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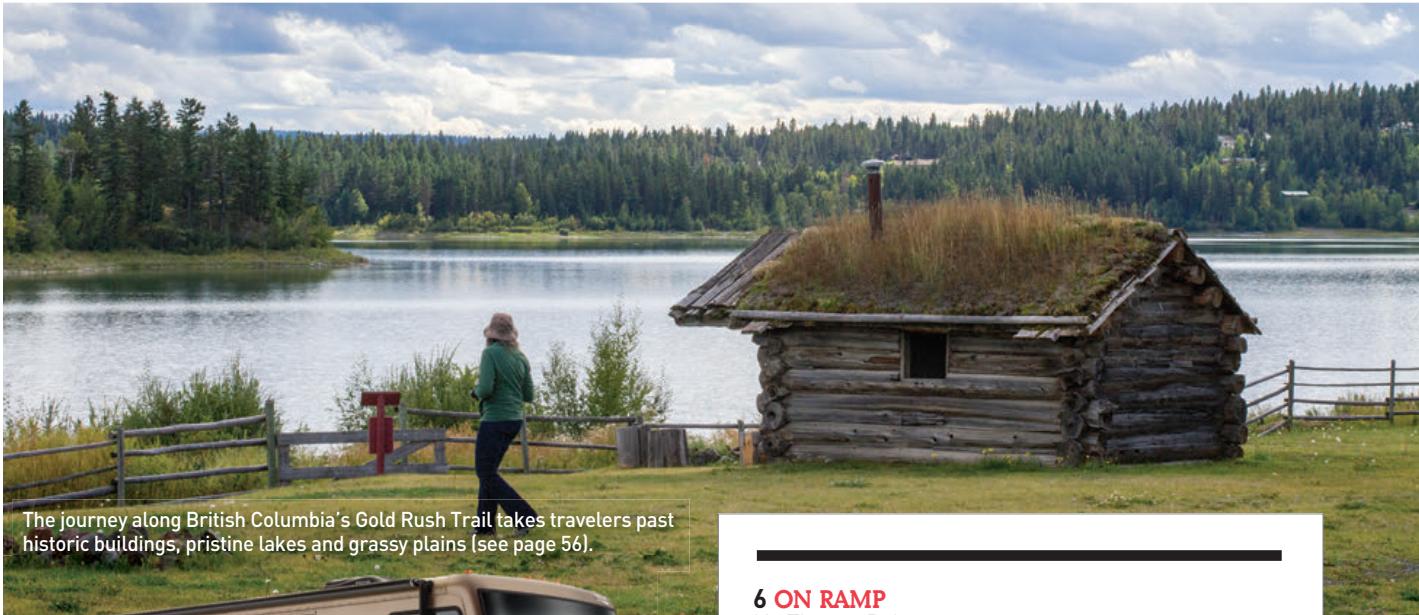
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The journey along British Columbia's Gold Rush Trail takes travelers past historic buildings, pristine lakes and grassy plains (see page 56).



We take a look at a dozen new Class A coaches, including Newmar's Bay Star Sport, with an MSRP around \$100K. Pg. 64

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#### ON THE COVER

Touring through Southern California's Joshua Tree National Park in the Fleetwood Pace Arrow LXE 38K (see test on page 92). Photo by Scott Hirko.

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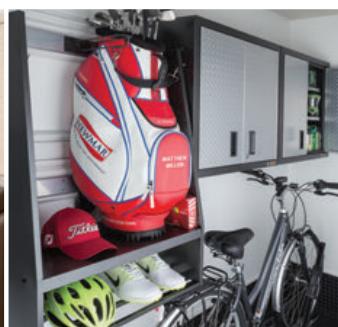
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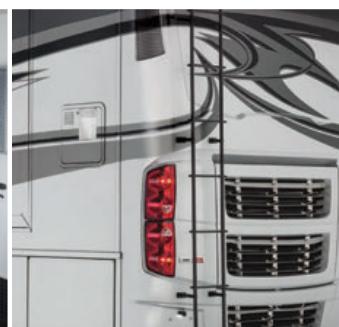
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VENT

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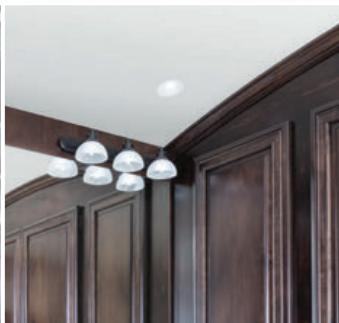
\*Passive Steer only available on tag axle models



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ANA<sup>5</sup>



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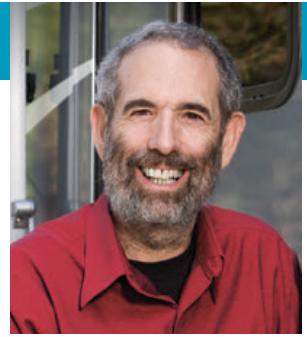
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By Bob Livingston

# No Time to Relax

**T**alking to friends who have retired and now spend more time in their motorhomes, the mantra seems to be that there is not enough time in the day. My response is usually, “How can that be, you don’t work any longer.” Most people fire back with, “Hard to believe, but it’s true. I’m busier now than when I was working full time.” After spending the entire month of February in an RV resort near Palm Springs, California, I now get it.

From the moment my wife, Lynne, and I landed on our site and set up, the time vaporized. Granted, I was working some, since monthly deadlines don’t take a hiatus, and we quickly set up our home office, which meant multiple trips to the office supply and electronics stores to buy the stuff we normally have in our stationary office. We also took the time to add a number of household items that make life on the road easier. Most of these items were the result of suggestions from our full-timing friends who have spent enough time on the road to know what works and what additions are worth the extra weight.

Once we were oriented in the park and immersed in the ongoing activities, it was crystal clear why RVers don’t have enough time in any one day. There’s just too much to do! Our typical day was jampacked with activities, including those sponsored by the resort and projects around the rig.

The original idea was to sleep in a little and while away the morning with coffee and a book sitting in the sun on the patio chairs. Well, that only happened a few times. Our day started by waking up early in the morning, getting ourselves ready for the day, throwing down a light breakfast and with coffee in hand, run out the door to socialize with our neighbors and friends to set the plans for the day. From there, Lynne headed out for the Zumba class or other activities and maybe a few rounds of mahjong with the ladies while I worked on the computer. Everyone circled back around lunch.

My passion is to tinker. I spent a lot of time working projects for this magazine and we even installed a

Splendide stacking washer and dryer in a friend’s RV, right in camp. It’s amazing how easy it is to find things that need to be tweaked or fixed — and find gadgets that are fun to install and use. That’s what happens when owners gather to compare ideas and brag about clever and useful modifications.

As expected, the conversations always touched on performance of the motorhome drivetrain and tow vehicles for those who pull trailers. I was able to relay my experience with 5 Star Tuning and the results we attained by testing the company’s reprogramming tuner for the Ford V-10 (see page 111). Now gas motorhome owners can take advantage of horsepower and torque gains once reserved only for diesel owners.

Although we went to four concerts, spent time in the pools, rode our bicycles and participated in many other activities, some people with fast-paced, structured careers and lives might consider our time in the desert somewhat unproductive. That’s music to my ears. Good thing there were 29 days in February this year. **M**

**“Hard to believe, but it’s true. I’m busier now than when I was working full time.”**

## Contributors | May



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



**Arline Chandler** (in memoriam) passed away January 12 at her home in Heber Springs, Arkansas. She was an avid RVer and a frequent contributor to *MotorHome*. Arline will be greatly missed.



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



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



**Larry Walton** is a freelance photojournalist and lifelong RVer who loves exploring the Pacific Northwest with his wife, Robin, and their two dogs, Buddy and Sunny.



**Mary Zalmanek** and her husband, Jim, enjoy traveling in their 2003 Safari Trek when they are not at home in Monument, Colorado. Mary is the author of *The Art of the Spark* ([www.artofthespark.com](http://www.artofthespark.com)).

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**What tips/tricks do you have for other RVers to combat mold and mildew buildup in a motorhome? Are there any products you've had success with, or does the "home remedy" route work better?**

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



### A Diligent Dehumidifier

Living in south Florida, mold and mildew are always a problem, even on the outside of the rig. Our biggest challenge was a roof leak on our Thor Vegas 24.1. The dealership working with Thor couldn't find the leak. We were concerned mold and mildew would take over the inside of the coach. We tested for mold and bought a used dehumidifier. After a lot of searching, we found the leak. We still use the dehumidifier in the motorhome during the rainy season with no sign of mold or mildew.

**Ray and Naomi Jodoin**  
North Port, Florida

### Move Over, Moisture

I spent many months in high-humidity conditions along the Gulf Coast, from Louisiana to Florida. Outside moisture had to be kept outside, and interior moisture had to be vented outside. I was able to keep moisture under control by doing the following.

1. Keeping windows, ceiling vents and the entry door closed most of the time. The A/C(s) or furnace will usually control moisture when they are cycling.
2. Replacing open-cell foam weatherstripping around the entry door with EPDM rubber weatherstripping for a tighter seal.
3. Replacing my two-speed range vent fan switch with a 12-volt DC potentiometer fan switch so the fan would operate at a lower, quieter speed. I ran it constantly when cooking/baking/washing dishes so the vapors were vented outside.
4. My coach has a ceiling vent fan in the bathroom, so I always open it when showering. I also purchased an adjustable, spring-loaded clothing rod and placed it inside my shower to hang wet clothing and umbrellas on rainy days (ceiling vent open).
5. If you have a washer/dryer combo, the dryer exhaust should be vented outside. If it is exhausted inside,

you will definitely have interior moisture problems during the drying cycle.

6. Opening ceiling vents during months that were too cool to operate the A/C(s) but too warm to operate the furnace. I learned that ceiling vents equipped with fans are much more effective than static vents, and having high-quality roof vent covers are a must for rainy days.

These measures were effective and I never had to use any commercial products to control moisture; however, extreme conditions might dictate using a small (electric) dehumidifier that can be easily dumped.

**Edward Phillips | Greers Ferry, Arkansas**

### Keep It Dry

I live on the Pacific Northwest coast where mold is a problem. I control moisture by using Dry-Z-Air absorbent crystals. As I only have a Class B, I can use two canisters — one in the front, one in the rear. It is necessary to check

## Featured Letter

### Dual-purpose Dehumidifier

We spend a lot of time in the Southeast, especially in winter. High humidity is the norm, and we've tried different approaches in our motorhome. Four years ago we bought a small floor-standing home dehumidifier. It has three fan settings along with the level of humidity we want to maintain. On a humid day it's not unusual to dump two reservoirs of water or more in 24 hours. An added benefit is that because it uses a compressor to pull the moisture out of the air, it also produces heat. So on cool nights this is all we need to keep comfortable in our Class A motorhome.

**Herb Brumbach | Livingston, Texas**



them at least once a week.  
**Frank Keavy | Florence, Oregon**

**An Airfree Solution**

We purchased an Airfree Onix 3000 from Hammacher Schlemmer and it works very well keeping mold and mildew out of our RV. It is maintenance-free and silent. You must, however, rid your RV/home of any existing mold. This model covers up

to 650 square feet. It is also supposed to destroy viruses, bacteria, dust-mite allergens, pet-dander allergens, pollen and odors. The negative: This specific make/model costs approximately \$300.

**Preston and Jae Cluff**  
 Eagle River, Alaska

**Charcoal Chatter**

I use two cardboard boxes filled with charcoal to combat mildew and mold

in my motorhome during storage. I place one box in the front and one in the rear of our motorhome. I've done this for the past five years and have had no problems.

**Ron Mattes | Palmetto, Florida**

**Disarm and Hammer Humidity**

I only have a problem when storing my Class C for winter. I get two large tinfoil pans (11 by 16 inches) and put a box of baking soda in each to cover the bottom about 1/2-inch deep. I put one up in the overhead bunk and one in back on the bed. It does a great job. It should work for full-timers too, but ventilation in the shower is far more important.

**Dave August | Via email**

**Dollar Tree of Life**

I use "moisture eliminator" from the Dollar Tree. I place one behind the toilet in the motorhome and it works fine. Of course it also helps to open a window or roof vent after a steamy shower.

**Kathy Burrows | Fresno, California**

**A Grand Adventure**

The February article "A Grand Time" brought back so many great memories of the Grand Canyon. We have visited the North and South rims many times. We always wondered what it would be like to raft the Colorado and see the canyon from that perspective. In 2012 we did just that. We went with Hatch River Expeditions and the trip was excellent. We traveled 188 miles in 8 days leaving from Lees Ferry. We stopped to hike, visit waterfalls and view petroglyphs. We slept on the ground and, looking up at the night sky, we saw millions of stars. What an adventure.

**Ray and Naomi Jodoin | Via email**

**Big-rig Travel Tips**

My husband and I live in Alaska, and we are used to the state's easy-to-navigate and uncongested roads. Being new to RVing in the Lower 48, can your readers recommend anything that provides good road/route information for big rigs? I can't find a mapping app or an RV guide that speaks directly to this. It is dangerous



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to find ourselves routed to a barely two-lane, windy road with no shoulder when in a big rig with a dinghy vehicle, or on a direct route through an urban area with narrow lanes and congested traffic. I know road conditions change rapidly with new construction and all, but is there anything that will help us navigate the roads; i.e., guides, mapping apps, websites, etc.?

**Nancy Schommer**

Trapper Creek, Alaska **M**

### Question of the Month

What resources do you use for navigating roads in a large motorhome? Is there a book or atlas, or even GPS program or app that seems to consistently steer your big rig clear of potentially dangerous situations?

Send your comments to:

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From the RV Sanitation Expert



## Good Times in the Badlands

Striking formations rise abruptly from the surrounding prairie in South Dakota's Badlands National Park

By Mary Zalmanek

**T**he rugged terrain and harsh environment in southwestern South Dakota were “bad lands” to the Lakota people in the late 18th century. The sharply eroded buttes, pinnacles and spires led French fur purveyors to call it “bad lands to traverse.” Modern-day visitors to the 244,000-acre Badlands National Park can travel its paved roads with relative ease. There are hiking trails ranging from easy to strenuous that allow visitors to immerse themselves in the park’s natural beauty.

Badlands is home to one of the most complete fossil accumulations in North America. A 7-year-old girl found a saber-toothed cat fossil, one of the park’s rarest specimens, in 2010. The Fossil Preparation Lab, located

in the Ben Reifel Visitor Center, gives visitors a chance to watch paleontologists at work.

Astronomy buffs will enjoy the night sky viewing at the Cedar Pass Campground Amphitheater. Ranger programs are offered Friday through Monday nights during summer. Telescopes are available to examine the Milky Way Galaxy, star clusters, planets, moons and nebulae. On a clear night, thousands of stars twinkle in the dark sky.

Cedar Pass Campground has 96 RV sites, some with electric hookups. The park’s other campground, Sage Creek, offers dry camping free of charge. For more information, call 605-433-5361 or visit [www.nps.gov/badl](http://www.nps.gov/badl).

By Bobbie Hasselbring

# The Egg & I

I'm in love with eggs. They're versatile, quick and easy to prepare, and low in calories.

