounted to the chassis and connected with high-quality stainless-steel fittings. Canisters can be attached easily, without binding.

without using adhesives or binders. It's designed to remove sediment down to 5.0 microns. A four-layer structure does a good job of retaining particles, and after a short while it was evident, upon a visual inspection, that this media removes a large amount of unwanted contaminants like silt and sediment.

The filters are made of 100 percent polypropylene that meets FDA CFR Title 21 requirements for use with food and pharmaceuticals. The

second-stage filter employs acid-washed coconut-based activated carbon. High-purity coconut shells and the 0.5-micron rating ensure that pesticides, cryptosporidium and giardia cysts will be removed from the water, according to the company.

The filter combination makes it possible to drink



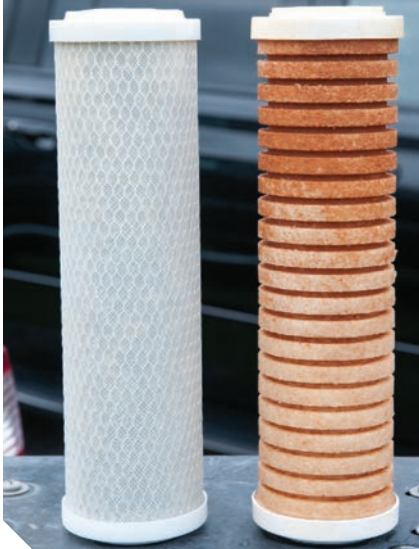
6) The company recently improved the system by adding stainless-steel rotating fittings for connecting the hoses. 7) Before using the new system the first time, or after replacing the filters, water must be flushed through a faucet until it runs clear. 8) Hooking up at RV parks with high concentrations of iron in the water leaves telltale "rust" stains. 9) Rust-colored staining on the hose inlet fitting was evident after only a few days. The fitting on the outlet side was clean, which is attributable to the rust-inhibiting filter used in lieu of the sediment filter while visiting the RV park.

THE RUST IS HISTORY

➤ The versatility of the Clearsource external system is unsurpassed when it comes to water filtering and conditioning. For example, we spend time in RV parks in the Midwest where the water has a high concentration of iron. Consequently, "rust" staining makes a mess of the sinks, shower stall and toilet. Clearsource offers a rust-inhibiting filter that does a commendable job of reducing staining.

We tested this filter over a period of one month and experienced virtually no staining. Previous visits to the area resulted in a toilet replacement and sustained scrubbing (think hard work) with products designed to remove "rust" staining. The rust-inhibiting media temporarily replaced the sediment filter while we were hooked up to the iron-heavy water. This filter sells for \$19.95.

Ⓢ After one week in service, the rust-inhibiting filter was stained badly, while the carbon-block cartridge remained clean. There were no signs of rust staining on the sinks or toilet during the test period.



water from the tap, with reasonably good taste and sans odor; ultimate purification will require a separate system designed for controlling contaminated water that can lead to serious illnesses. Products to achieve this level of purification are available in the marketplace, and the water typically flows through an independent spigot, rather than supplying the entire house, which

Solid Step

Now available in double, triple and quad step configurations!



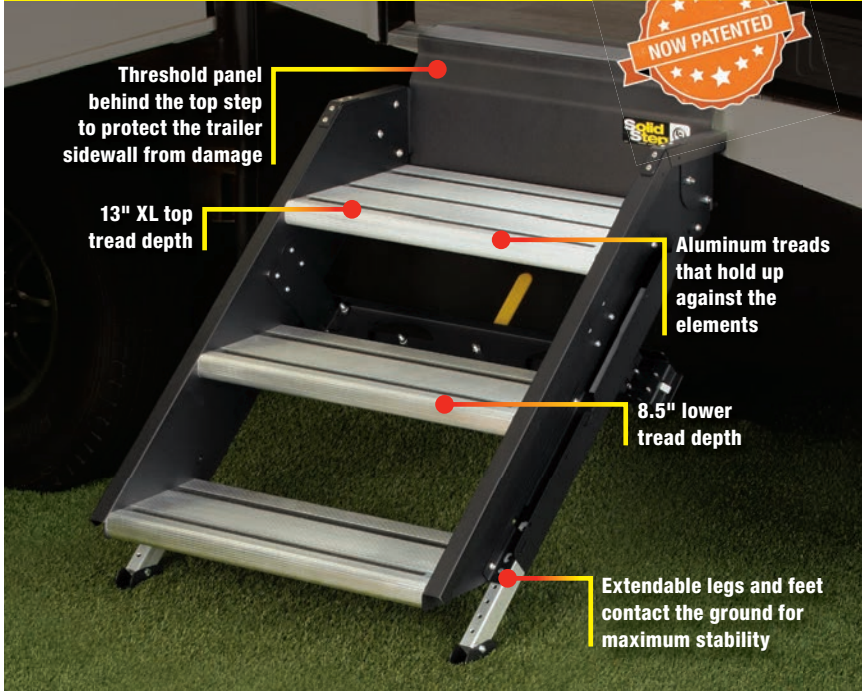
Threshold panel behind the top step to protect the trailer sidewall from damage

13" XL top tread depth

Aluminum treads that hold up against the elements

8.5" lower tread depth

Extendable legs and feet contact the ground for maximum stability



Solid Step

LIFT ASSIST

Now available with Lift Assist option! Featuring a Lift Assist Strut that makes lowering & raising your SolidStep easy!



Quick Facts

- The Lift Assist strut keeps the SolidStep from dropping completely when disengaged from the door-jamb.
- The heavy-duty gas strut system that takes the weight off of the SolidStep makes it virtually weightless when it is released to the ground.
- Because of the Lift Assist strut, the weight of the SolidStep allows for minimal effort on lowering. Lowering the SolidStep with Lift Assist can even be done with one finger.

Lift Assist Kit compatible with all generation 3 triple and quad SolidSteps.



LIPPERT COMPONENTS

lippertcomponents.com



would not be practical.

Clearsource rates its filters to produce 2,000 gallons of water before needing replacement, so the filters can be used effectively for the entire water system. Under normal conditions, with typical use of an RV, that should provide coverage of up to a year before replacing the filters. Full-timers, like ourselves, will likely replace filters every two or three months, although we found them to last quite a bit longer. Replacement filter packs sell for \$29.95.

TESTING THE WATERS

Longer use of the filters may lead to a reduction in pressure, which is tested at the factory at 40 PSI; flow rate is 6 gallons per minute. To test pressure consistency, we ran the filters for six months, which far exceeds recommendations, and experienced no significant drop in water pressure.

Storing the filters between trips is very simple. Non-use for up to two weeks requires no maintenance. We drained the water before storing the system in an outside compartment to prevent sloshing during travel. This was accomplished by turning the chassis on its side and allowing the water to flow



The onboard filter system (left) is quite a bit smaller and lighter than the external model. It's designed to be mounted in a utility compartment. It should not be installed in a storage compartment because of possible water leakage from burst hoses or worn gaskets.

out of the fittings. If the filters will be unused for a month or longer, the canisters should be drained and the filters placed in dry storage. Once water is reintroduced, the filters will reactivate. Those who prefer to sanitize the canisters after long storage can use cleaning tablets sold for hydration

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bladders popular with hikers and bicyclists.

Owners concerned with possible theft can run a cable through the chassis and lock it to a logical place on the RV frame.

Although the hose fittings on the original test system were fixed and worked well, the company now provides improved rotating counterparts that make hookup even easier. It also improved the washers to prevent them from falling out when the hoses were removed. Quick-connect couplings speed up the hookup process, and owners should use quality fittings to prevent unintentional disconnections.

OUTSIDE OR ONBOARD

As an external system, the Clearsource filters and chassis can be placed virtually anywhere outside the RV. It's always best to locate the filters out of the sun, which can be accomplished easily by scooting the system under the RV. It should not be used inside a compartment since a burst hose or bad gasket can lead to water damage.

Owners who have room in their utility compartment can consider the company's onboard system that's designed to be mounted on a wall. Using an equally stout chassis, albeit much smaller and lighter, these kits are available in two-

After only a few uses, it became apparent that this heavy-duty system will undoubtedly last as long as the RV, and was actually easier to handle than expected.

or three-filter arrangements. The two-canister onboard system uses the same filters that are packaged with the external chassis; the three-canister product comes with an additional 0.2-micron filter that provides another layer of water cleaning.

Those who have room for three canisters can integrate a rust-inhibiting or other type of filter into the system, depending on conditions. A sulfur-reducing filter is available for \$19.95, and a deionizing product that reduces dissolved solids to almost zero sells for \$39.95. Deionizing filters have limited capacity and are really designed to prevent water spotting when washing a vehicle.

Two-stage onboard systems sell for \$275, and the three-filter configuration has a \$350 price tag. The external system retails for \$275.