You're probably thinking, "Aren't eggs full of cholesterol and bad for the heart?" Like a lot of health advice, in recent years cautions against eggs have faded. WebMD states: "After 25 years of study, it's evident that cholesterol in food is not the culprit." So break out the eggs!

These little protein giants supply 7 grams of protein with only 75 calories, 5 grams of fat, and 1.6 grams of saturated fat. They're loaded with iron, vitamins, minerals and carotenoids, antioxidants that protect against cell damage. Carotenoids may reduce the risk of age-related macular degeneration (the leading cause of adult blindness) and enhance memory.

Eggs are also versatile and inexpensive. For about 20 cents each, you can fry, boil, poach, whip, scramble or bake them.

You can buy farm-fresh eggs at farmers markets or, in the country, direct from farmers. During motorhome trips, I watch for "Fresh Eggs" signs. When we traveled to Nevada to write, "Chasing the Ghosts of the West" for *MotorHome*, my sister couldn't believe the tiny dirt road we bumped down to buy farm eggs. It was worth it.

## Labels Unmasked

Eggs are readily available in supermarkets, but what do all the labels mean? Standard eggs, the cheapest, come from chickens kept indoors in crowded cages.

"Cage-free" means chickens are raised on the floor of barns with bedding material like pine shavings. They have nest boxes and perches, but still might be pretty cramped.

"Free-range" means the chickens can go outside. Some small farms keep range-free hens under cover outside (chicken patios!).

"Vegetarian" eggs come from hens kept in indoor cages and fed vegetarian diets (no meat or fish byproducts). They don't go outside and peck for grubs or worms.

"Organic" eggs come from chickens sometimes raised in cages, though most often not. They're fed organic feed and not given antibiotics, hormones or



From top: Cage-free chickens are usually raised on the floor of barns. Egg yolks add a silky richness to almost any dish — even pizza.

other drugs.

Which eggs taste best? I love fresh eggs from small farms where chickens have coops, perches, and nest boxes and roam free in the sunshine pecking for seeds, grass, worms and grubs. Happy hens lay tasty eggs.

## Got a favorite on-the-road egg recipe you'd like to share?

Email [bobbie@realfoodtraveler.com](mailto:bobbie@realfoodtraveler.com) with "Road Foodie Egg" in the subject line.

## ON-THE-ROAD FRITTATA



Here's my recipe for On-the-Road Frittata, an Italian dish similar to an omelet or crustless quiche with meats, cheeses and veggies (whatever you have on hand).

- 6 large eggs
- 1 cup cheese (any type that melts well)
- 1 cup vegetables
- ½ lb sausage

► Preheat oven to 350 F. In a nonstick, ovenproof pan with rounded sides, sauté sausage. Set aside. Using some of the sausage fat, sauté the veggies until they are tender-crisp. Return the sausage to the pan. Beat the eggs and add the cheese. Pour the egg mixture over the veggies and sausage. Cook over medium heat for 5 minutes, running a spatula around the edge. Place the pan in the oven and cook until the eggs are set (10 minutes or so). Cut into wedges and enjoy hot or cold.

Photos: courtesy American Egg Board

Photo: Anne Weaver

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## Tidy Titan

Your motorhome's sewer hose should be one of the last places you sacrifice on quality. But, that's what many of us do, opting for the cheapest model that gets the job done ... though we may pay for it later once the hose cracks, crimps or even gets crushed while in storage. Thetford has released its new Titan Premium RV Sewer Kit System that ensures you no longer have to choose between quality and a low MSRP. For less than 40 bucks, the Titan Kit contains everything you'll need for hassle-free holding-tank tasks, including a rugged 15-foot hose, a Revolve 5-in-1 adapter with a well-placed handle and two secure end caps to help keep things clean during transport. Thetford claims the thermoplastic elastomer (TPE) hose is virtually uncrushable, and that the ExtendGrip fitting that secures to the RV provides a larger area for handling, resulting in increased ergonomics and less dump-valve mishaps. Individual components are also available, sold separately. MSRP: \$34.95.

**Thetford, 800-543-1219, [www.thetford.com](http://www.thetford.com)**

## Gimme a Boost!

Nobody took those old "Can you hear me now?" commercials to heart more than RVers and other outdoor adventurers, whose pursuits often take them off the grid and into the heart of "poor signal" country on their cellphones. The new weBoost RV 4G is a signal booster designed to amplify existing cellular transmissions, meaning that even if the signal at the campsite is weak or spotty, users within range of the weBoost can enjoy enhanced speeds for data, music, movies, etc.

The weBoost RV 4G works across all U.S. and Canadian carriers and is designed to provide a boost in voice, data and 4G LTE signal for all cellphones and data devices, including tablets, laptops and mobile hot spots. Included are a 120-volt AC wall adapter and/or 12-volt DC cigarette lighter adapter and hardware. The reversible suction cup mount allows for easy installation and orientation of the outside antenna on the exterior of the motorhome. MSRP: \$399.

**Cell Phone Signal Booster.us, 800-501-3153,  
<https://cellphonesignalbooster.us>**



## Open Carry

When it comes to technology, faster is always better. We have become so accustomed to instant gratification that it often seems foreign to us to wait for things like the news, music or even your motorhome's satellite TV reception. That's why Winegard has released the new Carryout G2+, which is the company's fastest acquiring Carryout portable satellite TV antenna to date. The user-friendly antenna offers easy setup and fully automatic operation.

The G2+ receives DISH, DirecTV and Bell programming, and is designed for easy transporting with its compact 14.3-by-13.5-inch size and svelte 10-pound weight. The unit is powered via coaxial cable through the included power inserter, meaning no additional 12-volt DC power is necessary. Users can easily switch providers at the inserter without the need to remove the dome. The Carryout G2+ supports multiple TVs and can be temporarily or even permanently mounted to your motorhome if you find you no longer need the portability. MSRP: \$649.99.

**Winegard, 800-288-8094, [www.winegard.com](http://www.winegard.com)**



## Bring on the Blues ...

... And the classic rock ... and the jazz. Furrion introduces the DV5700 Series Entertainment System, which now offers wireless connectivity for seamless integration with Bluetooth-enabled devices. Users can easily stream audio content from their phone, tablet or MP3 player — playing through their motorhome's speakers — on the single-zone system. In addition to Bluetooth capabilities, the single-din DV5700 offers DVD playback, USB interface, and AUX-IN with video support and subwoofer output. As with all Furrion products, the DV5700 has been through exhaustive testing to ensure it could withstand continuous vibration and extreme heat and cold. The unit also benefits from Furrion's industry-first mounting design for single-din stereos that includes four exterior mounting points through hardware and a "snap-on" trim kit, rather than utilizing the conventional "mounting cage/pull tab" method. MSRP: \$159.

**Furrion, 888-354-5792, [www.furrion.com](http://www.furrion.com)**



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Yellowstone Lake, Wyoming



## Cruising on Yellowstone Lake

Yellowstone Lake, the largest body of water in Yellowstone National Park and the largest freshwater lake above 7,000 feet in North America, is a place of history. The Lake Queen offers a one-hour cruise with historic narration of the lake's geology, culture and resources. The passenger boat departs Bridge Bay Marina daily mid-June through mid-September and circumnavigates Stevenson Island. The onboard ranger relates a bit of legend about the remains of the boat E.C. Waters, its hull visible at the edge of the island.

At one point, the Lake Queen turns in circles with the ranger pointing out an unspoiled shoreline, likely the same view in the eyes of the first exploration parties between 1869 and 1871. Eagles, ospreys, waterfowl, elk and bison are frequently sighted.

**For more information**, call 866-439-7375 or go to [www.yellowstonenationalparklodges.com/things-to-do/](http://www.yellowstonenationalparklodges.com/things-to-do/) — *Arline Chandler*



Photo: Lee Smith

Central Oregon

## An awesome landscape and incredible fossils



Photo: Morey Edelman

John Day Fossil Beds National Monument in central Oregon showcases more than 40 million years of fossil records. Major finds of ancient mammal fossils have been ongoing in this area for the last 100 years. The Thomas Condon Paleontology Center shows many of these fossils along with the history of the discoveries. From the earliest rhinos, ancestral horses and catlike animals that hunted prey here, the interpretive displays explain and show many of the discoveries.

The monument is comprised of three units, each with its own unique area to explore. The Clarno Unit has numerous hiking trails and a picnic area. The Sheep Rock Unit has incredible hikes through Blue Basin, picnic areas and the Thomas Condon Paleontology Center. The Painted Hills Unit shows the remains of volcanic activity in a brilliant spectrum of colors.

To visit these units, devote an entire day. All have ample parking for motorhomes, and all roads are paved, with the exception of 1 mile of graded gravel to reach the Painted Hills viewpoint.

**To learn more**, call 541-987-2333 or visit [www.nps.gov/joda](http://www.nps.gov/joda) — *Morey Edelman*

Mississippi Delta, Mississippi

## Travelin' the Blues Trail

The roots of blues music run deep in Mississippi, and the state's Blues Trail reflects that heritage. While the trail winds through the whole state, the greatest concentration of trail markers is in the Mississippi Delta area.

In Tunica, visit the Gateway to the Blues Museum and Delta Interpretive Center, and in Indianola, tour the BB King Museum. Trail markers note the birthplace of BB King in Berclair, and his hometown of Indianola, where he worked as a tractor driver, got married, performed with a gospel quartet and began actively playing the blues.

In Greenwood, find the marker for Baptist Town — the final residence of Robert Johnson, who died just outside of town in 1938. In blues lore, he sold his soul to the devil in exchange for making him a great guitarist. There's controversy over the site of his burial, and especially the place where he might have bartered his soul for music. But there is definitely a marker for Baptist Town, and a wooden sign by Young and Pelican streets where he supposedly played his music and died (after perhaps being poisoned).

The Hollywood Café in Tunica is another stop on the trail and the source for a good hometown meal. In blues history, both at this site and the café's original location in Hollywood, Mississippi, it was a Delta dining institution known for pianist Muriel Wilkins, who performed there. She and the Hollywood were immortalized in the Marc Cohn hit song, "Walking in Memphis."

These are only some of the highlights of the Blues Trail; wherever you go, you are sure to find yourself steeped in the blues.

**For more information**, go to [www.msbluestrail.org](http://www.msbluestrail.org). — *Neala McCarten* 



Photo: Neala McCarten



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Orange Beach, Alabama, has 8 miles of sugar-white beach stretching along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

## Escape to Gulf Shores

Hit the beach with a trip to the Yellowhammer State

By Pam Windsor

**A**s I caught my first glimpse of the white-sand beaches and crystal-blue waters of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Alabama, something calmed my soul. Any stress I had brought with me ebbed away as I felt the warm coastal breeze, smelled the clean air and heard the waves pushing up against the shore. There's a reason this part of the country is becoming a popular vacation destination.

In years past, Gulf Shores and Orange Beach suffered quite a bit of damage from hurricanes and the BP oil spill of 2010. As a result, these days just about everything close to the beachfront appears shiny and new. Brightly colored businesses, condos and other structures have replaced the old ones.

While tourism took a hit after the oil spill, it quickly rebounded

after BP launched a national advertising campaign that ended up educating people on something many never realized before — Alabama has a beach — and a very beautiful one, at that.

The water is definitely the main attraction, with 32 miles of beachfront gleaming with that standout white sand. There is swimming, fishing, sailing, parasailing, kayaking, paddleboarding, jet skiing and much more. You'll also notice a long list of cruises and charters available to take you out on the water for a variety of tours.

A pod of close to 40 bottlenose dolphins call this area home, and visitors can cruise out on several different charter boats to see them up close. Captain Bill Mitchell with Cetacean Cruises likes to share insights about the dolphins' way of life and true stories about their intellect and humanlike qualities. He gives one account about a 5-year-old girl who fell asleep on a raft and floated too far out into the water; two dolphins, hearing her parents screaming from the shore, came to her rescue.

"They knew she was in trouble," he explained,

GULF SHORES & ORANGE BEACH, ALABAMA

### ← Getting There

Gulf Shores and Orange Beach are located at the southernmost tip of Alabama between Mobile, Alabama (50 miles to the northwest in Mobile County), and Pensacola, Florida (35 miles to the east in Escambia County). The area is accessible from the north via Interstate 65 and from the east and west via Interstate 10.

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## GETAWAY

ALABAMA'S GULF SHORES & ORANGE BEACH



“and pushed her back to about 100 feet away from her family that was wading out into the water. Once the dolphins knew she was safe, they left. That’s what makes dolphins so special — their compassion along with their intelligence.”

Other nature cruises will take you through the backwaters of Long Bayou and Wolf Bay, where you can learn about crabbing, shrimping and digging for oysters. It’ll give you a greater feel for what goes into gathering the oysters Rockefeller or coconut shrimp you might enjoy for dinner.

Thanks to the availability of that freshly caught seafood, you’ll eat well

along the Alabama coast. There are a number of local chefs who work to offer new twists on old favorites. Make sure to sample steamed royal red shrimp. You may also want to try the fried green tomato and crab stack, crawfish and andouille ravioli or pan-seared redfish while you’re here. And if you’re looking for lunch recommendations, you can’t beat the fish tacos at The Hangout or seafood potpie at Bill’s by the Beach. The Hangout, by the way, is famous for its annual three-day music festival with the same name.

While you’re visiting, you’ll likely spend time in both Gulf Shores and





From far left: The author rides a zip line at Gulf Adventure Center. Fort Morgan Historic Site stands as a living history lesson of the fort's pivotal role in the Civil War. Constructed between 1819 and 1834, this 479-acre site was the site of Admiral David Farragut's famous command "Damn the torpedoes. Full speed ahead!" moments before he led his troops into the Battle of Mobile Bay on August 5, 1864.

Orange Beach, as the two small cities sit side by side. Gulf State Park lies directly between them and offers a wide range of activities as well as campsites. The park has 496 full-hookup sites (pull-throughs and back-ins), 11 modern bathhouses and waterfront campsites. RV pads are paved, and sites include a grill and picnic table.

Gulf Adventure Center, based at the park, offers paddleboarding, kayaking, biking, Segway tours and zip lining among its many activities. If you're up for zip lining, Hummingbird Zip Line takes adventure-seekers over six different lines, several of them over

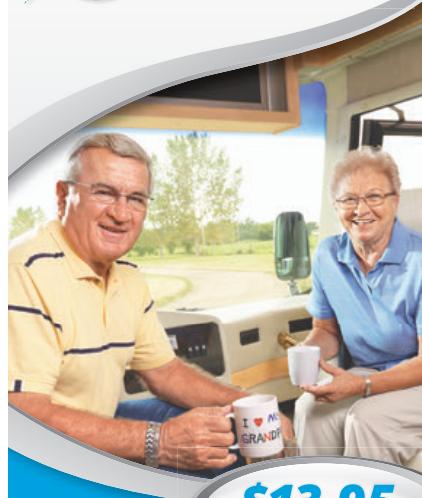
water, and you can't beat the view. In fact, on one of those lines (if you're brave enough to look down into the water below), you might even spot an alligator. Just knowing they're there adds a little bit of excitement to the ride and makes you appreciate the "need for speed" as you zip across.

Located next to the park is the Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo — one of the most enjoyable attractions for kids and adults. This small, nonprofit zoo has more than 500 exotic animals and since it's so small, it can offer something bigger zoos can't — animal encounters. The zoo cares for a number of baby animals and allows

Alabama's coastal landscape offers four diverse ecosystems: an ancient maritime live oak forest, wet longleaf pine savanna, fresh water marsh and small stream swamp forest.



Fort Morgan photos: courtesy Gulf Shores and Orange Beach Tourism



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# GETAWAY

ALABAMA'S GULF SHORES & ORANGE BEACH



From above: Capt. Skip Beebee of Sailaway Charters holds a freshly caught shrimp. The author pets a 7-week-old Bengal tiger at the Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo. The facility also has baby kangaroos that visitors can get up close and personal with for an additional fee.

visitors to get up close and personal with some of them. Those encounters usually involve baby kangaroos or baby lemurs, or — when they have them — baby tigers. There's an additional fee above the regular zoo admission for the encounters, but they are so popular they tend to fill up very quickly.

"The tigers are the biggest ticket we have," Patti Hall, the zoo's director, explained. "We'll post it on Facebook one day and it will fill up for the next

three months by the next day."

Hall has been running the zoo since 1997. She's had her share of challenges in the past that have ranged from struggling to get funding to surviving several major hurricanes. The biggest was Hurricane Ivan in 2004, which forced the zoo's evacuation and saw many of the animals end up at Hall's house — some for an extended period of time.

"We are the only zoo in recorded

American history that has ever staged a full-scale evacuation for a natural disaster," she recalled. She went on to explain that she and others who work at the zoo share a deep, special bond with the animals. "My staff is so dedicated, if I wouldn't have taken everybody to my house, they would have duct taped themselves to pine trees and ridden out the storm."

There have been other storms since, but they pale in comparison to

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Above: The “retro-inspired” Sugar Sands RV Resort has 63 sites with full hookups, Wi-Fi and 22-by-60-foot concrete pads to accommodate even the largest motorhomes.

Hurricane Ivan.

“We received 17 feet of water with Ivan; with Katrina we only received 9 feet. If we had gotten 9 feet first, that would have been a lot. But after 17 feet, 9 wasn’t anything.”

Animal Planet did a special series on the zoo’s ability to bounce back after the storms, calling it “The Little Zoo That Could.” The name has stuck. Plans are underway to move the zoo to a new location on higher ground with much more space by the end of this year.

History buffs will want to visit Fort Morgan, just 20 minutes up the road from Gulf Shores. Completed in 1834, it played a key role during the Civil War Battle of Mobile Bay. A museum on site tells the story of the soldiers who served there through equipment, uniforms, photos, letters and other personal items.

When it comes to places to stay, there are plenty of choices, with more than a dozen RV parks in Gulf Shores and Orange Beach. RVers Marty Cook and Lori Prescott had rave reviews for Sugar Sands RV Resort in Gulf Shores, which describes itself as a “retro-inspired” resort. It’s close to the beach, has full amenities and lots of open space.

“The grounds are well-landscaped; there’s a full bathhouse with shower, toilets, sinks; and the amenities are great,” Cook said.

Prescott added, “It has an awesome clubhouse and a laundry room, and the square footage is wonderful. The size of the lot really makes a difference. You don’t feel like you’re right up against another RV.”

Wherever you choose to stay, you’re sure to have a good time in this beach destination that has a flair and feel all its own. There’s something special about Alabama’s Gulf Coast. **M**

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo**  
251-968-5732, [www.alabamagulfcoastzoo.com](http://www.alabamagulfcoastzoo.com)

**Azalea Acres RV Park**  
251-947-9530, [www.azaleaacresrvpark.com](http://www.azaleaacresrvpark.com)

**Bella Terra of Gulf Shores**  
866-417-2416, [www.bellaterrarvresort.com](http://www.bellaterrarvresort.com)

**Cetacean Cruises**  
251-550-8000, [www.cetaceancruises.com](http://www.cetaceancruises.com)

**Gulf Shores and Orange Beach Tourism**  
800-745-7263, [www.gulfshores.com](http://www.gulfshores.com)

**Gulf State Park**  
251-948-7275, [www.alapark.com/gulf-state-park](http://www.alapark.com/gulf-state-park)

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## Lucky Dogs

Since 1980 Good Sam chapters have raised money for Dogs for the Deaf, an Oregon nonprofit that rescues dogs and trains them to assist people in need. In recognition of members' dedication and hard work, each year Dogs for the Deaf honors the top-contributing chapters and states, including the following 2015 award winners:

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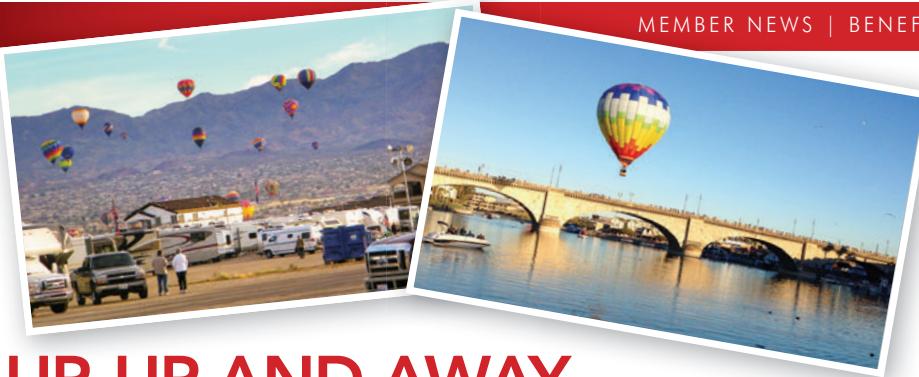
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Kaveman Travelers, Idaho  
Prairie State Sams, Illinois  
Trail Dusters, Oregon  
Blue Mountain Sams, Pennsylvania  
Foxchase Sams, Virginia  
Canyon Sams, Washington  
Skagit Sams, Washington  
Three Rivers Sams, Washington

### Top Five States

1. Oregon
2. Washington
3. Southern California
4. Northern California
5. Idaho

Learn more about Dogs for the Deaf at [www.dogsforthe deaf.org](http://www.dogsforthe deaf.org).

**Rescued and trained by Dogs for the Deaf, Harper now helps a hearing-impaired woman in California.**



## UP, UP AND AWAY

Arizona hosts the most uplifting club event of 2016

For the third year in a row, Good Sam members flocked to Lake Havasu City, Arizona, for January's Havasu Balloon Festival and Fair. RVers in 250 rigs crossed the historic London Bridge to park on an island with a terrific view of hot-air-balloon ascensions in the morning and ultralight planes and skydivers all day long. Members took advantage of the shuttle service to the festival grounds, where there was something for everyone with music, vendors and food booths, along with balloon displays and tethered rides.

Beyond the prime location, convenient shuttle and registration discount, one of the great things about the Good Sam deal was that net profits went to local Lions and Rotary clubs for distribution to charities throughout the region. The Lions and Rotary folks were great hosts, and we can't thank them enough for coordinating the RV parking, and providing doughnuts and coffee each morning. Our thanks also go out to Fantasy Tours for sponsoring Saturday's burrito breakfast.

Keep an eye on the events page of the Good Sam Club website for sign-up details for the 2017 festival, January 15 through 17. RV parking sold out early this year, so don't be left out. — Jo Yett, Good Sam West Region Director

► **MORE CLUB EVENTS:** To see the full schedule of upcoming Good Sam regional events and State/Provincial Rallies, go to [www.goodsamclub.com/events](http://www.goodsamclub.com/events).

## Like, Totally

Get stoked for Camping World's Tubular '80s Weekend

You don't have to be a Valley Girl to get awesome discounts on RV and outdoor gear during Camping World's Tubular '80s Weekend, April 29 and 30. Part of Camping World's and Good Sam's shared 50th anniversary celebration, the 1980s-themed event also features gnarly savings on Doorbuster items and a totally rad giveaway to the first 50 customers each day at each location. Customers at all Camping World stores will take home a free collectible '80s-look shopping bag with any purchase of \$50 or more from April 18 through May 8, while supplies last.

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◀ **FOUNDING FATHER** In 1966, the year the Good Sam Club got its start, 23-year-old David Garvin set up a humble camping-supply store at Bowling Green, Kentucky's Beech Bend Park. Fast forward 50 years, and the Camping World chain Garvin founded with that single store has grown into America's largest retailer of RVs, RV accessories and RV services.

# BEARTOOTH SCENIC HIGHWAY

Two separate states plus two different seasons equals one great adventure for RVers in Yellowstone Country

**T**he Beartooth Scenic Highway, a National Scenic Byways All-American Road, winds over steep switchbacks and climbs magnificent mountains for approximately 70 miles from Cooke City to Red Lodge, Montana. Beartooth Highway climbs one of the highest and most rugged areas in the lower 48 states, with 20 peaks reaching over 12,000 feet in elevation, including Granite Peak, Montana's highest at 12,799 feet. The road itself has the highest elevation of any highway in Wyoming (10,947 feet) and in Montana (10,350 feet), and is the highest elevation for a highway in the Northern Rockies.

Heralded as one of the most scenic drives in the United States — Charles Kuralt described it as “the most beautiful drive in America” — the Beartooth, traveled in late spring to midsummer, gives views

of the snow-covered Absaroka and Beartooth mountains. From dizzying heights, travelers pass over high alpine plateaus dotted with glacial lakes and sneak a quick look into forested valleys. On some slopes, the mountain

rocks peek from snow blankets like a caramel-colored tapestry veined with black streaks. On our first venture in early June, we headed out from Yellowstone in our dinghy vehicle and noticed that the snow banks at pullouts rose higher than the roof of our car.

Between Yellowstone National Park and Red Lodge, Montana, the curving, zigzagging roadway climbs through portions of Custer and Shoshone national forests and passes a wide range of ecosystems from lush, green lodgepole pine forests to alpine tundra. The surrounding snowcapped mountains lie within the 943,377-acre Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. The harsh climate at the highest elevation stunts the growth of trees and shrubs. The plants that survive have adapted to convert sunlight to heat, and many conserve water in the same manner as desert plants. In late June and mid-July, the fragile tundra blossoms with blue, pink and yellow wildflowers.

Grizzly and black bears make





During our trip along the Beartooth Highway in early June, snow banks at pullouts were higher than our dinghy vehicle's roof. The area looked quite different when we retraced our journey in September (left).

their home in the wilderness viewed from the winding roadway, as do elk, deer, moose, bighorn sheep, Rocky Mountain goats, mountain lions and bobcats. With more than 950 alpine lakes and hundreds of miles of trails, the mountains offer numerous opportunities for hiking and backpacking. Many trails are accessible directly from the Beartooth Highway.

Visitors can actually cross-country or downhill ski in June and

July. In fact, that's the only time skiers can get through because Beartooth Pass, at 10,947 feet, is closed in winter due to heavy snow and only opens from Memorial Day weekend through early October. Two weeks after we made our June drive to Red Lodge, the pass closed due to a summer snowstorm. Because of the high altitudes, the pass is also known for strong winds and severe thunderstorms.

Guided horseback trips are also available, as is fishing for trout in

the streams and lakes adjacent to the highway. Although the National Forest Service offers a choice of 13 campgrounds for overnight stays, the highway is not recommended for motorhomes, so plan on driving your dinghy.

The numerous switchbacks and steep climbs also call to motorcyclists. Those who leave an RV in a neighboring town and drive the Beartooth in their dinghy vehicle should plan on at least three hours driving time to make the trip between Yellowstone's Northeastern Gate and Red Lodge, Montana. We took more time due to frequent stops for photographs of the Absaroka-Beartooth Mountain Range. Even on sunny summer days, jackets feel comfortable. At the summit, weather can change and be quite cool.

Following a quick supper in Red Lodge, we headed back along the same route. The return trip was equally interesting and scenic, until darkness caught us at about 10 p.m. The mountain peaks, slopes and valleys



A view from the 47-mile-long Chief Joseph Scenic Byway, which crosses the Shoshone National Forest through the Absaroka Mountains to the Clark's Fork Valley in Wyoming.



### The Scenic Byway

From Yellowstone National Park and the Cooke City, Montana, area, the Beartooth Highway runs 68 miles to Red Lodge, Montana. From Cody, Wyoming, travel north on Wyoming Highway 120 for 17 miles to the junction of Wyoming Highway 296 — the Chief Joseph Scenic Byway. Follow the byway 47 miles to its intersection with the Beartooth. From here, turn right to go to the Beartooth Plateau and down the highway's switchbacks into Red Lodge, Montana. A left turn at the intersection leads to Cooke City and Silver Gate, Montana, and the northeast entrance to Yellowstone National Park.



look different traveling east to west — or west to east. And back in Yellowstone National Park, we saw more animals at dusk.

In late September, we made our second trip along the Beartooth Highway. How different the landscape looked from our previous drive, when a shawl like white ermine had wrapped the meadows and mountains! Under September's autumn sunlight, mountain slopes above the tree line appeared as smooth as soft buckskin leather covering a teepee. Rocks that lay under deep snow in late spring now littered slanted mountainsides in the warmth of early fall.

On this trip, we entered the Beartooth from the Chief Joseph Scenic Byway (Wyoming Highway 296), running north from Cody, Wyoming, and connecting with U.S. Highway 212, which is the Beartooth. The combined routes cross the Shoshone National Forest through the Absaroka Mountains to the Clark's Fork River Valley. Summer and fall are the most predictable times to travel the Chief Joseph and Beartooth highways. On our autumn drive, grasses and scrub vegetation nestled in copper-colored meadows between fir forests. Groves of aspens like bright yellow sunspots accented the dark green of the firs, their golden leaves rustling in the wind like the crisp taffeta skirts of a debutante's ballgown. In one honey-hued meadow, three black-tailed deer ripped grasses, occasionally eyeing our cameras with curiosity.

At a pullout on the Chief Joseph Byway, we looked over the edge of a steep mountain to the loops of road on the valley floor, crisscrossing like ribbons on a maypole. We read information on large tablelike signs, telling about the pursuit over the rugged mountains of Chief Joseph's

As we traveled along the Beartooth Highway in June, there was plenty of snow on the local mountains and the Absaroka Mountain Range.

Nez Perce by the U.S. Army. On that September day, the mountain ranges stretched peacefully before our eyes. However in 1877, the craggy terrain appeared hostile and forbidding to the fleeing Nez Perce, following their leader, Chief Joseph, to what they hoped would be a new home in Canada. After the Battle of the Big Hole in Idaho in 1877, Chief Joseph led about 1,000 members of his tribe over a 1,600-mile trek through Yellowstone, trying to escape capture and orders for the Nez Perce to settle on a reserva-



On both of our trips, we made a stop in Red Lodge, Montana, for dinner.



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tion. Crossing Yellowstone National Park, the Nez Perce headed north up the Clark's Fork River. They aimed for Canada across steep mountains covered in thick forests. After the five-day Battle of Bear Paw in north-eastern Montana, the tribe halted, only 40 miles from the Canadian border. In his speech of surrender, Chief Joseph expressed dignity and defeat with his famous words, "Hear me, my chiefs! I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever." Despite promises to allow them back on their lands in Wyoming, the U.S. Cavalry forced the Nez Perce tribe onto reservations in Oklahoma and Washington.