Owners who appreciate high-quality products will enjoy using the Clearsource filter system. In most cases, bottled drinking water can be removed from the grocery list, and those who gloated over their homemade filter supports will have no problem making the switch. Sorry, Rube. **TR**



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SMART AIR

PACBRAKE'S AMP AIR-SUSPENSION AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PROVIDES APP-CONTROLLED LOAD LEVELING AND UTILITY AIR WITHOUT IN-CAB COMPONENTS

Loaded vehicles tooling down the road with the back end sagging is not a pretty — or safe — sight. Not only does it look bad, but it adversely affects the handling of the vehicle. When the back end of a vehicle drops, the front becomes unloaded, reducing downforce on the steering tires, which can lead to loss of control. The headlight beam also raises, which can decrease

visibility for the driver and impact oncoming traffic.

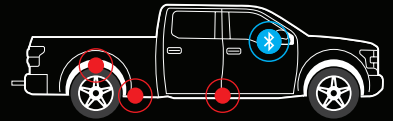
Truck engineers assume a truck won't be loaded all the time, so they design a suspension that can withstand a rated load without resulting in a harsh unloaded ride. A prime example is a 2017 Ford F-350 test truck with tiered springs in the rear and overload springs that come into play to handle the full-rated

load, leading to a drop in the rear when a load is placed in the bed.

Leaf springs are made up of a master leaf plus tiered or stepped leaves that add carrying capacity and move/flex under load, giving a better ride. Rebound clips hold the leaves together, so they act as a whole. In the case of heavy-duty pickups, engineers often add overload springs on the top and



1-3) Ford's new Super Dutys are pretty congested underneath, and it took some time to find a spot to mount the Pacbrake Amp pump on the F-350. The only option that allowed reasonable protection for the pump was to position it on one of the cab-floor cross members. Holes were marked and drilled before installing Nutsert threaded inserts to bolt the pump.



UPGRADE

AIR-SUSPENSION SYSTEM

Product	Pacbrake Amp
Difficulty	
Time to Install	10 hours
Cost	\$449.16/Air Spring Kit \$414.46/Onboard Air Kit \$615/Wireless Air Spring Controls Kit
www.pacbrake.com	

bottom of the spring pack, which take up weight as the truck squats when it is loaded. While this works, especially for temporary loads, it can make for a miserable ride with prolonged loads, like hauling a truck camper or towing, not to mention looking like the Joad family while driving down the road.

Many products on the market act as load levelers, and each system has its benefits and weaknesses, which must be contemplated by the vehicle owner before installing. Some inexpensive systems technically work but result in a permanently harsh ride, while others, like some air-spring systems, offer

on-the-go adjustability at a premium. In addition to front-to-back adjustability, air suspension can be adjusted from side to side to give more support to one side of the vehicle if it is heavier than the other.

A relative newcomer to the add-on air-suspension market is Pacbrake, a company known for its engine-exhaust-brake systems that are frequently found on diesel engines. Pacbrake's Amp division offers an airbag kit that, with the addition of a compressor, tank system and electronic controller, becomes a fully automated, adjustable system that doubles as a compressed-air source for filling tires, rafts and other inflatables, operating small

pneumatic tools or sounding air horns — all managed from a smart device.

There are a number of choices when it comes to installing an air-spring system. Buyers can opt to install only the Amp Air Spring Kit. Each airbag has a Schrader valve for adding or removing air using an external source. While inconvenient, this does work, provided there are no leaks or changes in the vehicle weight profile, in which case, you'll have to go outside to readjust.

For convenience, a built-in or portable compressor can be used to fill the springs on the go. In its purest form, this is still a manual operation,

- 4) The Nutserts were treated with anti-seize lubricant to prevent corrosion. Alternatively, the components can be mounted in the bed of the truck. As the pump is very noisy and gets hot, installing it in the cab is not recommended. 5) Installing the air tank required finding a suitable location on the outside of the frame, drilling and tapping the holes, and bolting the tank to the box-beam frame. If the truck has a C-channel frame, the tank can be secured with bolts and nuts. 6) The first step in installing the air springs is to remove the factory jounce bumpers and install the included speed nuts. The factory jounce bumper mounts are not used, because they are just slightly off. Brackets and fittings are assembled as directed. 7) The bracket system will vary depending on the truck; here a spacer on the jounce bumper strike plate and U-bolts around the factory lift block were installed, as well as long cap bolts down around the axle. It will be necessary to move items and readjust during the process. Take your time to make sure the pieces are assembled correctly and the installation makes sense. Tighten everything to the indicated torque values.



+ THREE-OF-A-KIND KITS

The Pacbrake Amp system consists of three separate kits. Vehicle-specific airbags are part of the Air Spring Kit, which includes brackets, tubing and Schrader valves for manual inflation. The Onboard Air Kit includes a tank, pump, wiring, tubing, pressure switch, quick-disconnect fitting and drain valve. The Wireless Air Spring Controls Kit comes with wiring, relay and mounting hardware. Even though most parts and supplies are included, you'll also need anti-seize lubricant and additional hardware, depending on how the pump and specific components are mounted. Heat-shrink tubing and various crimp connectors will also be needed for the installation.

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SMART AIR



using a fill hose from the compressor and a gauge.

Lastly, an automatic pump and tank with a controller can be installed, which not only allows suspension adjustment while driving but also monitors pressure and provides air for things like air horns and an air-hose connection.

Controllers vary by type and complexity. Legacy controllers mount inside the cab of the truck and have a power switch for the pump, a control or valve for both airbags and one or two gauges to show the pressure.

Pacbrake's Amp Wireless Air Spring Controls Kit completely changes the paradigm in onboard air systems. No longer are long runs of air line and wiring into the cab necessary. And there's no need for gauges and a control panel, which take up space and create

8-9) If the bottom bracket starts to bend, stop and recheck everything. We ended up inadvertently catching a bracket on the axle, which messed us up. Also, torque the U-bolt first, then the long cap bolts. 10-11) Some fittings have to be sealant taped and threaded into the ports in the air tank. The placement of the fittings depends on the placement of the tank. The drain/relief valve must be installed pointing down for condensation to drain out of the tank.

an increased likelihood of malfunction. Instead, the company has designed a controller, pump and tank system that can be installed under the truck and is managed by a mobile app on an Apple or Android smart device.

Installing this system is not for the fainthearted. The installation on the Ford truck took 10 hours at a Ford commercial truck center with lifts and extensive equipment, including access to Ford's online shop manual with wiring diagrams to show where to tap into the accessory wiring harness.

When all is said and done, the end product was worth the effort. The fully

TECH TIP » When purchasing the Pacbrake Amp system, buyers choose Android or Apple iOS. Switching platforms after installation requires replacing the main plug-and-play control module.



12



13



14

12) The Wireless Air Spring Control unit is designed to mount underneath the truck on the frame rail. Large U-bolts, brackets and a mounting plate are included. A more protected location would be desirable, but options were limited since the F-350 will be used for hauling truck campers as well as towing trailers. We'll monitor the condition of the system and clean it as needed. All of the connectors, valves and harnesses are sealed against water intrusion. 13) Heat shields are included with the Air Spring Kit and clamp on pretty quickly. 14) The wiring harness requires connections to a battery and the ignition.

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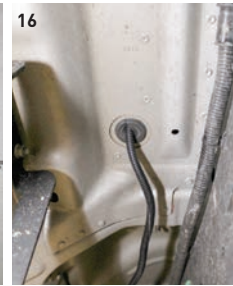
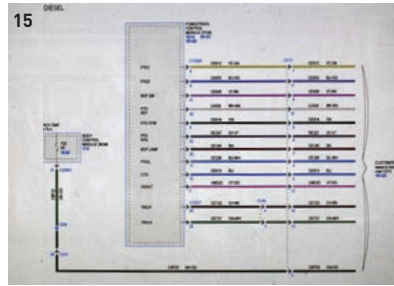
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MARCH 2019 / TRAILER LIFE **63**



15) Finding an ignition hot circuit in this truck was a bit complicated. Access to the Ford shop manual online showed a connection point for the Body Control Module in the passenger-side A-post. 16) A factory grommet in the floor was used to route the wiring under the carpet to the A-post. The wiring was properly stripped, twisted and sealed with heat-shrink tubing to ensure a long-lasting connection. 17) All of the air lines were routed and connected appropriately. Pacbrake includes an air port and bracket for attaching an included accessory hose. It was mounted on the passenger-side running board where it was hidden but accessible.

+ TAP THE AMP

The Amp interface on the smart device is easy to use. Once the controller is paired with the device, it will connect and disconnect via Bluetooth automatically. It is possible to inflate or deflate one or both air springs simultaneously. Three presets can be programmed for different loads. For example, when loading a truck camper, just tap the programmed number, and it will automatically adjust.

adjustable, weather-resistant, iPhone-controlled air-leveling system provides instant air-spring inflation, thanks to the onboard air tank, and works flawlessly. Additionally, a quick-disconnect port makes it easy to hook up an air hose for inflating tires and the like.

The air springs have a six-month warranty to the original purchaser, and the brackets and air-management system are covered for two years. The Amp Air Spring Kit for the test truck sells for \$449.16, but the kits start at \$366.68, depending on vehicle application. The Onboard Air Kit (HP10164) has a 2½-gallon steel tank and a \$414.46 MSRP. The Wireless Air Spring Controls Kit (HP10316) sells for \$615. **TL**

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CONSTANT CONNECTION

WIFIRANGER'S ROOF-MOUNTED SKYPRO HELPS ENSURE AN ENDLESS STREAM OF DATA

It wasn't too long ago that people went camping to get away from it all, to disconnect. Many RVers still do exactly that. However, times change, and recent studies by the U.S. Department of the Interior and Kampgrounds of America indicate that wireless internet and phone access is essential for many of today's RVers, especially the younger generations. Indeed, internet access is no longer considered a luxury. It's a utility. And, while the National Park Service and private RV resorts have recognized the need for better connectivity, the reality is that it's tough to get a suitable connection in a busy park today.

Nothing frustrates people quite as much as seeing a strong Wi-Fi signal indicated on their device, and not being able to get a strong enough connection to use internet services. This happens a lot on the road. The cellular companies are providing improved wireless data service, but it's still pretty expensive, and plenty of remote areas that RVers frequent don't have good service, or the service is with an alternate carrier. So, connecting to public Wi-Fi is still the better option in many situations. Not only do many businesses offer free Wi-Fi for customers, but service providers like Comcast Xfinity supply local and even citywide hotspots for subscribers, and, in theory, get home-strength internet service.

WiFiRanger was one of the first to market a Wi-Fi repeater

system for the mobile environment, and its products are now being included as standard or optional equipment right from the factory. Installing one in the aftermarket is a pretty straightforward affair, and, after extensive testing, we've found it's definitely worth the effort and expense.

WiFiRanger offers several units, including the SkyPro Pack, which has a 1½-mile range and a \$449.99 MSRP, and the Elite AC Pack FM with a 2-mile range and \$749.99 MSRP. We tested the SkyPro Pack, which supports multiple internet connections and is ideal for RV use. A SkyPro LTE Pack, with a built-in LTE cellular transceiver, is available for an additional \$200.

The inside router is dual-band for the SkyPro and Elite models. While the Elite systems are gigabit transceivers inside and out, the size of the solid-fiberglass antenna makes rooftop mounting more of a challenge in an RV environment, not to mention the added cost. If you need the ultimate in speed





UPGRADE

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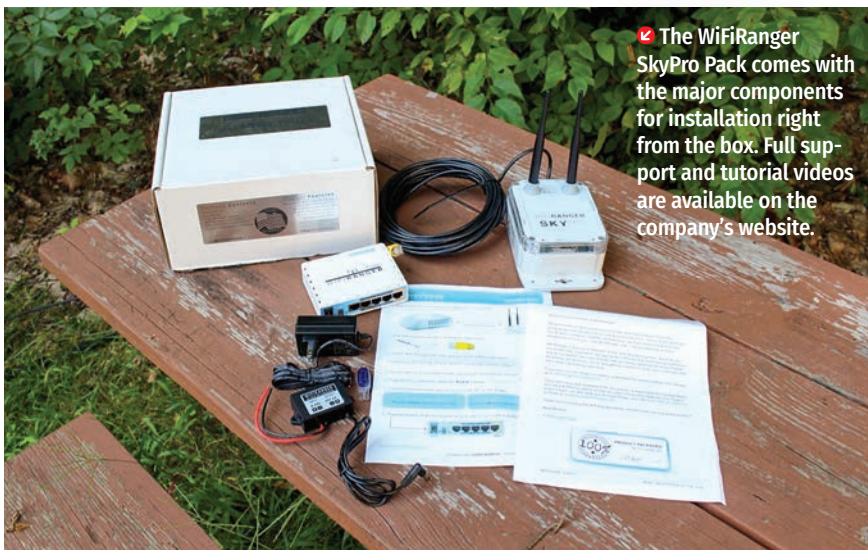
Product WiFiRanger SkyPro Pack

Difficulty

Time to Install 2 hours

Cost \$449.99

www.wifiranger.com



✔ The WiFiRanger SkyPro Pack comes with the major components for installation right from the box. Full support and tutorial videos are available on the company's website.

(provided that 5.8-GHz networks are nearby), then an Elite system is preferred, and the antenna can be installed on the roof, ladder or TV-antenna mast. The SkyPro Pack has a 2.4-GHz transceiver, which offers the greatest distance and current compatibility with Wi-Fi systems but is limited to 450 to 600 Mbps. This is considered a good speed for most RVers.

The SkyPro Pack's external roof-mounted transceiver is a small, attractive white box with a clear lid that supports the Flex-Guard antennas. LEDs inside the box indicate operational status and produce a cool glow at night, which can be disabled if desired.

The inside router is fully configurable and broadcasts on both bands, so connecting to it is simple, and is secure once the setup process is completed, creating a private Wi-Fi network. Setup is pretty well automated, and connecting

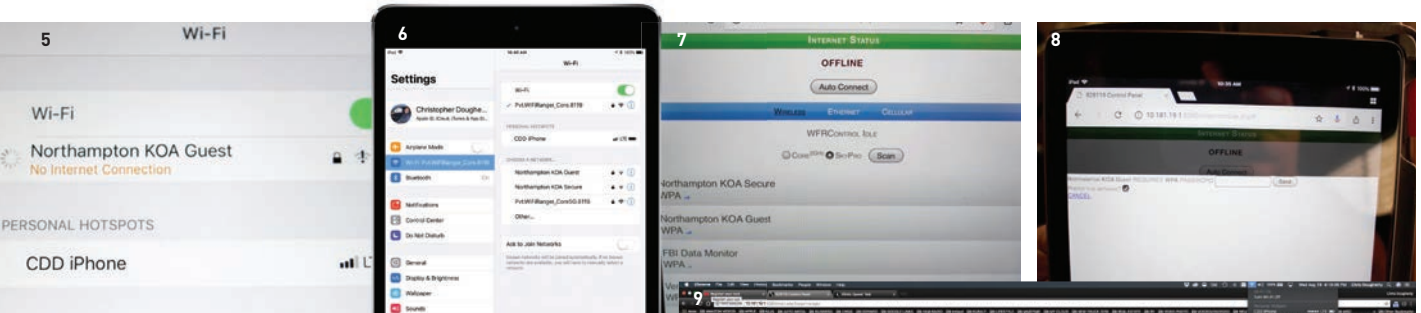
to a new external Wi-Fi source is as easy as connecting to the router, logging on to www.mywifiranger.com and selecting and signing on to a Wi-Fi source. Of course, the system can be custom configured, if the user wishes, and mistakes can be undone by restoring factory settings.

If you're in a campground or populated area, Wi-Fi will be your best bet. If you're in a more remote area with good cellular service, a mobile hotspot or smartphone can be connected via USB to feed the system, using your data plan. And if you own a seasonal site that has cable TV and dedicated internet access, an ethernet port on the router allows that connection as well. As they say, all roads lead to Rome — or in this case, the World Wide Web.

SETTING IT UP 1-4

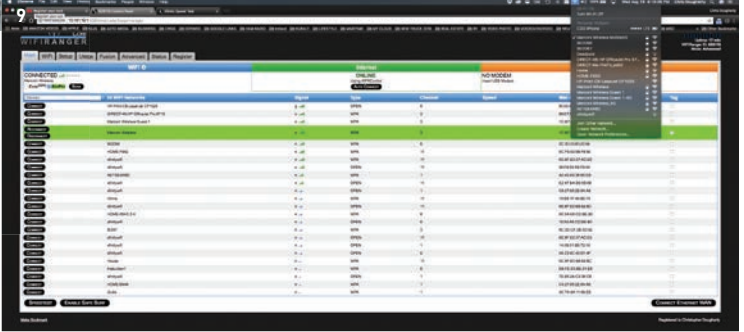
1) To mount the roof unit, select a spot on the RV's roof that provides a clear space around it to avoid interference. Also, consider where you'll be dropping the cable and running it to the router. Fasten at least two of the screws into the structure, if possible, and use butyl tape under the screw flange and appropriate self-leveling sealant on the roof. 2-3) The router was mounted behind the TV after drilling straight through into the fireplace cabinet. A Winegard cable clamshell was used for the installation and sealed with butyl tape and Alpha Systems TPO roof sealant. 4) The unit comes with a 12-volt DC and a 120-volt AC plug adapter for convenience. The 12-volt DC adapter can be used when boondocking. Here, the core router is mounted on the wall, behind the TV, because of easy access to 12-volt DC power. This installation also gives access to the ethernet and USB connections, and devices can sit on the mantle or adjacent countertop.