Still reflecting on the plight of the Nez Perce, we continued on, over the winding road we had overlooked, passing rustic log structures, some abandoned, a few still sheltering cattle and people. At a bend in the road, we took a short trail to an unnamed cascade that tumbled over layers of



During our drive along the Chief Joseph Scenic Byway in September, we stopped at a bend in the road to walk a short trail to an unnamed cascade of frothy water fed by snowmelt.

ancient rock. Frothy white water, constrained by the creek's narrow passage through tall stone walls, caught rays of the sun in a rainbow. Around another curve, we stopped to watch two cowgirls on horseback, circling a small herd of cattle, their trained dogs gently nipping the heels of black steers.

After joining U.S. Highway 212, we turned west on the Beartooth to find a restaurant for lunch in Cooke City, a gateway to the scenic byway. About 8 miles east of town, bright yellow aspens lined a stream of sparkling water gurgling over a brownstone creek bed. In the distance, Pilot Peak,

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stretching its pointed summit to the blue sky, stood like a sentinel over the Beartooth's pristine landscape. After a hearty lunch, we pointed our compass east again to zigzag along the Montana-Wyoming border climbing to the 10,947 elevation of the Beartooth Pass. The distant mountains, snowcapped when we made the drive in early June, stood bare under a hazy sky. At a point called "Top of the World" (but it's not!), we once again photographed the sign that previously had almost been buried in snow. We passed blue mountain lakes close to the roadway — lakes that had gone previously unnoticed by us as they were frozen solid in early June.

We descended on more curving switchbacks on the opposite side of Beartooth Pass, enjoying the brilliance of yellow aspens dotting the fir moun-

All of the snow we had experienced in June had melted by the time we made our September trip along the Beartooth Highway.

tainsides. We drove into Red Lodge in time for a more leisurely dinner in a hometown restaurant. Returning to Cody, Wyoming, in twilight, we took a shorter route than crossing the steep mountains of the stunning Beartooth. We bid the winding roadway farewell, wondering if we'd ever travel it again. Perhaps other adventures will call us. Yet, we will always carry our memories of traveling the roadway in two seasons, and to have seen and photographed its ever-changing beauty. **M**

### For More Information

**Absaroka Bay RV Park**

800-557-7440, [www.cody-wy.com](http://www.cody-wy.com)

**Friends of the Beartooth All-American Road**

406-446-1718, <http://beartoothhighway.com>

**Ponderosa Campground**

307-587-9203, [www.codyponderosa.com](http://www.codyponderosa.com)

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**B**y their very nature, all national parks are places where the senses are invigorated. As you look up at the gigantic redwoods towering above you, or listen to the mournful sound of a loon calling across the water, or feel the rough granite as you clamber to the top of a rocky outcropping, you can't help but become more attuned to the sights, sounds and surfaces that surround you.

But what if we told you there was a park that appealed to all five of your senses, one where vision, hearing, touch, smell and even taste worked in concert to create an unforgettable experience? If that possibility sounds like a stretch, allow us to introduce you to Capitol Reef National Park.



# SENSE

for all of your senses

## Fruits of Your Labor

The key to this full-tilt sensory experience is the fact that Capitol Reef is home to the largest historic orchards in the National Park Service's vast holdings.

That means you can show up in the spring and be treated to the intoxicating scents of 3,000 apple, pear, cherry, apricot and peach trees

---

In the Cathedral Valley District of the park are sculptured monoliths named the Temple of the Sun and the Temple of the Moon.



Photo: visitutah.com

in bloom. Turn up later in the growing season and you'll be able to wander through the orchards sampling these fruits — many of which are heirloom varieties that are rarely seen in grocery stores — fresh from the tree. You can also pick yourself a basketful to take with you for a modest fee.

Truth be told, though, as uniquely mouthwatering as the park's bountiful harvests are, they're just a small part of Capitol Reef National Park's appeal.

## Hidden Valley

Capitol Reef may be the least visited of Utah's "Mighty 5" national parks — a collection that includes Arches, Bryce Canyon, Canyonlands and Zion — but don't let that fool you. People have been coming to this valley since pre-historic times.

Archaeologists tell us that bands of nomadic hunter-gatherers occupied this area as many as 12,000 years ago. The presence of the more recent agriculturally oriented Fremont culture that replaced them is easier to find evidence of, thanks to the large petroglyph panels they left scattered on rock walls throughout the park.

As for non-native peoples, their "discovery" of this hidden valley didn't come until late in the 19th century. In

The Gifford homestead — in the heart of the Fruita Valley — includes a smokehouse, garden, pasture, rock walls and a barn.

---

fact, this rugged country remained one of the last blank spots on the U.S. map until famous Grand Canyon explorer John Wesley Powell and his team fanned out to explore this area in 1869.

Within a decade, Mormon settlers began establishing small communities throughout southern Utah. One man, an immigrant named Nels Johnson, recognized the favorable growing conditions in this isolated valley and planted the first of many apple, pear, peach and cherry trees. No wonder that the town that grew and flourished here adopted the name Fruita.

Today the tiny town of Fruita has all but disappeared. However, you can still see reminders of the 10 or so families who lived and worked here, in places like the one-room schoolhouse near the visitor center, the 1908 Gifford family home, now a museum and, of course, the extensive orchards that grow throughout the Fruita Valley.

## This Place Rocks

If you look at Capitol Reef National Park on a map, the first thing you'll notice is that it's unusually long and



## Getting There

Capitol Reef National Park is located in south-central Utah and can be accessed from the east (take exit 40) and west (take exit 149) via Interstate 70, and from the north (take exit 95) and south (take exit 188) via Interstate 15.

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## UNCOMMON SENSE



Peak flowering times to see the park's fruit trees in bloom are late March through April 23 for peaches, late March through May 3 for pears and April 10 through May 6 for apples.

narrow. That's because its boundaries were drawn around a particularly noteworthy geologic feature called the Waterpocket Fold.

This remarkable wrinkle in the earth's crust, which stretches for almost 100 miles north to south, takes its name from the countless small bowl-like depressions that hold rainwater after a storm. Look at it from the right vantage point and it's a classic example of a monocline, with a gradual slope on the east side leading up to a line of steep cliffs. These sheer, unbroken rock walls were once such an impediment to travel that early settlers likened them to an underwater reef.

In places, these reddish-orange cliffs are topped with a cream-colored Navajo sandstone that weathers to form rounded domes not unlike the one atop the U.S. Capitol building. Put the two

ideas together and you'll understand where Capitol Reef National Park gets its unusual moniker.

### What's Where?

Today you'll find Capitol Reef National Park divided into three distinct regions: the main part of the park, and the remote southern and northern sections.

Access to the main part of the park is relatively easy thanks to state Route 24. The park's 7.9-mile Scenic Drive (\$10 entrance fee) starts at the visitor center just off the highway and meanders along past a wide-open floodplain known as Grand Wash. At the end of the paved road is the generally well-maintained dirt track known as Capitol Gorge Road, which weaves its way into the very heart of Waterpocket Fold between towering

Enjoy spectacular views, especially during sunset, at the aptly named Sunset Point, 2.7 miles west of the park's visitor center.



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UNCOMMON SENSE



Photo: visitidah.com

cliffs of buff-colored sandstone.

While most visitors never venture any farther than this, there are adventures waiting to be had in more remote parts of the park. South of state Route 24, you have both Notom-Bullfrog Road, which parallels the park's eastern boundary, and Highway 12, which does the same thing on the west side of the park. Both are great drives in and of themselves but, more importantly, they connect to Burr Trail Road, which offers views of the Henry Mountains and direct access to the southern reaches of the Waterpocket Fold. Note: The Burr Trail switchbacks are not considered suitable for RVs.

North of Highway 24 is an area known as Cathedral Valley, named for its dramatic freestanding rock towers not unlike the formations found in nearby Monument Valley. Unfortunately, accessing this part of the park requires a high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicle.

### Got Adventures?

When it comes to what to do on your visit to Capitol Reef National Park, the list of possible adventures is long and wide-ranging. The easiest way to see all that Capitol Reef has to offer, of course, is on wheels. Most park roads are at least partially paved, and even the gravel sections are accessible to ordinary passenger vehicles in dry conditions.

Grand Wash, which follows a narrow canyon, is one of the easier trails and only 2.2 miles long.

The park has more than a dozen trails to choose from, ranging from easy to strenuous.

If you're looking to get farther off the beaten path, there are outfitters in nearby towns like Torrey and Boulder who can set you up with ATVs or rent you a four-wheel-drive Jeep. If you don't feel comfortable motoring through the wilderness on your own, many of the same companies will take you on a tour of these less accessible areas led by an experienced guide.

For those who'd prefer a different kind of horsepower, other local guide services offer a range of horseback adventures from easy half-day trail rides to multiday backcountry camping trips. Either way, you'll see places you probably couldn't get to on your own thanks to the horse's own natural four-wheel — or should we say



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## UNCOMMON SENSE



Photos: National Park Service

From above: Fruita Campground has 64 dry-camping sites, potable water and a dump station. Free, ranger-led programs about the park's culture and geology are available spring through fall.

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Other guided tour options include fly-fishing trips, where you can land brown trout measuring 20 inches or more. Rock art tours allow you to seek out little-known petroglyphs, while photography tours make it possible to take home outstanding images of this rocky wonderland.

### Take a Hike

Capitol Reef is a hiker's paradise, with more than a dozen well-marked trails in the main section of the park alone.

One of the best and easiest outings in this area is a visit to what's known as Panorama Point or the Goosenecks Overlook, which lies just west of the visitor center off state Route 24. There you'll find what can best be described as a miniature Grand Canyon, as the meanders of Sulphur Creek have cut a convoluted channel into the bedrock hundreds of feet below.

Grand Wash is another prime hiking destination. From the parking area you can hike a short distance to view 400-foot Cassidy Arch, named for outlaw Butch Cassidy, who is said to have frequented this area.

For a unique hiking experience, check out one of the many narrow slot canyons in the area, including the winding passage known as Muley Twist Canyon. Local outfitters run tours to visit this and other slot canyons, or you can explore them on your own.

Finally, be sure not to miss the large petroglyph panels located just off state Route 24. Many of the trap-ezoidal human forms are depicted with facial expressions and adorned with elaborate headdresses and necklaces. Other images feature animals such

as deer and bighorn sheep, plus symbols including handprints and abstract designs. Though some of these petroglyphs can be seen from the road, we suggest you stop and take the short boardwalk that will give you an up-close look at this extraordinary collection of rock art.

### Sensory Overload

While a visit to Capitol Reef National Park shares much in common with other parks, there's one thing that sets it apart. Namely, a chance to stimulate all five of your senses in a place where full-on sensory overload is as much a part of the unforgettable experience as the scenery. **M**

### IF YOU GO

Visiting the main part of Capitol Reef National Park is a low-stress experience thanks to the paved Scenic Drive and well-signed side trips. However, if you plan on venturing farther off the beaten path in a dinghy vehicle, you'll want to be prepared. First be sure to check with the rangers at the visitor center on road conditions and the weather forecast, as wet weather can make some unpaved roads impassable. Also make sure you have a full tank of fuel, a spare tire and working jack and lug wrench, plus sufficient water, food and warm clothes/blankets in case a mechanical breakdown leaves you temporarily stranded.

As for where to spend the night, Capitol Reef National Park's Fruita Campground [435-425-3791, [www.nps.gov/care](http://www.nps.gov/care)] has 64 sites, with no hookups, available on a first-come, first-served basis. The campground has potable water, bathrooms (but no showers) and a dump station. If you need hookups, there are also a number of private campgrounds nearby, including Sandcreek RV Park, 435-425-3577, [www.sandcreekrv.com](http://www.sandcreekrv.com); Thousand Lakes RV Park, 435-425-3500, [www.thousandlakesrvpark.com](http://www.thousandlakesrvpark.com); and Wonderland Resort and RV Park, 435-425-3665, [www.capitolreefrvpark.com](http://www.capitolreefrvpark.com).

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# FLYING HIGH IN THE

Come to Great Bend, Kansas, for the birds, stay for the culture

**T**he best time to visit Great Bend, Kansas, is in the spring and fall, when millions of migrating birds stop nearby for food and rest in the Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. When I mentioned to a friend that my husband, Jim, and I would be traveling through Kansas in June, she convinced me to follow the Wetlands & Wildlife National Scenic Byway, even though most of the migrating birds had already come and gone. We still saw plenty of birds — hundreds instead of millions — and found plenty of other reasons that made our detour worthwhile.

We chose conveniently located Cottonwood Grove RV Campground in Hesston to be our home for the first two nights, and then moved to Pine Haven Retreat, an RV park in St. John, for our last night in the area. Both are no-frills, no-Wi-Fi parks with full hookups. They suited us perfectly for our short stay.

Our first stop was Cheyenne Bottoms, the midpoint along the Central Flyway, a route birds use in traveling from the coastline of South America to the Arctic. It's the largest inland marsh in the interior United States, covering 41,000 acres. The statistic I heard that makes me want to return during migration is that 45 percent of all migratory shorebirds nesting in North America stage at Cheyenne Bottoms during spring

migration. Both Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira were designated Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 1988. Ramsar is a global intergovernmental environmental agreement negotiated in the 1960s by countries and nongovernmental organizations concerned about wetland habitat for migratory waterbirds. The treaty was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971.

The Kansas Wetlands Education Center at Cheyenne Bottoms has several interesting exhibits, including a "Birds for All Seasons" display showing which birds can be expected each month, and another explaining the history of the refuge. Armed with this knowledge, we planned to find a place to put our kayak in the water in hopes of getting a closer look at the



# E HEARTLAND

## ure and a visit to an Underground World



### The Byway

The 77-mile-long Wetlands & Wildlife National Scenic Byway covers three counties in central Kansas and connects the towns of Ellinwood, Great Bend, St. John, and Stafford, as well as the wetlands of Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge.

At least 330 species of birds, including these American pelicans, have been observed at Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area.



Photo: Rob Graham

birds. After we asked about kayaking, we quickly changed our minds. Mosquitos were worse than usual, due to the heavy rains and flooding in the spring of 2015. We heard a story about a man who worked for the nearby Nature Conservancy. Early one cool morning, he walked away from his white truck. When he returned, he couldn't see his truck. He thought it had been stolen. As he walked toward the spot where he left it, he could see something white moving. He realized the mosquitoes were swarming his truck, presumably to keep warm. That little anecdote convinced us to drive through the refuge with the windows up. We admired the snowy egrets, great blue herons and American white pelicans from the air-conditioned and bug-free comfort of our dinghy vehicle.

The next morning, we took a tour of Rosewood Winery, the only winery in the nation devoted to providing employment opportunities to people with developmental disabilities. The winery is located 9 miles west of Great Bend on a 900-acre horse ranch. The award-winning wines are named after their world-champion horses. The

winery is open for tastings and tours on Thursdays and Fridays from 1 to 5 p.m., or by appointment.

Rosewood's clients who express an interest in horses and horseback riding can participate in the therapeutic riding program. We watched a group of five riders doing a fine job of controlling their horses and doing exercises to improve their dexterity. Each October, riders demonstrate the skills they've learned at the Rosewood Rodeo. When we talked to a few of the participants, it was evident how important the therapeutic riding program is to

them. One young man, Chris, has been a participant in the program for 14 years. He has also competed in the National Snaffle Bit Association (NSBA) World Championship Show in Tulsa, Oklahoma, three times. NSBA hosts this weeklong horse show featuring exhibits, events and contests for various classes including equestrians with disabilities.