TESTING IT OUT 5-9

5) The WiFiRanger SkyPro was tested in a campground at the farthest point away from the office. While the campground had other access points, the connection had little to no throughput because of the weak signal. There were no other Wi-Fi connections available. 6) Then we powered up the WiFiRanger and connected to it, and logged on to the core router. 7) The control panel shows the available connections. Note that the campground signals indicate full strength, including the secure office signal. 8) After entering the password, we were online. 9) Back at the office in the city, the device was tested again. We named our office network Marconi Wireless, using an ASUS router. Note the WiFiRanger control-panel signal strengths versus what the MacBook Pro wireless signal strengths were inside the RV. The "xfinitywifi" hotspots are citywide hotspots. The computer sees one; the WiFiRanger sees nine and could connect to all of them. **TR**



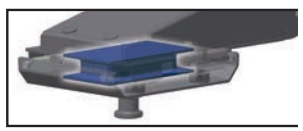
TRAVEL TIP ✦
The SkyPro's rooftop antennas are resistant to branches but certainly not immune to damage. As always, care must be taken to avoid overhanging branches and other obstructions.

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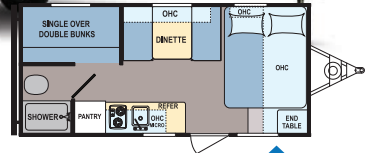
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BRAKE TIME

CURT ECHO TRAILER-BRAKE CONTROL PROVIDES UNIQUE PORTABILITY AND SMARTPHONE INTERFACE

— by Chris Dougherty



MOBILE BRAKE CONTROL

Cost \$261.⁸⁴
 Difficulty...
 Setup. 15 minutes

One of the biggest issues with towing a trailer is equipping the tow vehicle with a brake control when the vehicle isn't equipped with a wiring harness from the factory. Often, in later-model vehicles, a connection point is provided for a harness, but finding it can be

complicated and time consuming. And it's not practical to install a brake control in a vehicle that may be used to tow a trailer only once.

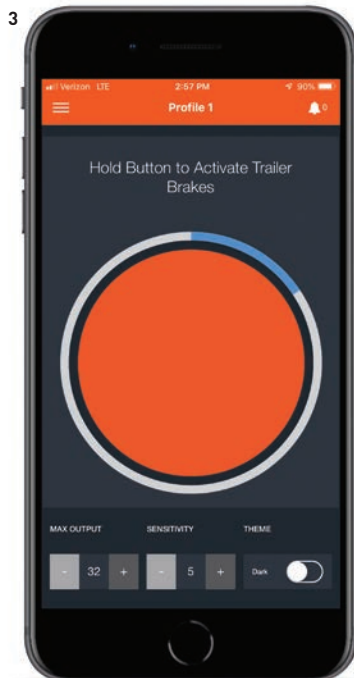
Curt, a name familiar in the hitch-equipment circles, has introduced a device that is completely portable and uses Bluetooth technology and computerized wizardry to provide proportional brake control when towing trailers. It simply plugs into the round seven-way flat-blade trailer connection on the rear of the tow vehicle and is controlled via a smart device, albeit at a cost.

The completely weatherproof module operates using a triple-axis motion-sensing accelerometer, and the Android or iOS device becomes the controller for the driver. The

accelerometer detects stopping and incline, just like the built-in brake controls, and results in smooth stops.

The smart device hosts a dedicated app that allows the driver to adjust the power, gain and other settings for multiple vehicle-trailer profiles, which makes transfer between vehicles about as easy as it gets. No wiring is required, nor the need to mount brackets to secure a box under the dash, which can get in the way.

To operate, the brake control requires a 12-volt battery-charge line to be active in the seven-way receptacle. In some vehicles, the charge line is switched off until the system senses that the power cord is plugged in or the tow/haul mode has been activated. The 2018 and newer Ford F-150 requires the tow/haul mode to be active, and in some 2015 to 2017 F-150 trucks the 12-volt DC power may turn off when in park or during gear shifting, which is incompatible with the Echo. In these cases, a dedicated 12-volt DC charge line needs to be installed directly from the battery. Otherwise, it is a matter of plugging it in and following simple directions for downloading the app and mating it with the smart device.



PLUG, PLAY AND PRESS

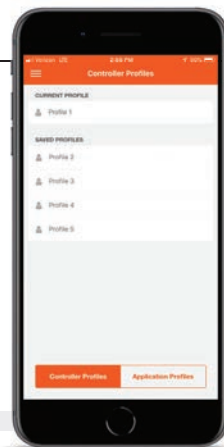
1) The Echo device is simply inserted into the seven-way receptacle. A card is included with the security pin, or you can find it under the cap. In most vehicles, the controller will power up as soon as it is plugged in. However, in some cases, the tow/haul mode will have to be activated after connecting the trailer cord. 2) The Echo installs upside-down in the Ford seven-way receptacle but is still plenty usable. The LED is facing down instead of up but is visible in a reflection. 3) The Echo app has light and dark themes to coincide with day and night. The large dot in the center is the manual brake-activation button. The colored band around the dot is a visual representation of the brake power setting. When the dot is pressed, the power moves up to 100 percent of the maximum adjusted output and is indicated on the bottom of the screen. There is also a sensitivity adjustment for fine-tuning.

The app stays resident on the screen, provides system updates and acts as the manual trailer-brake activation button. Here's where additional costs come into play. The smartphone or other device will need to be mounted to a windshield or other suitable place where reaching the screen is convenient during an emergency stop or anytime manual brake control is needed, such as in a sway event.

For the test, the Echo was plugged into the factory receptacle on a 2017 Ford F-350. When connecting the trailer power cord to the brake control, it was necessary to put the truck in gear for 12-volt DC power to be present in the seven-way plug. Once done, however, the unit worked as designed.

An iPhone 7 Plus was connected to the truck via Ford's Sync 3 and Apple CarPlay, which assumed control of the

4) Portability is the primary feature of the Echo, allowing the user to set multiple vehicle and trailer profiles and easily move the device from vehicle to vehicle. The profiles can be renamed as desired.



iPhone and took the Curt Echo app off the screen. We tested it with Maps, Messages, Music and Phone, and, in every case, those features superseded the Echo app. If the driver needs to apply the trailer brakes in an emergency, such as a sway event, he or she may be prevented from doing so quickly while hunting for the app and relaunching it. With the iPhone disconnected from Sync, all other Bluetooth connections were disabled when the Echo app is active, making the iPhone dedicated to the Echo.

Also, the smartphone will have to be plugged into a charging source adequate enough to equalize battery consumption, since the screen is on all the time. However, for folks who benefit from the vehicle-to-vehicle brake-control portability, this is a minor inconvenience. If the Echo had some kind of Bluetooth button or level for the cab that interfaced with the smart device, this would be an awesome brake control.

All the settings are resident on one screen, including the manual brake activation, brake current level, maximum output, sensitivity and a day/night screen-theme button. Once the system is set up, the trailer-brake settings are configured in the same manner as a traditional brake control.

MSRP for the Echo is \$261.84, which can easily be justified by the portability and convenience. The Curt Echo is ideal for folks who change tow vehicles and trailers frequently, or motorhome owners not wanting to go through the expense and time to install a full-wire brake control. The Echo has a limited lifetime warranty. **TL**

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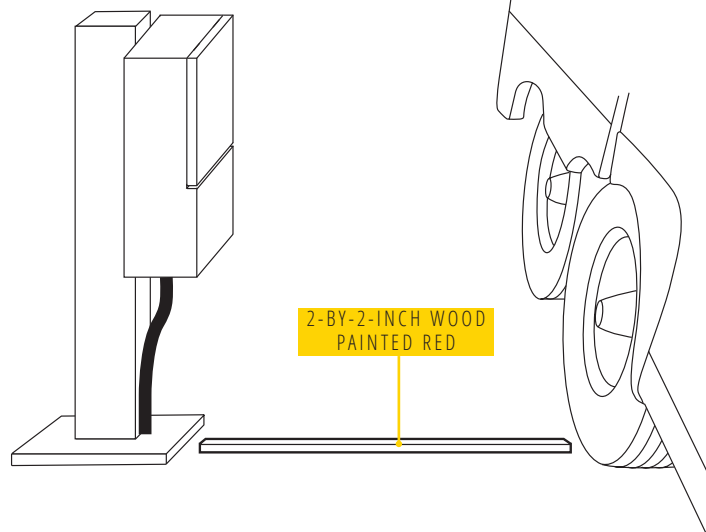
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ROOM TO SLIDE

After having to reposition my fifth-wheel when discovering that I could not fully extend the slide without hitting the power pedestal, I made an indicator. I got a piece of 2-by-2-inch wood that is about 6 inches longer than the distance from the extended slide to the outside of the fifth-wheel's tires, and I painted it red. Once I place the indicator on the ground between the pedestal and the campsite, I can tell just where to back my fifth-wheel into position. I drilled a couple of holes in the 2-by-2 so I can add landscape spikes to raise it, if needed, so it's more visible when parking on grass.

Gale Carlson, Lake City, Minnesota



and replaced the frames' glass with the plastic. The lids usually yield a usable flat piece that's about 10 by 12 inches. They're not necessarily optically perfect, but they're light and virtually unbreakable.

We attach the pictures to the RV's walls with hook-and-loop fasteners, which doesn't always stand up well to heat. To keep the hook-and-loop secured, I staple each piece to the wall at the top of the frames with a household stapler in the "tack" position. The hook-and-loop material has always peeled off without damaging the walls, and the staple holes are so small they're barely perceptible.

Mike Gleason, Bangor, Maine

Picture Perfect

• We like to have framed photos (camping-related, of course!) gracing the otherwise uninteresting walls of our travel trailer, but they didn't always stay put. Glass in photo frames is relatively heavy and breakable. To solve that problem, I cut suitably sized sections of clear plastic from the lids that come on supermarket trays used for sheet cakes and sandwich platters,



the outer edge of the skylight, and then attached the matching pieces to the rim of the sun shade. Now I have a skylight shade that can be removed and replaced in seconds.

Robert Sutton, Slatington, Pennsylvania

DIY Skylight Shade

• To keep the sun from heating up the bathroom in my RV, I made a cover for the large skylight above the shower using a solar windshield shade. I cut the sun shade to fit around the outer edge of the skylight. Then I used 2 feet of hook-and-loop fastener and cut it into small lengths with the two sides attached. I peeled off the back from each piece and attached them to



TECH ED TIP

➔ For safe power at campsites, be sure to check the integrity of the electricity at the RV park's power pedestal before plugging in your RV. A miswired pedestal can cause severe accessory/appliance damage and possibly even a fire. The best way to prevent this is to use an RV power-management surge protector that recognizes reverse polarity, open neutral and open ground, plus keeps the power off when problems exist. A good multimeter can provide the above information, minus surge protection.

—Chris Dougherty



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.



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PULL THE PLUG

REPLACING THE BATHROOM SINK AND COUNTER TOOK THE EDGE OFF SHAVING IN CLOSE QUARTERS

INVESTMENT ↗ Cost: \$300 | Time: 1 day

I found myself too close to the mirror when shaving in the bathroom of our 2005 Keystone Montana 2980RL fifth-wheel. The solution was to replace the surface-mounted sink with a new one that was farther away from the mirrored medicine cabinet.

The counter was stapled to the vanity base. To remove it, I first had to disconnect the hot- and cold-water lines and the drain. Then I gently tapped the underside edges of the counter with a rubber mallet until it loosened enough to lift off.

At a plumbing store, I found a vessel sink that was the right size and, as a bonus, it was marked down significantly. I bought a new faucet set at a big-box store. With a cardboard template I had drawn for the new sink and faucet placement, I went to a cabinet shop to find a countertop. I discovered a leftover piece of engineered quartz and was charged for only the cutting of the counter and backsplash.

I installed the sink and faucet



IN-SYNC BATHROOM SINK
Above, top to bottom: Bill Hill's Montana fifth-wheel came with a sink that was tucked tightly under the medicine cabinet. To allow more room for shaving, he installed a new bathroom counter, sink and faucet set.

set in the new counter and used counter-setting adhesive to attach the counter and backsplash to the vanity. I made minor adjustments to the water lines and drain and attached them to the faucet and sink. I was able to use the drain-closure pull that came with the new faucet set.

The result of a day's work and visits to three shops is a bathroom sink and vanity that look more up-to-date and function better for our needs. — *Bill Hill, Prescott, Arizona* 🇺🇸

RV RENOVATIONS

Have you modified your RV or remodeled it completely? Tell us about it in 500 words or less, including the total cost and time spent, and email your description to info@trailerlife.com. Include an ample selection of photos illustrating the project, along with your full name and mailing address. We'll pay \$50 for every RV Makeover we publish.

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See your favorite local RV dealer for more information.

ROVR ROLLR 45 COOLER \$369

In the world of coolers, some are tame, suited more for the summer concert series, and some are wild and ready for a backcountry experience. The line of RollR coolers from RovR Products definitely falls into the latter category.

Even at first glance, the boxy 45-quart RollR, with 9-inch all-terrain tires and spoked-aluminum wheels, stands out from the crowd. A gasket around the lid helps keep cold air in and warm air out. The pop-up box called the Wagon Bin makes a convenient place to put blankets, tablecloths or other dry goods while in transit. It folds down and straps to the top of the cooler, doubling as a seat pad. Add-ons include a Prepping Board (\$39.99), Dual Cup Holders (\$24.99) and a BikR Kit for towing the cooler with a bike (\$54). RovR



claims its coolers are certified bear-resistant, but our conversations with park rangers remind us that even the bear canisters used by backpackers can still end up at the bottom of a canyon. Bears may not have gotten the food, but neither will the backpackers, who will never see their canisters again.

www.rovrproducts.com



STAFF PICK We loaded the RollR with beverages and ice, plus some items in the Wagon Bin, and it stood up to our test admirably. The ice stayed frozen significantly longer than in the other coolers in our collection, and our reislings and sauv blancs remained perfectly chilled. — *Bob Dawson, Production Director*

FUSION2GO 3.0 RV \$399.99

Designed for RV use, the SureCall Fusion2Go 3.0 RV signal booster is designed to maximize cell signals for multiple users inside the RV. The easy-to-install kit captures the outdoor signal with a roof-mounted omni antenna, then amplifies and rebroadcasts it with an omnidirectional whip antenna located inside the RV. The FCC-approved system works with all North American 4G LTE carriers to boost voice, text and data signals.

www.surecall.com



BRITE-NITE LANTERN \$34.95

With three lighting modes and a 120-degree flood pattern, Wagan's Brite-Nite Dome USB Lantern is ideal for nighttime activities, not to mention power outages, and it doubles as a USB charger. A hanging hook, anti-slip feet and bottom magnet make the compact multifunctional lantern versatile outside and in the RV.

www.wagan.com



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UNEASY CHAIR

When the upholstery on a vinyl-covered chair in their three-year-old travel trailer started to separate, a Florida couple made a modest request:

FF We purchased a new Cruiser RV ViewFinder in 2015. In the spring of 2018, the vinyl material on one of the lounge chairs started to delaminate. The outer surface of the material separated from the fabric underneath. In our estimation, this was caused by a defect in the material, since the chair hadn't had lots of use, and another chair and sofa with the same

material have not shown any signs of the same issue.

We took photographs and sent them to Cruiser RV's warranty department. Because the trailer was out of warranty, the only solution they could suggest was to sell us a new chair for \$364.65.

At this point, we would be happy if Lippert Components, the maker of the chair, would provide us with a couple of yards of the vinyl material so we could recover the part of the chair that is peeling. If you can give us any assistance with this matter, it would be greatly appreciated.

Bob and Cindy Shaw, Palmetto, Florida

THE COMPANY RESPONDS

A week after sending a letter to Lippert Components with the Shaws' request, RV Resolutions received the following reply:

I have spoken to Mr. Shaw, and per his request, there will be 2 yards of material sent to his attention so that he is able to make repairs to the furniture in question as needed.

Dan Collins, Consumer Affairs
Lippert Components, Inc., Elkhart, Indiana

We heard from the Shaws again a short time later:

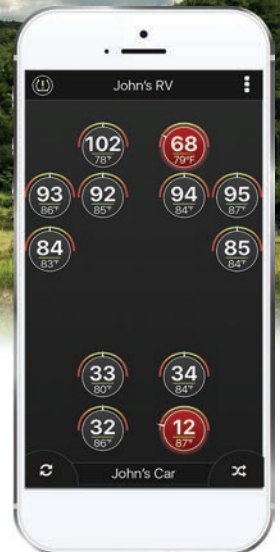
FF Thank you so much for your help with Lippert Components regarding the chair in our ViewFinder. The day after the letter arrived from RV Resolutions letting us know that Lippert had

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been notified of the problem, we received a phone call from Dan Collins at Lippert verifying that he received the request for 2 yards of material. He followed up a week later to let us know the material had been ordered and the expected ship date.

We were very pleased with the results from our request to RV Resolutions for assistance, and with how quickly Lippert responded and wanted to correct the problem. The material for our chair arrived before the anticipated date. We asked for 2 yards and received 5 yards. Lippert went above and beyond our request.

Thanks again for your help, and thanks to Dan Collins at Lippert for the fast service.

B. and C.S.

Passing the Baton

Another Florida couple asked for help getting reimbursement for repairs to their just-off-the-lot fifth-wheel:

“On our first camping trip with our new Keystone Montana, we discovered that it had a faulty inverter and the water line for the refrigerator’s icemaker was crimped. During the pre-delivery inspection, the fifth-wheel had been plugged into electrical power, so there was no way we could have known the inverter was nonfunctional. Also, it wasn’t hooked up to water, so we couldn’t have known that the icemaker had a problem.

We called Keystone Owner Relations and were told that the Montana was so new they would certainly reimburse us for the repairs, so we paid \$367.74 to have the problems fixed while on that first trip. We submitted the receipt to Keystone and were instructed that the reimbursement was being processed.