We soon discovered Rosewood is much more than a winery and a horse ranch. The parent company, Rosewood Services, also runs a greenhouse, garden, honeybee farm, industrial

From below left: The Kansas Wetlands Education Center at Cheyenne Bottoms has several interesting exhibits, including this one that explains the history of the refuge. In addition to providing employment opportunities to people with developmental disabilities, Rosewood Services offers a therapeutic riding program to its clients.



kitchen, furniture gallery, art studio, retail wine and gift shop, and 30 group homes. All of these enterprises were built to help Rosewood's 170 client-employees develop skills and self-confidence in a nurturing environment. Founder and executive director Tammy Hammond started Rosewood Services in 1998 to "create an agency of excellence that fostered independence, inclusion and productivity through education, work, recreation and housing for people with developmental disabilities." It's no wonder that the success rate for clients at Rosewood is three times the state average.

I was so impressed with everything Rosewood that later in the day we visited two more facilities. The Furniture Gallery is where high-quality, solid-wood furniture is manufactured and sold. In the back of the store, we saw client-employees sanding, staining and assembling furniture. Tables, chairs, dressers and desks to delight adults and children were displayed in the showroom. At the Wine Cellar, we tasted wine and admired the products made by client-employees, which included horsehair pottery, bath products, candles, honey and jellies. We bought a bottle of blackberry cabernet and some red hot "Cowboy Candy," a jelly made from jalapeños. It's delicious with cream cheese and crackers. Bronze sculptures purchased and donated by Tammy Hammond are located on the sidewalks at three sites in Great Bend. I especially liked the sculpture Bucket List, outside the Wine Cellar, which depicts a "senior couple reminiscing about their long life together and the bucket list they lived to accomplish."

Heartland Farm, 15 miles west of Great Bend, is an organic farm run by the Dominican Sisters of Peace. It's a Christian community committed to "working for the healing and care of Earth and its inhabitants." Visitors and volunteers are welcome. It's an interesting place to hike, bird-watch, pet an alpaca or walk a labyrinth mowed into the prairie. Our visit happened to coincide with a five-day Peace Camp for 8- to 11-year olds. The first four days had specific themes: earth, air, fire and water. The kids



From above top: Rosewood Wine Cellar sells wine and other products made by client-employees such as horsehair pottery, bath products, candles, honey and jellies. From the 1870s to the 1930s, Ellinwood Underground businesses included a barbershop, blacksmiths, a bathhouse and drummer rooms, where proprietors would literally "drum up sales."

were engrossed in the lessons of the day regarding water: throwing water balloons, looking for water bugs and swimming. Heartland Farm participates in Harvest Hosts, a network of wineries, farms and agritourism sites that invite self-contained RVers (no hookups) to visit and stay overnight for free. Harvest Host membership costs \$44 per year. Go to <https://harvesthosts.com> for more information.

In an area well-known for its bird population, it's fitting that local artists have decorated more than 70 birdhouses. These works of art, ranging in size from 3 to 5 feet tall, pay homage to the birds that frequent the nearby

“ I was surprised to learn that Quivira has two large saltwater marshes. Really? Salt water in Kansas? ”



Two saltwater marshes in the 22,135-acre Quivira National Wildlife Refuge attract migrating shorebirds.

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wetlands. They are placed in front of 50 businesses around Great Bend. Using our Birdhouse Tour brochure with descriptions written by the artists themselves, we stopped to appreciate several of them.

The Great Bend Raptor Center is another way to appreciate the plight of our feathered friends. The center rescues injured birds, provides medical treatment and releases rehabilitated birds in the area they were found or another, more suitable environment. Don't expect to see the birds; since the goal is to return the birds to their natural habitat, there is no human interaction. It's the only facility of its kind on the Scenic Byway. Visitors can peruse the interpretive and educational displays. The center is the entrance to the Brit Spaugh Zoo, which is home to more than 100 types of mammals, birds, reptiles and insects.

On our last day in the area, we stopped in the town of Ellinwood while on our way to Quivira. We were



The Great Bend visitor center offers a self-guided-tour brochure of more than 70 decorated birdhouses by local artists that pay homage to the birds that frequent the nearby wetlands.

curious about Ellinwood's Underground World. In the 1870s and '80s, businesses were booming. They expanded into basements that were connected by underground passages along Washington (Main) Street and side streets. Many of Ellinwood's settlers were from Bavaria, where this type of underground construction was common. Underground businesses included a barber shop,

blacksmiths, drummer rooms where proprietors would "drum up sales," and a bathhouse where patrons would get a bath for 15 cents, or for 5 cents with dirty water and a used towel. The tunnels were abandoned in the 1930s. In 2013 Ellinwood native Chris McCord bought Hotel Wolf, which sits atop the Underground World. Chris and eight volunteers are restoring the hotel and making use of the underground by

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From far left: Tours of the Ellinwood Underground begin at Hotel Wolf or across the street at the Dick Building. The area's farmers are honored at the Great Bend Farmers Memorial located at the corner of SR 96 and 10th Street.

turning the former public library into a saloon. Chris introduced us to a local celebrity, Miss Sally, a mannequin who welcomes visitors. Sally is often invited to weddings, has her own Facebook page, and recently started dating Russ, a mannequin from Russell County. The community was in an uproar when Sally was kidnapped on the hotel's opening day, and greatly relieved when she was later found unhurt. Tours can be arranged at the Hotel Wolf or across the street at the Dick Building.

After leaving our motorhome at Pine Haven Retreat, we drove our dinghy to the 22,135-acre Quivira

National Wildlife Refuge. We stopped at the visitors center at the south end of the refuge, where I was surprised to learn that Quivira has two large saltwater marshes. Really? Salt water in Kansas? The salty surface waters and salt flats at Big and Little salt marshes are caused by natural salt water in the underlying bedrock. We left the car at Big Salt Marsh, then explored on our mountain bikes. That's when I realized the good fortune in our timing. There weren't as many birds as during migration, but there weren't many birders either. We were delighted to see scores of red-winged

blackbirds and hundreds of pelicans, and better yet, during our entire 15-mile bike ride, we saw only one vehicle. It was a white truck, clearly visible in the distance — not obscured by mosquitoes. In fact, neither Jim nor I got a single bite at Quivira.

We got what we came for and more. We saw birds in their natural habitat and we met people with big hearts in America's heartland. **M**

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Fortunately, Technology Research LLC offers a full line of carefully engineered devices that deliver the most complete electrical protection available for any size RV from pop-up trailer to custom coach. TRC's Surge Guard surge protectors protect your RV's electrical system, appliances and electronics against power surges and spikes, high/low voltage, miswired pedestal, open neutral, open ground, ground fault and plug/receptacle overheating, depending on the model and level of protection you choose.



*Don't let this happen to you! Using a surge protector that offers multi-mode surge suppression and additional safety features will help protect against the risk of electrical fire, which can quickly consume an RV and leave you, your family and pets little time to escape.*

### Surge Protection & Diagnostics

Perfect for pop-ups and travel trailers, Model 44260 (30-amp) and Model 44270 (50-amp) are portable units that provide surge protection plus they identify faulty park power, analyzing circuits to verify pedestal power while testing for and indicating open ground, open neutral and reverse polarity. LED indicators show power status. The 30-amp model offers 2100 Joules of surge protection; the 50-amp model, 4200 Joules. Both offer up to 6,500 amps of protection against current spikes.

Model 44750 portable 30-amp surge protector with ground fault protection automatically shuts off power when it detects a ground fault, plus it offers 510 Joules of surge protection and up to 1,250 amps of protection against current spikes. The affordable unit resets manually after a ground fault.

### Complete Electrical Protection

For 5th wheels and motorhomes, Model 34830 (30-amp) and Model 34850 (50-amp) portable surge protectors with easy-to-read LCD display offer total protection, shutting off power automatically when they detect open neutral, open ground, overheated plug/receptacle or low (< 102 volts) or high (>132 volts). They reset automatically once power is restored, and continuously monitor and indicate voltage and amp draw (RMS), reverse polarity from a miswired pedestal or elevated ground voltage and surge failure.

The 30-amp unit provides 2450 Joules of surge protection; the 50-amp unit, 3850 Joules. Both have a built-in 128 second reset delay to protect air conditioner compressors and up to 6,500 amps current spike protection. All TRC portable surge protectors have Easy-T-Pull™ handles for safe disconnection from the power pedestal and are built for weather resistance.

### Hardwired Convenience

For the convenience of built-in surge protection, Model 34520 (30-amp) and Model 34560 (50-amp) hardwired surge protectors offer multi-mode surge suppression, automatically shutting off power to the RV in the event of open neutral or low/high incoming power. Both reset automatically with a 128 second delay to protect air conditioner compressors. LED indicators show miswired pedestal, reverse polarity and elevated ground voltage. The 30-amp model provides 2450 Joules of surge protection; the 50-amp model, 3850 Joules. Both provide up to 6,500 amps current spike protection. The UL-listed units install easily in a storage compartment, protected against UV and weather.

TRC Surge Guards are available at Camping World and other retail outlets, along with portable voltage regulators, anti-theft locking hasp for portable surge protectors, automatic transfer switches and digital power monitor. With TRC between your RV and the power pedestal, enjoy peace of mind the next time you plug in.



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  - ▶ 35550 - 50, 120/240V with 3850 joules of Surge Protection



**30A Portable  
34830**

**50A Portable  
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### 30A Model 34830

- ▶ 120V, 10/3 AWG Cord with 2450 joules of Surge Protection

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### 50A Model 44270

- ▶ 120/240V, 6/4 AWG Cord with 4200 joules of Surge Protection



**30A Portable  
44260**

**50A Portable  
44270**

By Bobbie Hasselbring



# EUREKA!

Pay dirt isn't all RVers can discover along British Columbia's Gold Rush Trail



## The Route

The author's route began in Vancouver along Highway 1, then headed east to Hope, north to Yale and on to Lytton. Following Highway 12 north to Lillooet, the road becomes Highway 99, which leads to Highway 97. Traveling north on 97 to Williams Lake and Quesnel, the author then turned east on Highway 26 to Barkerville.

**G**old fever binds British Columbia and the American West. When Hudson's Bay Company shipped 800 ounces of gold to San Francisco, California, in 1858, it set off a stampede of gold-crazy miners that rivaled California's gold rush. Today, RVers can travel past historic buildings, through unique geologic landscapes, and along parts of the original Cariboo Wagon Road to rediscover British Columbia's Gold Rush Trail.

Instead of driving from our home in Oregon, we fly to Vancouver, British Columbia, and rent a Class B motorhome from Westcoast Mountain Campers. Though we normally drive a larger Class C, this little rig fits the bill.

British Columbia's Gold Rush Trail is more than 1,000 miles long, but we're concentrating on the Cariboo portion, bordered on the east by the Cariboo Mountains and on the west by the mighty Fraser River.

After loading up on groceries, including some local blueberries at a fruit stand in Vancouver, and churning 90 minutes through suburban sprawl, we turn on Trans-Canada Highway 1 toward the town of Hope and leave the traffic behind. Almost immediately we're surrounded by massive mountains of the Fraser

A crude log cabin at 108 Mile House Historic Site illustrates the ruggedness of life in the goldfields.

River Canyon, where fishermen dot the banks of the silty green water and Bridal Veil Falls feathers the face of nearly vertical rock.

We pass through tiny Hope and cross the Fraser River. Even though we're at an elevation of only 227 feet, we're already deep in the mountains. This is amazingly rugged country and it's hard to imagine miners more than a century ago navigating these steep hills.

The town of Yale is equally small and easy to pass by. Instead, we turn toward the river and Yale Historic Site, with its 1870s Creighton House museum and gift shop, and the rebuilt 1863 St. John the Divine church. The museum contains gold rush items, Chinese and pioneer artifacts, railway exhibits and an impressive collection of First Nations cedar root baskets. However, it's the living-history tent city, with its grocery, saloon and barbershop, that really illustrates what this gateway to the Cariboo goldfields was like. I try my hand at gold panning and come up with a few flecks.

### Fraser River Canyon, Hell's Gate and a Native Village

We drive out of Yale and into the canyon, now narrow and steep, with

the Fraser River a thin ribbon. We pull into Hell's Gate, the place where the canyon tapers to a mere 115 feet wide. Hell's Gate got its colorful name from explorer Simon Fraser, who in 1808 described this passage as "a place where no human should venture, for surely these are the gates of hell."

Traditionally, this was an area where First Nations people fished. It also provided access for miners on their way to the Cariboo goldfields. During the 1880s, the Canadian Pacific Railway built a railroad on the west side of the canyon. Today, it's the site of the Hell's Gate Airtram, which gives a bird's-eye view of this historic landmark and the 200 million gallons of water per minute that thunder through here.

The Airtram, which is dog-friendly and operates every 10-15 minutes, whisks us across the river, where we spot huge gates constructed to help migrating salmon. In 1914 while working on new rail tunnels, the Canadian Pacific Railroad caused a huge landslide that blocked much of the river and decimated migrating salmon runs. These giant gates are an international effort to slow the water and give the fish a fighting chance.

There's lots to see and do in Barkerville Historic town, with more than 125 restored heritage buildings, musical theater shows, stagecoach rides and re-enactors from the 1860s era.



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## EUREKA!



The Thompson River joins the silt-laden Fraser River at Lytton, British Columbia. Staff in character and period costumes brings the history of Barkerville to life for visitors. At Tuckkwiwhum Heritage Village, guide Carol explains native salmon-drying techniques.



Across the river, we explore the gift shop and an impressive exhibit on salmon life cycle. We resist the fudge and ice cream shop, but indulge in creamy salmon chowder and crispy halibut and chips in the café. After lunch, we walk a dizzying pedestrian bridge over the river before making the four-minute return tram trip.

Just up the road is Tuckkwiwhum Heritage Interpretive Village, a First Nations outdoor museum. Native peoples, including Nlaka'pamux nation ("River People") have lived in the Fraser River Canyon for thousands of years. Our guide, Carol, dressed in a buckskin dress and ochre-painted face, leads us through traditional summer and winter lodges and exhibits of herbs and foods used by her people. She gives us a sample of "salmon candy," super-salty air-dried salmon and, in the gift store, I purchase a jar of herbal healing salve reputed to be good for aches and pains.

It's 7:30 p.m. when we pass Jackass Mountain summit (1,184 feet) and begin to descend into Lytton. The land is open and drier here, and the



fir and cedar have been replaced with pine. The mountains' granite faces are striated with ribbons of quartz.

Our berth for the night is Kumsheen Rafting Resort. Kumsheen means joining or co-mingling, and this is where the clear Thompson River joins the silt-laden Fraser. While the resort specializes in whitewater rafting, it also has a cozy RV and tent campground, where we hook up the motorhome and head to the onsite restaurant for tasty sirloin steaks.

We wake to cool and brilliant blue skies. In the village of Lytton, we stop at the bridge to take photos of the different colors of the two rivers' kumsheen. We're following Highway 12 now beside towering ochre-and-white cliffs, sometimes along the river, other times high above it.



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## EUREKA!