We have a one-year warranty on the fifth-wheel. Every time we try to follow up on reimbursement, the representatives at

the call center pass the baton. One time we were told that we must fill out a W-9. We did not receive any money; we paid out and are seeking reimbursement. Please help us.

Donald and Nancy Collins, Winter Haven, Florida

RV Resolutions contacted Keystone RV Company twice on the Collins’ behalf, and although the manufacturer did not respond directly, the couple was reimbursed:

“We finally received a check for \$367.74. Thank you.

D. and N.C. 🇺🇸

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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Thursday, March 21st Arrival - Sunday, March 24th Departure



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2	Rhode Island RV & Camping Show	3/1/19-3/3/19	Rhode Island Convention Center	Providence, RI
3	Colorado RV, Sports & Travel Show	3/7/19-3/10/19	National Western Complex	Denver, CO
4	National Capital Boat Show	3/8/19 -3/10/19	Dulles Expo Center	Chantilly, VA
5	Virginia RV Show - Hampton	3/8/19-3/10/19	Hampton Roads Convention Center	Hampton, VA
6	El Paso RV Show	3/15/19-3/17/19	El Paso Convention Center	El Paso, TX
7	Greater Phoenix Boat, RV & Outdoor Sports Show	3/21/19-3/24/19	Westworld of Scottsdale	Scottsdale, AZ
8	Springfield RV & Camping Show	3/22/19-3/24/19	BOS Center	Springfield, IL
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REFRIGERATOR OPERATION

Q We just bought our first RV, a 2015 Keystone Outback Super Lite fifth-wheel, and are learning things every time we get in or go somewhere. I have a problem with the refrigerator. After returning home from the last camping trip, we hooked up to 30-amp power to keep everything working, but the “Check light” on the refrigerator keeps coming on.

I looked up in the only paper I have on it, and it tells me to turn it off for 10 seconds and then turn it back on, and the light will go off. I have done this 100 times, it seems. I have been told that I need to leave the gas on, and it will automatically use whichever it needs, and it did. It drained the cylinders down pretty quick. Then someone else told me that when I have it hooked up, I shouldn't have to turn the gas on.

Marty Belcher, via email

A Hi, Marty, and welcome to the RVing community! First, since you're new at this RV gig, I'd recommend you navigate online over to our *Trailer Life* FAQ page at www.trailerlife.com/tech/rv-clinic-faq. While you're on the *Trailer Life* website, I'd also recommend you look at the drop-down Tech menu, then choose the Tech Q&A section. On those pages you'll find a wide variety of technical questions and answers, many that are similar to your question, that are derived from our RV Clinic column.

That “Check light” you're seeing is part of the refrigerator's LP-gas power system. It lights up when there's an incomplete startup in the combustion cycle or when the unit is running on LP-gas and something happens that causes the burner to shut down. If you were running on LP-gas, it could mean the cylinders are empty.

You didn't say which model of refrigerator you have, but if it's an Automatic Energy Selector (AES) type, it automatically chooses the best available power supply and uses that. You can learn more about that from the owner's manual or the manufacturer's website. The fact that the fridge keeps turning on the Check light suggests you don't have an AES model. Try manually switching it to AC power and see if that works. Again, the owner's manual is your friend.

If you have the trailer plugged in,

and it won't work on AC-power mode, check the power receptacle in the refrigerator compartment and see if there is power there. If so, and the refrigerator is plugged in, it's possible that the 120-volt AC fuse on the circuit board is blown and/or there is a bad AC heating element.

Dirty Tank Sensors

Q How can we clean the sensors for the holding tanks, as they are misreading? I have heard this can be caused by debris sticking to the sensors, giving false readings.

Larry Fister
Merced, California

A You're right, Larry, debris builds up on the sensors over time, and that creates false tank-level readings. There are several sensor cleaners on the market, and one that we've heard some very good things about is Thetford's Tank Blaster, a fairly new product. Another is Thetford's Level Gauge Cleaner, which is used as a regular maintenance item. Both

Thetford products are readily available at RV-supply stores and dealers.

You may also see online references to various mechanical solutions — such as using ice cubes to slosh around in the tank and knock some debris loose — and these work to varying degrees of success. You may find the chemical solutions are all you need. For a more permanent solution, you can consider replacing the existing sensors with Horst Miracle Probes or switch to a system like the SeeLevel II from Garnet Instruments.

More Black-Tank Valve Leaks

In January's RV Clinic, I read with interest Kevin Kobus' problem with his Jayco hybrid trailer's leaking black-water valve. I had the same problem on my Dutchmen. I was going to replace the valve block, which would mean cutting through the discharge tube to unbolt the back two bolts.

I then found that the small rod attached to the push/pull cable was cut too short by about ½ inch and would not fully push the gate valve closed. Bouncing down the highway caused the valve to open even farther. What a mess!

I used some farm-boy engineering

READER TIP: BLACK-TANK VALVE IDEA

➔ In regard to Kevin Kobus' January letter, “Black-Water Valve Leak,” a good suggestion for all RV owners is to add a Valterra Bladex T58 twist-on waste valve, or a similar model, on the outlet of the wastewater drain. Before disconnecting the sewer hose prior to travel, I close the valve. When the sewer hose is connected at the next stop, I open the valve. It prevents valve leakage and residual wastewater from pouring on the ground. It is an inexpensive and easy-to-install “belt-and-suspenders” precaution to eliminate surprises and campground embarrassment.

Ken Olsen, Poplar Grove, Illinois

That's a good idea to add a double-valve setup, Ken. The caveat is that many RVs have such low-hanging waste-pipe terminations that 5 or 6 inches of the new valve's length will further reduce the pipe's ground clearance. An RVer considering this modification needs to take some measurements and be sure the new valve won't cause low-hanging-pipe clearance problems.

and cut a small bolt to length, drilled a hole, welded it to the OEM shaft, thus extending it, then rehooked it to the wire. It works perfectly.

Larry Amstutz, Grand Haven, Michigan

Thank you for passing that along, Larry. It's terrific that you found a way around the improperly sized valve-operating cable and were able

to engineer what sounds like a good solution to the problem. You may well be causing some readers to head under their RVs to see if your solution will help them as well.

Breakaway-Switch Failure

After reading John Abel's December 2018 "Brake-Control Failure" question and Vernon Wesley's August 2018

"Breakaway-Switch Brake Failure" question, I am prompted to write about a breakaway-switch failure I incurred.

I have a 2008 Keystone Copper Canyon fifth-wheel that was on a site that sloped back toward a lake, so before I disconnected it, I pulled the breakaway switch as advised last summer in RV Clinic. I then chocked the wheels and disconnected it from my truck.

About two hours later, as we were sitting around the campfire, the left-rear brake light/taillight came on, so I immediately went to check the breakaway switch, which I had forgotten to plug back in. It and the wire were burnt, so I cut the wires and disconnected the battery. My wife saw some smoke coming from under the trailer, which we determined was from the brake magnets smoking. I also disconnected the campground power source for the night.

The next morning, I disconnected the breakaway-switch wires from the junction box under the gooseneck and found the insulation had burned off some other wires in the bundle. I separated the wires and taped them so they would not short, and checked the operation of everything in the trailer. Everything seemed OK, but later the batteries were going dead, so I charged them through the truck until we got home. I found that the two 40-amp reverse-polarity fuses in the converter had blown, and after replacing them, it started charging the batteries.

What really bothers me is that I think the breakaway switch and its wires are way undersized for that amount of amperage. The feed wire from the Copper Canyon is about 10-gauge, and the wires for the switch are about 14-gauge. After I installed a new switch, I tried it, and it and its wires got hot immediately. It doesn't appear to be protected with a fuse.

I am a mechanical engineer and have a basic knowledge of electricity, and consider this design inadequate, unsafe and a fire hazard. Please alert the manufacturers and the public about this problem.

Donald J. Ahola, Ishpeming, Michigan

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Thank you for your detailed note, Donald, but there's no easy way to say this: You used the breakaway switch and trailer brakes the wrong way, and that's why you had the problem. It's not because of inadequate design, and it's not unsafe, per the millions of other trailers with the same switch that are having no problems.

The switch is not meant to be a parking brake, it never has been sold or promoted as a parking brake, and you may have read about that in a magazine ("as advised last summer"), but it wasn't *Trailer Life*. We polled our entire tech staff here and found no one ever recommended that to anyone, either verbally or in print. We'd never do that because it's wrong.

The emergency breakaway switch is designed to apply the trailer brakes in the event of a tow vehicle and trailer separation. Under ideal conditions, the trailer would slow to a stop when the switch is activated, then the plug is inserted back into the switch to shut off the current flow.

Vernon Wesley's problem was due to a breakaway switch that was mistakenly activated, compounded by trailer brakes that were probably out of adjustment; it was not a breakaway-switch failure. John Abel's problem was likely due to an incorrectly adjusted brake control that could have also been aggravated by trailer brakes that needed to be adjusted. Neither case was attributed to a breakaway switch that did not do its job.