### Cariboo Wagon Road and Goldfields

In Lillooet (pronounced lil-LOO-it), we stop at the Miyazaki House, built in the 1880s and home to Dr. Masajiro Miyazaki, a Japanese man interned by the Canadian government during World War II. Miyazaki later became the town's physician and councilman. The house, a tribute to Japanese Canadians, contains historic area photos as well as artifacts and antique furnishings.

We cross the Fraser into town on the Bridge of the 23 Camels. After gold discovery in 1858, horses, mules and oxen hauled goods to the goldfields. An entrepreneur thought camels would make ideal pack animals, and imported 23 of them. The ill-tempered creatures kicked, bit, and frightened other animals and were released into the wild. They didn't survive, but this bridge is named after them.

Lillooet is a walkable town, with huge chunks of polished jade along each corner commemorating the town's old jade mines and its reputation as Canada's jade capital. While they don't mine the green mineral anymore, we stop at the House of Jade, where the shop owner's son tells us those streetside specimens are worth \$1,500-2,000 each. We shell out

\$10 for our own sliver of souvenir jade. This is also the site of the Mile Zero cairn that marks the official beginning of the Cariboo Wagon Road to the goldfields.

We bump down a dirt road north of town and down a narrow drive to Xwisten, a heritage site of the area's St'át'imc people. Sandra, our cultural guide, joins us for a lunch of fresh Fraser River salmon and bannock (Indian fry bread) and then leads us along a pathway to the Bridge River Fishing Grounds. Along the river are rustic pole structures for processing and drying fish. Sandra shows us how they lay out the salmon, then slice it across several times before hanging it to dry in the warm breezes.

The next morning, we drive along the sagebrush-covered canyon's windy, steep, avalanche-prone road. We've turned away from the river and we're climbing (elevation 2,529), passing several former slides and Pavilion and Crown lakes. We're tempted to stay at Marble Canyon Provincial Park Camp right on Crown Lake, but it's early and so we drive on enjoying the white, gray and black marble of this gorgeous canyon.

We turn west onto BC Highway 97, the Cariboo Highway. At mile 47, in the village of Clinton, we meet Edith,

A family explores the 108 Mile House Historic Site's log structures and exhibits.



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**THETFORD**

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curator of the Clinton Museum. The town grew up around the Clinton Hotel, a roadhouse on the way to goldfields in Barkerville. The hotel burned down in 1952 and the museum has plenty of its artifacts. The museum and a 1911 livery barn are chock-full of antique farm equipment, household items, Chinese artifacts, rifles and even one of those famous camel saddles. Just down the street, you can

buy some of these antiques — from old wagon wheels to a child's spaceship ride — at the Clinton Emporium.

Back on the road, we continue to climb (elevation 3,777 feet) and, just past 70 Mile House, pull into The Sugar Shack for lunch. The owner is a Frenchman from Quebec who makes killer poutine (fries, cheese curds and gravy) and Montreal smoked-meat sandwiches that we devour.

We stop at the 108 Mile House Historic Site, a collection of 1800s and early 1900s log structures, including a massive 1908 Clydesdale barn and a 1911 sod-roofed cabin. It's Sunday so the museum and many of the buildings are closed, but we mark it on our to-do list for another time.

It's late by the time we pull into Stampede Campground at the rodeo grounds in Williams Lake. We've missed the horse show today, but we're grateful for the full hookups, level campsite and clean, coin-op showers.

It rains overnight and we wake to broken clouds. As we climb along Highway 97, we note the aspens turning yellow. Fall comes early to this rugged part of the world, and we imagine miners who traveled this route worrying about early snowfall. We've rejoined the Fraser River, its mighty green ribbon of silt far below us.

At the town of Quesnel, we turn east onto BC Highway 26 for our final push to the Cariboo goldfields. Fifty miles later, we pull into Barkerville, formerly the main Cariboo Gold Rush town and now a preserved site containing more than 125 historic buildings, many on their original foundations. With a population of more than 5,000, Barkerville was the largest city north of San Francisco and west of Chicago. This boomtown contained everything from live theater to coffee saloons and churches and literary societies. It also had plenty of saloons, brothels and gambling halls. Unlike other gold rush towns that have crumbled into the dirt, Barkerville's buildings and 187,000 artifacts have been preserved in this National Historic Site.

It's raining lightly as we stroll the mile-long Main Street. In the 1860s, Barkerville's muddy streets filled with toxic runoff so they built wooden sidewalks. Today, I'm glad they did. We wander through the blacksmith forge, where the smithy makes iron items like fireplace poker; visit the historic dentist's office with its primitive dental tools; pick up cookies

COMFORT ZONE | 06

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The promise of gold brought Billy Barker, the town's namesake, to British Columbia's rugged interior. Gold mining continues in the area today. Hell's Gate tram drops visitors 1,100-plus feet to the visitors center and offers a close-up view of the narrowest section of the Fraser River that Simon Fraser called "the gates of hell." A motorhome plies Highway 1 near Hell's Gate, British Columbia.

at Goldfields Bakery; and, at C. Strouss & Co., warm ourselves beside the wood stove with cups of hot coffee.

In the afternoon, we join in the historic games. Despite on-and-off rain, kids and adults alike happily compete in the hammer throw, egg toss, ladies' egg/spoon race and pie-eating contest. After several burly men fail, a skinny lad wins a bottle of Canadian whiskey by clambering up a 40-foot greased pole.

Tonight, we'll eat at Lung Duck Tong Chinese restaurant and stay at one of Barkerville's forested campgrounds, but, for now, I've got to get ready for that pie-eating contest. **M**

### For More Information

**Barkerville Historic Town**  
888-994-3332, [www.barkerville.ca](http://www.barkerville.ca)

**Destination British Columbia**  
[www.hellobc.com](http://www.hellobc.com)

**Gold Rush Trail**  
[www.goldrushtrail.ca](http://www.goldrushtrail.ca)

**Hope Valley RV and Campground**  
604-869-9857, [www.hopevalleyrv.ca](http://www.hopevalleyrv.ca)

**Kumsheen Rafting Resort**  
800-663-6667, [www.kumsheen.com](http://www.kumsheen.com)

**Williams Lake Stampede Campground**  
250-398-6718, [www.williamslakestampede.com/campground](http://www.williamslakestampede.com/campground)

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# SIX-FIGURE Symphony

SURPRISINGLY,  
\$100K STILL  
BUYS A LOT OF  
MOTORHOME;  
HERE ARE  
12 CLASS A  
CHOICES

**S**ix figures just ain't what it used to be. I can remember daydreaming as a child, thinking, "If I had \$100,000, I'd be rich and set for life!" Ah, youth. True, \$100K is nothing to sneeze at, but it's not exactly the life-altering amount that had me dreaming of multiple mansions, worldly travels and fancy cars in my days of youth. But that doesn't mean you have to "settle" for a \$100,000 motorhome: even in these days of quarter-million-dollar coaches practically being the norm, the princely sum of \$100,000 can get you a nicely outfitted Class A.

Stout construction? How about fiberglass front and rear caps and one-piece roofs. Upscale amenities? Try solid-surface countertops, residential appliances and precision cabinetry. State-of-the-art electronics? Do big-screen TVs, Bluetooth-enabled DVD players and cutting-edge monitoring solutions toot your horn?

These motorhomes have many amenities without sacrificing craftsmanship, quality or perhaps best of all, overall visual appeal.

So, much like your childhood fantasies, allow yourself to dream big, and check out these motorhomes for around \$100,000, listed from lowest to highest base MSRP.



## Fleetwood Flair 26D

Fleetwood builds motorhomes using what it calls F21 technology; “F” being for Fleetwood RV, and “21” for 21st-century materials and techniques. This means the company utilizes such materials as precision-welded aluminum frames, solid-bead insulation and aluminum-extruded slide ramps, to name a few. The Flair may be Fleetwood’s entry-level Class A gasser, but that doesn’t mean the company has scrimped on the amenities. Two 12-volt DC power jacks, a central monitor panel, composite tile flooring and hardwood cabinet doors are standard, as are interior LED lighting and auxiliary batteries with a disconnect switch. Galley features include laminate countertops and a residential double-bowl sink, while the bedroom offers an LED TV on a swing arm, a headboard and handy reading lights in the queen bed’s overhead cabinet. The 26D offers a freestanding recliner in the living area, in addition to a spacious amidships galley.



## Nexus Maybach

Nexus RV is a factory-direct RV manufacturer, which makes purchasing the 2017 Maybach a more hands-on buying experience. The exterior of the well-appointed base model features seamless fiberglass side walls, radius tinted windows, a fiberglass front cap and a fiberglass roof, while inside, buyers are treated to amenities such as raised-panel cabinets, upgraded flooring, LED lighting, stainless-steel sinks in the galley and bathroom, a queen bed and a double-door refrigerator. But the true personalized experience begins when customers begin selecting from an impressive array of options (available online, with prices), with everything from upgrades to the cockpit area to deluxe furniture to Blu-ray entertainment systems and practically all you could imagine in between. You can even opt to swap out the standard bunks with a large wardrobe. The Maybach is built to last with a high-strength alloy-steel cage frame, galvanized exterior storage compartments and all composite materials throughout.



## Thor Vegas 25.4 RUV

With a length of 27 feet and a narrow width of 7 feet 10 inches, the Vegas 25.4 RUV is easy to drive and maneuver, making it a great choice for campgrounds with tight turns or even a tailgating party outside the local team’s stadium. Owners can opt for the 32-inch LED exterior TV to watch the big game under the stars, or they can cheer on the home team in the living room while watching the LED TV. The 42-by-74-inch Dream Dinette in the 25.4 is spacious enough for the whole tribe, and RV chefs are never far from the action in the free-flowing galley layout. The bedroom is fully outfitted with a nightstand, dresser, wardrobe and queen bed, and there’s the option here for yet another 32-inch LED TV. The power drop-down hideaway overhead bunk in the living area means there’s room for everybody to sleep, and the ceiling-ducted air-conditioning system means they’ll be sleeping in comfort. The cockpit has been outfitted with a touch-screen AM/FM/CD unit with Bluetooth compatibility and a handy backup monitor and mirror display.

Chassis	Ford
Engine	6.8-liter V-10
Fuel cap	80 gal
GVWR	16,000 lbs
Ext length	27' 10"
Ext width	8' 6"
Ext height with A/C	12'
Wheelbase	158"
Freshwater cap	50 gal
Black/gray-water cap	35 gal/35 gal
LP-gas cap	14 gal
Base MSRP	\$88,550

### Fleetwood RV

800-854-1344, [www.fleetwoodrv.com](http://www.fleetwoodrv.com)

Chassis	Ford F53
Engine	6.8-liter V-10
Fuel cap	80 gal
GVWR	22,000 lbs
Ext length	37' 5"
Ext width	8' 5"
Ext height with A/C	12' 10"
Wheelbase	242"
Freshwater cap	80 gal
Black/gray-water cap	43 gal/86 gal
LP-gas cap	20.3 gal
Base MSRP	\$99,999

### Nexus RV

855-786-3987, [www.nexusrv.com](http://www.nexusrv.com)

Chassis	Ford E-Series
Engine	6.8-liter V-10
Fuel cap	55 gal
GVWR	12,500 lbs
Ext length	27'
Ext width	7' 10"
Ext height with A/C	11' 3"
Wheelbase	188"
Freshwater cap	42 gal
Black/gray-water cap	30 gal/40 gal
LP-gas cap	10 gal
Base MSRP	\$101,775

### Thor Motor Coach

800-860-5658, [www.thormotorcoach.com](http://www.thormotorcoach.com)



### Thor Axis 24.1 RUV

Thor calls its Axis a recreational utility vehicle (RUV), as it combines the versatility and easy driving attitude of an SUV with the amenities of a Class A. Storage in the Axis is convenient, as a large MEGA storage compartment should easily swallow most supplies; additional rotocast storage compartments will handle the rest. Inside, the rear bedroom of the 24.1 has an interesting twist: dual twin beds that can be combined to form one large RV king bed. The living area boasts a large sofa bed (with air mattress), perfect for dining at the roomy pedestal table. A drop-down overhead bunk provides additional sleeping options. In the galley, a flip-up countertop extension means chefs have plenty of space to work while preparing food from the 6-cubic-foot double-door refrigerator on the three-burner stove or in the standard microwave. An oversized-bowl kitchen sink and single faucet with pull-down sprayer complement the flat-panel cabinet doors with a rattan inlay and nickel-finish hardware.



### Winnebago Sunstar

The Winnebago Sunstar is a family-friendly Class A offered in a variety of budget-friendly floorplans ranging from 27 to 31 feet. The Sunstar has been outfitted with standard features you don't often find at this price, such as a rearview monitor system, a decorative backsplash in the galley and MCD roller shades. The master bedroom in the 26HE offers a private retreat complete with walk-around queen-size bed, a wardrobe and shirt closet. The 31BE offers a bunk-bed configuration for families with small children, as well as an optional exterior entertainment system. The 31KE features a U-shaped dinette, a dash workstation, sofa bed, large living area, split bath and a walk-around queen-size bed. Also available is the new 29VE, complete with optional tailgate package and exterior TV and speakers. Additional sleeping space in all Sunstar motorhomes can be added with the available StudioLoft bed that lowers from the ceiling.



### Fleetwood Storm 28MS

There aren't any options available on Fleetwood's Storm 28MS, but that's because the sub-30-foot Class A comes equipped with most everything you'll need. Whether it's the 28-inch LED TV and DVD player in the living area, the laminate countertops with a bullnose edge, the whole-coach water filtration system or the porcelain toilet bowl in the bathroom, the Storm has been outfitted with residential-type amenities not usually found in this price range. Fleetwood's F21 construction standards mean the motorhome is built for the long haul. Flexsteel furniture, a soft-touch vinyl ceiling and a Hide-a-Loft drop-down queen-size bed highlight the living area, while the hidden cabinet door and Euro hinges and full-extension drawer guides and transit-ship locks truly enhance the hardwood cabinetry, which is available in either a rich Barcelona hue or a lighter, tan Buttercup motif.

Chassis	Ford E-Series
Engine	6.8-liter V-10
Fuel cap	55 gal
GVWR	12,500 lbs
Ext length	25' 6"
Ext width	7' 10"
Ext height with A/C	11' 3"
Wheelbase	188"
Freshwater cap	42 gal
Black/gray-water cap	30 gal/40 gal
LP-gas cap	10 gal
Base MSRP	\$102,000

**Thor Motor Coach**  
800-860-5658, [www.thormotorcoach.com](http://www.thormotorcoach.com)

Chassis	Ford F53
Engine	6.8-liter V-10
Fuel cap	80 gal
GVWR	16,000 lbs
Ext length	31' 3"
Ext width	8' 5.5"
Ext height with A/C	12' 2"
Wheelbase	190"
Freshwater cap	64 gal
Black/gray-water cap	41 gal/57 gal
LP-gas cap	18 gal
Base MSRP	\$102,614

**Winnebago Industries Inc.**  
641-585-3535, [www.winnebagoindustries.com](http://www.winnebagoindustries.com)

Chassis	Ford
Engine	6.8-liter V-10
Fuel cap	80 gal
GVWR	18,000 lbs
Ext length	28' 8"
Ext width	8' 6"
Ext height with A/C	12'
Wheelbase	178"
Freshwater cap	60 gal
Black/gray-water cap	35 gal/35 gal
LP-gas cap	14 gal
Base MSRP	\$102,620

**Fleetwood RV**  
800-854-1344, [www.fleetwoodrv.com](http://www.fleetwoodrv.com)

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### Holiday Rambler Admiral XE

The Admiral XE 30U offers owners three distinct living areas for a true residential feel. The living area features a spacious 41-by-70-inch dinette, in addition to a 66-inch jackknife sofa, offering plenty of viewing options for the 32-inch LED TV. The galley has been designed with the RV chef in mind, with a 6-cubic-foot refrigerator, three-burner cooktop and handy round sink, which allows for easy cleanup of pots and pans. A large pantry handles the foodstuffs. After dinner, mom and dad can retreat to the private bedroom and sleep easy on the large king-size bed; a 19-inch LED TV, dual nightstands and a cavernous wardrobe round out the offerings. Outside, the power electric step and power awning with LED lighting allow owners to truly enjoy the campsite; an exterior entertainment center enhances the patio-side experience. All HR motorhomes include a one-piece molded fiberglass end cap, corrosion-resistant tubular framing, a Vacu-bond floor and hull lamination process, all of which combine to make a solid coach.



### Winnebago Vista

The popular Winnebago Vista offers owners a great value with four different floorplans designed with the whole family in mind. Outside, the premium high-gloss side walls look great, and flourishes such as the automatic entrance steps and powered patio awning add to the bang-for-your-buck factor. Automatic hydraulic leveling jacks make setting up in camp as easy as pushing a button. Each Vista makes maximum use of its space with dual-purpose furniture, such as a sofa bed, convertible dinette and swivel captain's chairs. The new sure-to-be-a-hit 31BE floorplan features a full-wall slide, bunk beds (with optional DVD players with flip-down monitors), a walk-through bath with bedroom privacy entry and an exterior entertainment center. Owners of Vista motorhomes can add more sleeping space with the optional StudioLoft bed, while the galleys come standard with a two-door refrigerator, microwave, three-burner range and laminate countertops.



### Forest River Georgetown FR3 30DS

The Georgetown FR3 series is what Forest River has dubbed its "crossover" motorhome line due to its Class A-type amenities and Class C-like maneuverability. The 30DS shown above is a dual-slide configuration with a master "retreat" featuring a supple king-size bed, LED TV and dual wardrobes behind a solid door. The split-bath configuration maximizes the use of space (and helps with getting ready for the day), while the wraparound booth dinette and sofa bed with footrests offer comfortable seating as well as additional sleeping areas for friends and family. Outside, the gray gelcoat side walls, one-piece fiberglass front cap, LED turn signals and "Super Storage" rear pass-through compartment all make life in the motorhome easy; the in-dash Bluetooth-enabled backup monitor with AM/FM/CD and vinyl-wrapped low-profile doghouse in the cockpit continue that trend.

Chassis	Ford
Engine	6.8-liter V-10
Fuel cap	80 gal
GVWR	18,000 lbs
Ext length	30' 11"
Ext width	8' 6"
Ext height with A/C	12'
Wheelbase	190"
Freshwater cap	50 gal
Black/gray-water cap	35 gal/35 gal
LP-gas cap	14 gal
Base MSRP	\$104,243

**Holiday Rambler**  
800-648-6582, [www.holidayrambler.com](http://www.holidayrambler.com)

Chassis	Ford F53
Engine	6.8-liter V-10
Fuel cap	80 gal
GVWR	18,000 lbs
Ext length	31' 11"
Ext width	8' 5.5"
Ext height with A/C	12' 2"
Wheelbase	208"
Freshwater cap	70 gal
Black/gray-water cap	43 gal/59 gal
LP-gas cap	18 gal
Base MSRP	\$109,499

**Winnebago Industries Inc.**  
641-585-3535, [www.winnebagoindustries.com](http://www.winnebagoindustries.com)

Chassis	Ford
Engine	6.8-liter V-10
Fuel cap	80 gal
GVWR	18,000 lbs
Ext length	31' 8"
Ext width	8' 3.5"
Ext height with A/C	12' 2"
Wheelbase	190"
Freshwater cap	57 gal
Black/gray-water cap	41 gal/41 gal
LP-gas cap	24.5 gal
Base MSRP	\$111,749

**Forest River Inc.**  
866-837-6044, [www.forestriverinc.com](http://www.forestriverinc.com)



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### Thor A.C.E. 30.1

Thor's A.C.E. motorhomes are built using vacuum-bonded laminating on the side walls, floor and roof, helping with durability and longevity. The 30.1 shown here is a dual-slide model offering owners plenty of seating in the living area, in addition to a removable coffee table in the cockpit area, which comes in quite handy while having a get-together for family and friends. Both the jackknife sofa and the booth dinette also up the sleeping positions and, along with the drop-down overhead bunk, mean the 30.1 should have no problems accommodating a family of five or six. Thoughtful touches like a broom closet at the entry door, a Pet-Link multipurpose tie-down, pullout Kibble Station and rubber tread steps make the A.C.E. a great choice for pet owners, and the vinyl flooring and leatherette furniture inside are easy to clean. The split-bath configuration features a spacious 30-by-36-inch shower, giving owners plenty of room to bathe themselves or the family dog.



### Newmar Bay Star Sport

The triple-slide Bay Star Sport 3004 features a full-wall slide and an open floorplan to make the coach live larger than it already does. The living area is highlighted by a 74-inch jackknife sofa with a removable table that doubles as a dining area. In addition, there is a convertible table top/console between the driver and passenger seats over the engine cover, offering plenty of surface area for large meals and gatherings. The galley is roomy and well laid out, with a flip-up counter extension in the forward portion of the kitchen, while the main TV is located along the bath wall just rear of the galley area, providing a good viewing angle for the entertainment settings. For overnight visitors, the slide houses two 27-by-72-inch bunks, which are situated directly across from the split-bath area for minimal nighttime interruptions. A 36-inch radiused shower makes bathing a breeze. Occupants of the master bedroom can enjoy a 60-by-80-inch queen bed and LED TV when the sun goes down.



### Jayco Precept

Jayco's Precept combines top-notch amenities and a smooth ride for an enjoyable RVing experience. The company achieves the latter by employing its JRide Plus system on the Precept, which greatly improves handling and on-the-road comfort by employing a computer-balanced driveshaft, Bilstein shocks, jounce bumpers, front and rear sway bars and an additional heavy-duty rear sway bar. Outside, the high-gloss fiberglass side walls, one-piece front and rear caps and seamless rubber roof all belie a motorhome that's generally a little harder on the wallet. Inside, raised-panel cabinet doors, recessed LED lighting, a water-filtration system and porcelain toilet are all appointments you might not expect to find in this price range. Nor would you likely expect the bunk beds, bedroom TV and exterior entertainment center on the 29UR, making the Precept a great choice for RVers who like to entertain. There's also an included (as part of the mandatory Customer Value Package option) Onan 5.5-kW generator for taking the party off the grid.

Chassis	Ford F53
Engine	6.8-liter V-10
Fuel cap	80 gal
GVWR	18,000 lbs
Ext length	30' 10"
Ext width	8' 3"
Ext height with A/C	12' 2"
Wheelbase	190"
Freshwater cap	50 gal
Black/gray-water cap	24.5 gal/44 gal
LP-gas cap	20 gal
Base MSRP	\$115,050

**Thor Motor Coach**  
800-860-5658, [www.thormotorcoach.com](http://www.thormotorcoach.com)

Chassis	Ford F53
Engine	6.8-liter V-10
Fuel cap	80 gal
GVWR	20,500 lbs
Ext length	30' 11"
Ext width	8' 5.5"
Ext height with A/C	12' 4"
Wheelbase	200"
Freshwater cap	75 gal
Black/gray-water cap	40 gal/60 gal
LP-gas cap	25 gal
Base MSRP	\$115,388

**Newmar**  
800-731-8300, [www.newmarcorp.com](http://www.newmarcorp.com)

Chassis	Ford F53
Engine	6.8-liter V-10
Fuel cap	80 gal
GVWR	18,000 lbs
Ext length	32' 1"
Ext width	8' 5"
Ext height with A/C	12' 4"
Wheelbase	190"
Freshwater cap	71.5 gal
Black/gray-water cap	40 gal/40 gal
LP-gas cap	16.5 gal
Base MSRP	\$116,676

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By E. Don Smith

# AC GENERATOR SERVICE

Proper care and maintenance are critical for optimal performance of a motorhome's auxiliary power plant



**I**f you are a DIY kind of person, the annual service of your motorhome's AC generator should be on your to-do list. In many ways, the generator engine is just like the main coach engine, only smaller. Servicing a generator consists of many of the same items as servicing the coach engine, but of course it is a lot easier due to its size and location.

On many Class A diesel motorhomes, the generator is placed in a front-mounted slide tray that allows easy access to the engine. A gas-engine motorhome will usually have a gas generator and a diesel-engine motorhome will usually have a diesel-engine generator because the generator usually shares the same fuel tank as the chassis.

For this article, we are specifically covering the annual service of an Onan Quiet 7500 diesel generator. However, even if you have a slightly different diesel generator or a gasoline- or LP-gas-fueled generator, many of the service items will be similar. Service intervals vary by make and model, so it's important to refer to the owner's manual for

the generator in your coach to make sure you are servicing the correct items at the correct time. Most of the service intervals for motorhome generators are expressed in terms of hours of usage (with a minimum of annually) so use your hour meter as the guide in order to decide which items need to be serviced.

**➔ ON THIS COACH, WITH AN ONAN QUIET DIESEL 7500, THE MAIN SERVICE ITEMS ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

1. Engine oil and filter replacement (150 hours or annually)
2. Fuel-filter replacement (500 hours)
3. Check and/or change engine coolant (1,000 hours)
4. Engine air-filter replacement (500 hours)
5. Check and clean all electrical connections (monthly)
6. Clean out spark arrestor (150 hours)

One of the most important things you can do to keep your generator functioning properly is to use it regularly. Onan suggests that a generator should be run under a 50 percent load once a month for at least two hours. So even if you don't ever boondock, you should operate the generator as stated above to keep the generator in top condition.

Since this procedure involves being under the motorhome and handling fluids such as used engine oil, there are a few safety precautions. First, set the parking brake on the coach AND chock the wheels to prevent the motorhome from rolling. On most rear-engine diesel coaches,

the front generator slide can be opened with the motorhome at normal ride height and you can service the generator without using any jacks. If you decide to use the leveling jacks to make the generator access easier, you will also need to use safety jack stands as well.

Another important aspect of this procedure is dealing with the drained oil and/or coolant. Used oil should always be collected for proper disposal at a recycling center, as should the coolant, with both in separate and sealed containers. Many engine coolants are attractive to animals, so never leave a drain pan where it can be accessed by pets, etc.

After referring to the service manual for your motorhome's generator, you will need to purchase the various filters and fluids for your project and then gather up a few hand tools. The owner's manual will have specifications for fluids, such as the engine oil and coolant. Remember, diesel engines and gasoline engines require different fluids, so pick the right one for your generator.

The only other thing you will need is a catch pan and an hour or two of your time, and you are ready to tackle the annual generator service and save yourself a lot of money in the process. Let's take a look at the steps we took to service our Onan diesel generator.



1



2



3



4

[1] Many generators are equipped with an AUTO START feature, so before you begin working on the generator, make sure it is disabled so that it cannot try to start unexpectedly.

[2] If the engine is completely cold, it's best to start it for a few minutes to slightly warm the oil. Then shut it down before beginning the servicing process.

[3] Gather the oil, oil filter and other items needed, and open the slide tray to access the generator.

[4] After locating the drain plug on the bottom of the generator, remove it and allow the oil to drain into the catch pan positioned below.



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5



6

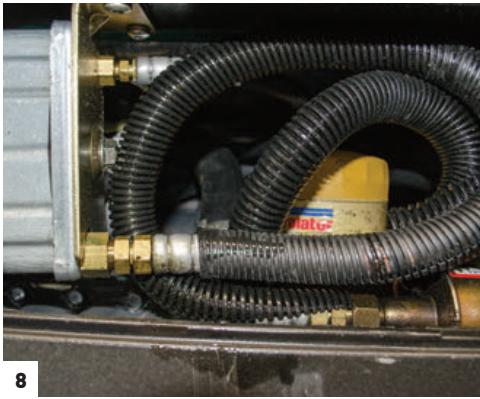


7

[5] While the oil is draining, it is a good time to check all the generator electrical connections and ground wires. If they are clean, spray them with terminal protector.

[6] If the connections are corroded, clean them first with a battery-cleaner spray or baking soda/water solution and a soft-bristle wire brush. Then spray them with the protectant.

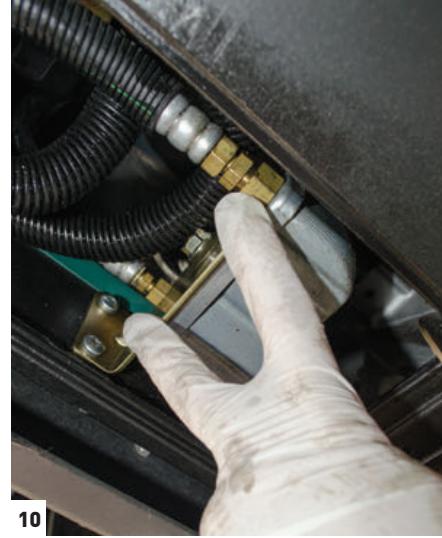
[7] Locate the access-panel door on the bottom of the generator and open it as shown. This will give you access to the oil and fuel filters.



8



9



10



11

[8] Behind this network of wires and fuel hoses is the oil filter. The filter can be removed by using a strap or spider-style oil-filter wrench. Make sure the old filter gasket comes off with the filter.

[9] To reinstall the new filter, you need to lubricate the rubber gasket with fresh oil. Then reinstall the new filter and torque it properly. Mobil (and most other filter manufacturers) suggests tightening it by hand until the gasket contacts, then turn it another three-quarters of a turn.

[10] If your motorhome's generator is due a fuel-filter replacement, here are the fuel-line connections that will need to be removed. In between the two fuel lines is the nut that mounts the filter to the housing.

[11] After installing the new oil filter and drain plug we refilled the generator with 3 quarts of Rotella T5 Synthetic Blend oil. Make sure the oil meets the API specifications of the generator's manufacturer.