Additionally, electric RV trailer brakes are not designed to be used as parking brakes. They are meant for relatively short-duration use rather than leaving them on for hours or days at a time, and that would tend to overheat the magnets and probably the wiring. When brakes are applied, the magnet is attracted to the drum armature and, via

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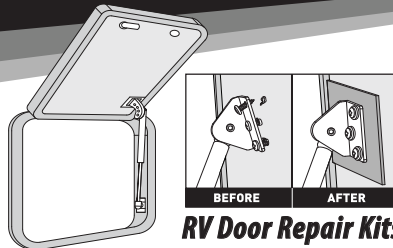
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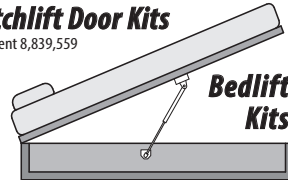


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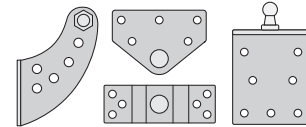


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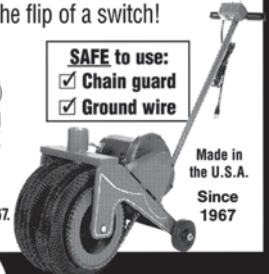
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mechanical linkages, spreads to the brake shoes to apply the braking force. Without drum rotation, there is no braking. There are a few trailer brakes with mechanically activated parking brakes built in, but they have nothing to do with the magnets and electrical components.

It's unfortunate you had the problems with your fifth-wheel, but in this case, you need to point the finger in another direction besides the breakaway switch.

Factory Brake-Control Fan

In response to December's "Brake-Control Failure," John Abel's concern about the factory-installed brake controller in his truck, I would like to state that I am definitely a fan of them. I have a one-ton 2008 Ford with a factory-installed integrated brake controller that proved its value to me this past fall.

We were pulling our 31-foot Alpenlite on a trip from western Oregon to Idaho when we encountered road construction on a mountain pass. I will admit I was going faster than I should have been under the circumstances, probably exceeding 60 MPH, when we came over a small rise and saw that the traffic was stopped directly in front of us. I hit the brakes hard. When I was at the point of deciding if I was going around that truck and trailer in front of us on the left or the right, the brakes suddenly took us down to a stop with room to spare.

I am convinced that the way the brakes on the trailer reacted is the only reason we did not hit the rig in front of us. Never did the brakes on either the truck or trailer lock up, and we stopped a lot faster than I expected. Thank the Lord for that brake controller.

Rodger Shaddy, Marcola, Oregon

Thank you for the words of recommendation, Rodger. It's surprising — although it should not be — how well a tow rig and trailer's brakes can work together under demanding circumstances. Your tale is also an excellent reason for keeping one's trailer brakes properly adjusted so when push comes to shove, they do the job. (continued on page 94)

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RV CLINIC

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**COMMENT:
TRAILER BACKING TECHNIQUE**

➔ Regarding Roger Cohee's inexperience at backing up a trailer ("Backing Dilemma," December 2018), I have been in camp-grounds where I have backed for several people. My point is that a common mistake is leaving the trailer brakes operative while attempting to back the trailer. Many people keep their foot on the brake pedal, which energizes the brakes and makes it difficult to control the trailer movement. I learned the hard way.

Lyle Caswell, Somerville, Alabama

Thank you for the suggestion, Lyle. If a driver can back without that lightweight but steady foot on the brake, it works fine, but disconnecting the trailer also works, although that eliminates any backing lights you may need after dark. Practice makes it easy!

Q We are looking at purchasing a used 2012 Grey Wolf 27BHKS. It meets all our needs except that it

only has a stovetop. There is a large drawer under the stovetop, and I was wondering if it is possible to take the drawer out and install an oven instead? If it is possible, is that something we could do ourselves, or should we take it to an RV dealer to be done? Also, would this be an expensive project?

Dan and Fan Bender
New Providence, Pennsylvania

A Using that drawer space for an oven installation makes a lot of sense because that's what the RV manufacturers do. When the RV is slated to get a stovetop-and-oven combination, the unit is built into the cabinet. If it's just a stovetop, the space is used for drawers or a storage cabinet.

You'll probably need to buy a stove-oven combination, rather than just an oven, because standalone ovens are few and far between. Check the online specifications of the unit you have in mind to verify you'll have enough clearance for the oven per its manufacturer specifications.

You'll also need to do some modest cabinet work to remove the drawer or door hardware and framing. There's nothing extremely mechanically complex about this kind of project, so if you're familiar with cabinet work and carpentry, you can do this yourself. However, rearranging the propane line, which may be necessary to hook up the new stove-oven combination, is something that's best left to a professional.

As for cost, we can't hazard a guess because it depends on the stove-oven combination, how much work you do yourself and how much modification is needed for the cabinetry. A qualified RV-service center should be able to do this work for you without any problems because it's a fairly straightforward project.

Toilet Water-Supply Shutoff

Q We are relatively new to the RV experience but have enjoyed using our 2018 Jayco Jay Flight

several times. We always use RV-style quick-dissolving toilet paper, but occasionally a clog does occur, which is quickly resolved with a straightened coat hanger. The problem is, while this is being done, the bowl continues to fill with water.

I asked the dealership service department about installing a shutoff valve on the supply line for occasional use, which they adamantly recommended against, saying it could create a host of other problems that I wouldn't want to experience. Seems pretty simple to me. What's your opinion?

Ron Tomlinson, Cassville, Georgia

A The easy solution is switching off the water pump, or if you're connected to the campsite water supply, turning off the hose spigot at the hookup while performing the unclogging duties. Alternately, I can't imagine any reason why you shouldn't install a shutoff valve in the freshwater feed line to the toilet. As long as you remember to open the valve when the unclogging is done, there should be no harm, and it's hard to guess what the dealer meant by "a host of other problems" if you install such a valve.

Consider running more water into the bowl before using. The extra water volume may help move the paper out of the bowl and down the pipe more effectively without giving it a chance to be entangled in the valve seals.

Separate Tank Flush and Drinking Hoses

Q I read that you should never use your drinking-water hose to wash out your black tanks via the black-tank flush connection. What about using the small hose attached to my outside faucet?

Rick Petzak, Zeeland, Michigan

A In theory, you could use the small outside shower-hose connection on your RV, but you won't get as much pressure from it as you would by using a hose connected to a city-water faucet. Pressure is part of what helps clean the gunk inside the black tank, so the more the merrier.

As for using a separate hose for the black-tank flush, each of those flush systems includes anti-backflow valves that allow water to go into the tank but not sneak back out. According to the system design, you can connect any hose to the black-tank flush fitting, and the water will flow toward the tank and not back into the hose.

This is great in theory, but why take the chance? If the backflow valve fails,

the hose can become contaminated. It's always wise to use a hose dedicated to cleaning the holding tank. It's just cheap insurance. **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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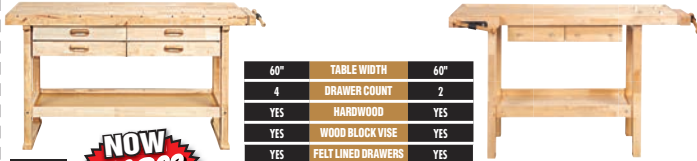
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Customer Rating
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60" WOOD WORKBENCH



60"	TABLE WIDTH	60"
4	DRAWER COUNT	2
YES	HARDWOOD	YES
YES	WOOD BLOCK VISE	YES
YES	FELT LINED DRAWERS	YES

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H7723

* GRIZZLY H7723 stated specs.

ITEM 63395
93454/69054/62603 shown



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• 5 mil thickness

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ITEM 97582, 97583, 37051, 37052, 64417, 64418, 61363, 68497, 61360, 61359, 68498, 68496 shown



Customer Rating
★★★★★



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- Night vision

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Customer Rating
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~~\$249.99~~



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18 PIECE SAE AND METRIC T-HANDLE BALL END HEX KEY SET

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MODEL: HTWKS14PCN



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12,000 LB. TRUCK/SUV WINCH

- Weights 83.65 lbs.
- 21" L x 10-1/8" H

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MODEL: 96820



Customer Rating
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Customer Rating
★★★★★

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MODEL: PC360



Customer Rating
★★★★★



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OBD2 CODE READER WITH ABS/SRS/FixAssist® ZR13



Customer Rating
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MODEL: EECR3A



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1 TON CAPACITY FOLDABLE SHOP CRANE

- Boom extends from 36-1/4" to 50-1/4"
- Crane height adjusts from 82" to 94"

COMPARE TO IRONTON \$199.99

MODEL: 46218



Customer Rating
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NOW \$129.99

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drillmaster SUPER COUPON

80 PIECE ROTARY TOOL KIT



COMPARE TO PROFESSIONAL WOODWORKER \$26.35

MODEL: 61832



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LIMIT 8 - Coupon valid through 6/19/19*

SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating
★★★★★



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Grant's SUPER COUPON

12" x 12" MICROFIBER CLEANING CLOTHS - PACK OF 4



Customer Rating
★★★★★

COMPARE TO PROELITE \$10

MODEL: 687400



NOW \$1.99

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WARRIOR SUPER COUPON

18 VOLT LITHIUM CORDLESS 3/8" DRILL/DRIVER KIT



Customer Rating
★★★★★

COMPARE TO RYOBI \$69

MODEL: P1810



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SUPER COUPON

TWO-TIER COLLAPSIBLE EASY-STORE STEP LADDER



Customer Rating
★★★★★

COMPARE TO WERNER \$33.88

MODEL: S322A-1



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SAVE 40%
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PREDATOR SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating
★★★★★



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PITTSBURGH SUPER COUPON

16 OZ. HAMMERS WITH FIBERGLASS HANDLE



Customer Rating
★★★★★

COMPARE TO KOBALT \$9.98

MODEL: 62742



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~~\$4.99~~



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CENTRAL MACHINERY SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating
★★★★★



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drillmaster SUPER COUPON

1500 WATT DUAL TEMPERATURE HEAT GUN (572°/1112°)



Customer Rating
★★★★★

COMPARE TO BLACK & DECKER \$28.06

MODEL: HG1300



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PITTSBURGH Automotive **SELLING JACKS** IN AMERICA

RAPID PUMP® 3 TON STEEL HEAVY DUTY LOW PROFILE FLOOR JACK

- Weighs 73 lbs.

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COMPARE TO TEQ \$149.99 MODEL: T830018Z

ITEM 64264/64266/64879/64881 61282/62326/61253 shown

46264120

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U.S. GENERAL Series 2

30", 4 DRAWER TECH CART

- 12,600 cu. in. of storage
- 580 lb. capacity
- Heavy duty gas struts hold lid open at 90 degrees

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOW \$107.99

COMPARE TO \$79.95 MODEL: KR8C10TRPC

SAVE \$69.1

ITEM 64818 64096 shown

46270519

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CENTRAL PNEUMATIC

21 GALLON, 2.5 HP, 125 PSI VERTICAL OIL-LUBE AIR COMPRESSOR

- Air delivery: 5.8 CFM @ 40 PSI 4.7 CFM @ 90 PSI

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOW \$159.99

COMPARE TO \$229 MODEL: C201H

SAVE \$69

ITEM 61454/69091/62803/63635/67847 shown

46278732

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 6/19/19*

HaulMaster

72" x 80" MOVING BLANKET

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOW \$5.99

COMPARE TO BLUE HAWK \$19.99 MODEL: 77280

SAVE 70%

ITEM 69505/62418/66537 shown

46279884

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 6/19/19*

HaulMaster

30" x 18" HARDWOOD DOLLY

- 1000 lb. capacity

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOW \$11.99

COMPARE TO MILWAUKEE \$19.97 MODEL: 33700

SAVE 39%

ITEM 92486/39757/60496/62398/61897/38970 shown

46281738

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 6/19/19*

EARTHQUAKE XT

1/2" COMPOSITE PRO EXTREME TORQUE AIR IMPACT WRENCH

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

1190 TORQUE F.L.B.S. BOLT BREAKAWAY

NOW \$129.99

COMPARE TO \$149.99

WEIGHS 4.4 LBS.

COMPARE TO \$599.95 MODEL: PT850

SAVE \$469

ITEM 62891

46284727

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 6/19/19*

PITTSBURGH Automotive

PNEUMATIC ADJUSTABLE ROLLER SEAT

- 300 lb. capacity

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOW \$19.99

COMPARE TO DURALAST \$64.99 MODEL: TR6201C

SAVE 69%

ITEM 61160/61896/63456/46319 shown

46287126

LIMIT 6 - Coupon valid through 6/19/19*

PREDATOR

8750 MAX. STARTING/17000 RUNNING WATTS 13 HP (420 CC) GAS GENERATOR

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

ITEM 63086/68530/63085 shown

ITEM 68525/63088/63087 CALIFORNIA ONLY

- GFCI outlets

SAVE \$2,069

COMPARE TO HONDA \$2,599 MODEL: EB6500X1AT

NOW \$529.99

Wheel kit and battery sold separately.

46290092

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 6/19/19*

PITTSBURGH Automotive

3 TON HEAVY DUTY STEEL JACK STANDS

- Adjusts from 11-3/4" to 16-3/4"

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOW \$18.99

COMPARE TO TORIN BLACK JACK \$25.84 MODEL: 1007102

SAVE 26%

ITEM 38846/69597/62392/61196 shown

46291797

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SUPER COUPON

200 LUMENS LED SUPER BRIGHT FLIP LIGHT

- Wireless, tool-free and easy installation

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOW \$2.99

COMPARE TO PREMIER \$6 MODEL: SW-SWITCH-12/24

SAVE 50%

ITEM 64189/64723/63922 shown

46293662

LIMIT 9 - Coupon valid through 6/19/19*

COVER PRO

10 FT. x 10 FT. PORTABLE SHED

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOW \$139.99

COMPARE TO SHELTER LOGIC \$236.89 MODEL: 70333

SAVE \$96

ITEM 56184/63297 shown

46303331

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 6/19/19*

WARRIOR

3 PIECE TITANIUM HIGH SPEED STEEL STEP BITS

- Drill 28 hole sizes from 1/8" to 3/4"

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

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COMPARE TO IRWIN \$59.98 MODEL: 15504PKSM

SAVE 85%

ITEM 69087/60379/91616 shown

46304994

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PITTSBURGH Automotive

12 VOLT, 150 PSI PORTABLE INFLATOR

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOW \$6.99

COMPARE TO CUSTOM ACCESSORIES \$19.49 MODEL: 59008

SAVE 64%

ITEM 4077/63109/63152 shown

46316400

LIMIT 8 - Coupon valid through 6/19/19*

HaulMaster

TRI-FOLD ALUMINUM LOADING RAMP

- 1500 lb. capacity

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOW \$74.99

COMPARE TO REESE \$149 MODEL: 74554700

SAVE \$74

ITEM 69595/60334/90018 shown

46320441

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9 PIECE FULLY POLISHED COMBINATION WRENCH SETS

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

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Item 42305 shown

COMPARE TO \$17.97 MODEL: HCW10PSSAE

SAVE 66%

ITEM 69043/63282/42304 69044/63171/42305

46323184

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CENTECH

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

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

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COMPARE TO SCHUMACHER ELECTRIC \$59.99 MODEL: SE-1250

SAVE 50%

ITEM 60581 3418/60653 shown

46335425

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 6/19/19*

Bauer

10 AMP DEEP CUT VARIABLE SPEED BAND SAW KIT

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOW \$99.99

COMPARE TO DEWALT \$299 MODEL: DWM120

SAVE \$199

ITEM 63763 64194/63444 shown

Blade sold separately.

46337666

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 6/19/19*

PORTLAND

14" ELECTRIC CHAIN SAW

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOW \$39.99

COMPARE TO CRAFTSMAN \$99.99 MODEL: 071-45247

SAVE \$60

ITEM 64498/64497 shown

46346668

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HaulMaster

700 LB. CAPACITY BIGFOOT HAND TRUCK

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOW \$39.99

COMPARE TO ROUGHNECK \$99.99 MODEL: 40546

SAVE \$60

ITEM 37520/97568/62974/62900 shown

46356569

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SUPER COUPON

.50 CAL METAL AMMO CAN

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOW \$12.99

COMPARE TO GAME WINNER \$24.99 MODEL: FSGWHE1030

SAVE 48%

ITEM 63750/63181 shown

46367364

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Romancing the Rockies

It's easy to fall in love with the Maroon Bells, Colorado's uniquely colored, camera-ready mountains

— by Emily Fagan

The Maroon Bells are the most photographed peaks in Colorado, and when we stood in front of them before dawn alongside a dozen other photographers, we could easily see why they are so beloved.

The rising sun cast a glow on the mountain-tops that was reflected in Maroon Lake at their base, and as the sun slowly climbed higher, the peach hue crept down their sides. Dozens of camera shutters

clicked as we all captured the magical scene.

Suddenly, a young man nearby dropped to one knee and proclaimed his love for his girlfriend as he held out a glittering ring. A cheer went up from the onlookers when she giggled, “Yes!” and flashed her new diamond in the morning sun.

A few moments later, a bride in a white gown and her wedding party appeared on the shore for a photo shoot. Their smiles

radiated pure happiness as they posed against the spectacular backdrop.

Such beauty! We had come to photograph the celebrated mountains, but the Maroon Bells had given us a touch of romance.

→ If You Go
The Roaring Fork Transportation Authority provides public bus service from Aspen Highlands Ski Area to Maroon Lake from mid-June through early October. Access by private motorized vehicles is limited.
www.rfta.com/routes/maroon-bells **TL**



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