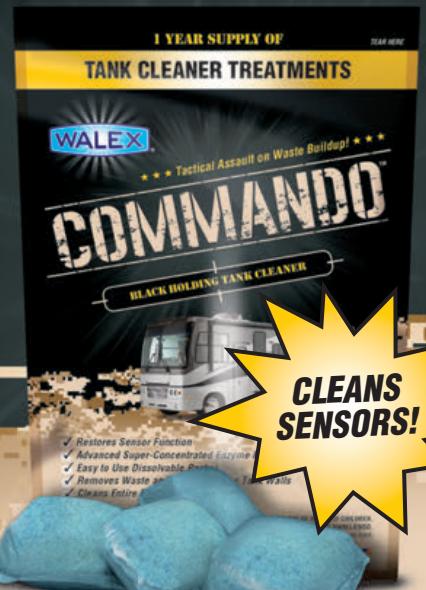
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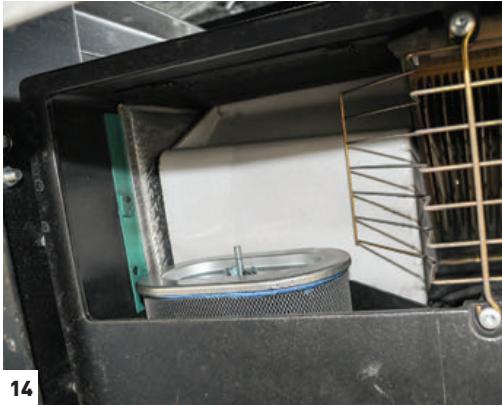
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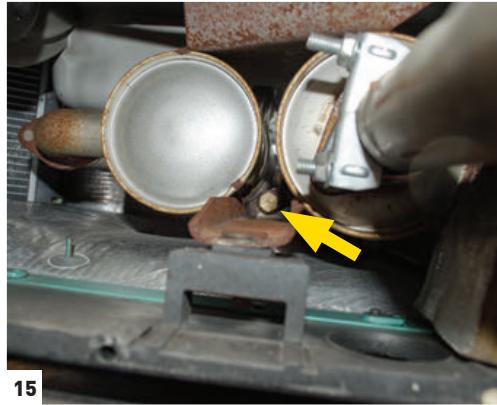
13

[12] Check the engine-oil level to ensure it is correct.

[13] If the generator is due for an air-filter change, you will find it here under this plastic cover on the bottom of the generator. Simply remove the wing nut and cover to access the filter.



14



15

[14] Below the cover is the air filter that can be easily replaced after removal of the metal cover and wing nut. Then install the new filter and replace the plastic cover.

[15] After locating the exhaust system on the bottom of the generator, you should be able to see the exhaust plug shown here (you may need a flashlight). The spark arrester, which is very difficult to access, should be serviced every 150 hours on this generator.

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16



17



18

[16] Using two socket extensions we were able to access the exhaust plug and remove it. If the plug is rusted, you may have to spray it with penetrating oil and allow it to soak in. After it has been removed, start the generator and allow it to run a few minutes to clear out the debris. **Make sure you have completed all the other items above before starting the engine.**

[17] In order to reinstall the exhaust plug, we used some wadded-up masking tape to fill in the bottom of the socket. This holds the bolt high enough inside of the socket to catch on the threads as we reinstalled it.

[18] Although a coolant change is not part of the annual service, the levels should be checked. The coolant fill spout is marked and it is just behind the oil fill. The coolant level can be seen through the coolant overflow tank. **M**



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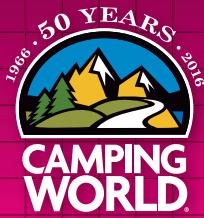
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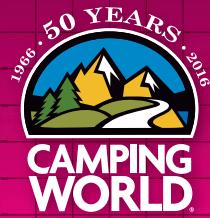


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# WATCH AND WARN

## Choosing the right security system for your motorhome

**W**hen *MotorHome* reader Rob Sanford wrote to ask about RV security systems, it was clear that his interest was not just academic: “As someone who has suffered losses from break-ins,” wrote Sanford, “I hope *MotorHome* can offer some advice and recommend security equipment in an upcoming issue.”

There is little doubt that security can be a big concern, especially for those who have had an experience like Sanford. Whether it’s protecting your family or your property, adding a layer of electronic protection can be very important to your peace of mind.

Motorhome security systems are much like home security systems. They can notify you — or the authorities — of a break-in, alert with strobe and siren, sense heat, motion, or windows and doors being opened.

But motorhome systems that work anywhere you go can be quite different from home-based systems when it comes to power and com-

munication. Motorhomes have the capacity to operate off of the power grid, which means a dedicated motorhome security system should as well. In addition, motorhomes cannot rely on hard wires (phone or Internet cables) to remain in communication for monitoring, reporting and remote control of system features.

### FINDING A FIT

Talking to fellow RVers and to those designing motorhome security systems, it quickly became apparent that one size does not fit all due to the wide-ranging variety of ways that we use our motorhomes, where we store

them, whether or not we have pets on board, how much we want to know about what is happening in and around our units when we are not there and whether or not we want to inform the authorities of incidents.

For example, we store our RV at a facility that is very secure behind razor-wire fences, inside a blanket of electronic surveillance and under the watchful eye of on-site security guards. Other off-site parking spaces may not be as secure and could use some initiative on the part of the owners to monitor and ward off invaders.

Some motorhome owners think their dogs or their weapons have them covered while they are using their motorhome, but their motorhome is probably the most vulnerable when it is parked in the driveway before and after trips. A system that takes advantage of home wireless equipment might be

just the thing. Those with an existing home security system can take advantage of that system while at home by activating an additional motion-sensor zone in the motorhome or making use of a break-beam sensor in the driveway.

For many motorhome enthusiasts, venturing out on the open highway intensifies security concerns because there are people and pets to protect and there is less control over the ever-changing environment. Motion sensors that worked well when the vehicle was unoccupied may need to give way to door and window sensors while pets and people are wandering around inside. What about when you stop for lunch or take a short hike down to those falls you've heard so much about?

Circumstances continue to change as you arrive at your destination. You could be rolling into a gated property with solid security or into a location with lots of public access and a steady flow of both vehicle and pedestrian traffic. We've camped in upscale RV resorts and felt quite protected and we've set up base in public skating rink parking lots while our kids competed in hockey tournaments for the weekend — a setting in which you can expect lots of movement around the RV.

### SAFE AT HOME BASE

As stated above, if you already have a home security system, security for your motorhome while parked at your house may be as simple as adding a



Although break-ins are not as big of a problem in motorhomes as they are in traditional stick-and-brick houses, they do, unfortunately, occur. Help to protect your motorhome by installing an RV security system.

motion detector or other sensors that connect to your existing home system.

If you need home security only for your motorhome and it is parked within range of your wireless network, there are lots of options for inexpensive systems that can alert you to movement or to open doors and windows. These devices are easy to install and do not require service contracts.

Guardzilla offers a simple camera-based unit that you simply plug in, download an app for your smartphone and then connect to your home Wi-Fi. It sends you a text, email and/or push message when motion is detected. When you get the message, you can open your app and view a live video. Using your smartphone you can arm or disarm the system, view the activity log, change settings, push the panic button to make the alarm go off in your motorhome or switch to additional Guardzilla cameras. Mobile hotspots and guest networks do not work well for these types of systems,

so you either need to use your home system or a consistent wireless Internet setup in your motorhome.

### MOBILE SECURITY

To take a motorhome security system on the road, you need to settle the question of connectivity and power. Connecting to the motorhome for monitoring, reporting and controlling the system usually requires satellite- or cellular-based Internet. If your motorhome doesn't have Internet, you'll need a system that provides it as part of the package. Any systems must answer the right power source questions as well. Do they need shorepower? Will they drain the motorhome house battery? Do they have their own power source?

Motorhomes already equipped with satellite- or cellular-based Internet service have lots of options for wireless systems designed primarily for home use. As long as an appropriate power source is readily available, many of these systems can



### ☞ NETBRIGHT LIGHTS

We improved the security of our RV parking spot by installing a set of NetBright lights by Mr. Beams. The motion-detector lights are battery-operated and easy to install. The key feature is that they act as a network. If movement triggers one light, it sends a signal that turns on the other lights in the network. Because they are battery-operated, you can install them in locations without power. You can even take them along with you on your motorhome outings to provide added security wherever you go. As of this writing, our lights have been in constant service for more than nine months on the original batteries.

use the wireless network in your motorhome to keep you informed of the security status and make changes to settings. Motion detectors, door and window sensors, smoke detectors, temperature sensors and water sensors can alert you and allow you to see what's going on in your coach.

If your motorhome does not have constant Internet, a standalone system that provides for cellular or satellite connection can get the job done. Standalone security systems with video alert, such as the RV Security System by All Secure Alarm Company, require a one-year contract for monitoring, which costs about \$55 per month. When the system has cell coverage and is activated, a siren sounds from the motorhome panel and the system sends you a text alert with a 10-second video clip of your motorhome's interior showing who activated the system. You can call the local police or take whatever action you deem appropriate. Your video can even be forwarded to the police to identify the intruder.

Here are some of the latest security products that were developed with the motorhome enthusiast in mind:

**[1]** Guardzilla's simple-to-install, standalone motion detector with built-in video camera streams video to users' smartphones in real time and captures pictures. The motion sensor and siren capabilities allow Guardzilla to identify and deter unwanted intrusions. Requires AC power and wireless Internet. 855-268-7733, [www.guardzilla.com](http://www.guardzilla.com)

**[2]** Chicopee Electronics system for motorhomes includes a Starlink Cellular Communicator to connect the system, which includes a main control panel, LCD keypad, wireless pet-immune motion detector, wireless door/compartments/window contacts, loud horn and strobe. 413-533-6743, [www.chicopeeelectronics.com/menu.htm](http://www.chicopeeelectronics.com/menu.htm)

[1]



[2]



### DEFENSIVE STRATEGIES

Motorhome security system features you may want to consider include battery backup, inertia-based sensors and cable-lock sensors to secure outdoor items, pet provisions for motion detectors, expandable sensor zones for adding to the system, video alerts, remote control, horn and strobe alert options, smartphone apps for controlling and monitoring the system, driveway sensors and mobile connectivity.



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## RV SECURITY SYSTEMS

[3]



[4]



**[3]** Dakota Alert's DCMA-2500 wireless motion detector/receiver kit is ideal for protecting your motorhome while on your own property. It features a passive infrared sensor. It operates on one 9-volt battery and can detect a person or vehicle from more than 50 feet away. The sensor can send a signal back to the receiver within a half-mile. The DCR-2500 receiver has four form "C" relay outputs and one 12-volt DC output. The output durations are adjustable up to 10 minutes. The receiver will play one of four different tunes that are selected at the transmitter so that different zones can be distinguished. The receiver is powered by a 12-volt DC transformer. The receiver also offers a five-minute exit delay so you can leave without disturbing any occupants, as well as a reminder beep and counter function. 605-356-2772, [www.dakotaalert.com](http://www.dakotaalert.com)

**[4]** The Global RV Guardian operates anywhere you go by employing a roof-mounted satellite antenna to communicate alarms and other information to the Guardian System servers. The system uses the 12-volt DC system in the motorhome for power. 920-769-0066, <http://guardianwireless.com>



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# Bull's Eye

Redesigned for 2016, the full-featured Fleetwood Pace Arrow LXE 38K hits its mark

By Chris Hemer

**A**s you stroll through the miles of aisles at local RV shows and dealerships, you find that your mind is alive with possibilities, ideas and questions. There's so much to think about when purchasing a new motorhome, particularly a Class A diesel pusher;

sensory overload becomes a familiar friend as you consider gleaming stainless-steel appliances, glittering natural stone and layers of hand-rubbed paint. Manufacturers compete for your attention with the biggest TVs, the highest-tech entertainment systems, the largest slideout rooms,

the most storage, the highest power. But what it all really boils down to is this: When is enough really enough?

It's not an easy question for consumers — and believe it or not, it's not an easy one for manufacturers, either. Finding that harmonious balance of content versus price versus value is one that eludes many motorhome product planners — something you can often tell as you walk through various floorplans. But as the days roll by in the 2016 Fleetwood Pace

**ABOVE:** Full-body paint in Aztec Quartz gleams brilliantly in the desert sun. Exterior entertainment center brings the TV count in this floorplan to four.



**BELOW:** There is no shortage of countertop space in the kitchen, and there is plenty of lighting throughout the living areas. Below, clockwise from top left: Cockpit features comfortable chairs and optional overhead TV; dash has easily discernible instruments; extendable couch can also serve as a chaise lounge; 2,000-watt inverter and built-in surge protector come standard.



Arrow LXE we're testing outside of Palm Springs, California, it appears that the company got it right. This 38K floorplan offers many of the same features we've seen in other motorhomes costing \$400,000. Yes, but the kicker is that this one comes in well south of \$250,000.

If you can live with 340 horsepower instead of 400 (which would cost a lot more), the Pace Arrow rewards with everything else you would expect in a diesel pusher — full-body paint (Aztec Quartz in this case), aluminum wheels, a power awning with LED lighting and automatic leveling, plus

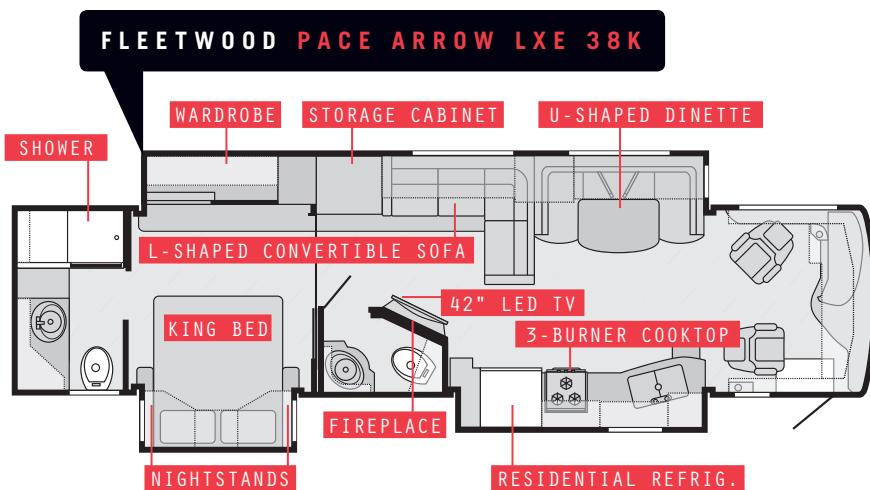
an uncommonly large storage bay with side-opening baggage doors. Inside the coach are more surprises — not the least of which is a full-wall slideout, name-brand residential appliances and solid-surface countertops, to name a few. And, in fact, the engine had no difficulties maintaining highway speeds and climbed grades better than expected; in our testing,

the Pace never dropped below 55 MPH. Stepping into the cockpit, we found that the Freightliner dash is logically arranged and everything is within easy reach of the driver. The instruments in particular are simply laid out, with an analog tachometer on the left and speedometer on the right, along with coolant temp, fuel gauge, oil pressure, battery voltage

and primary/secondary air gauges. The instruments are far enough apart so that they're not crowded and afford easy readability while driving, which is a definite plus. To the driver's left are controls for an overhead map light, cockpit fans, retarder switch and transmission gear selector, plus power mirror controls and a nice, big cup holder. The HVAC controls feature a classic layout and are very easy to use. There are two screens to the right of the steering wheel; one reserved for backup and sideview camera views, the other a multimedia screen for navigation, radio, etc. Beneath the lower of the two screens is a handy catchall shelf with a foam-padded surface, and a bin that looks like it was sized for maps, magazines, newspapers, etc. Directly above the driver on the left is a large cabinet door that opens to reveal a dry-erase board for checklists and such, and a nearby map light can easily be positioned for evening work.

The dash arrangement is driver-centric, and we appreciate the intended purpose of making everything easier to see/reach for the driver, but it makes it difficult for your co-pilot to assist while you're driving. If you need help finding a radio station, operating the navigation unit, etc., your significant other is likely going to

have to unbelt and crawl over unless he/she has the reach of an NBA star. The passenger does, however, have access to a 120-volt AC outlet to plug a laptop into, and creature comforts are abundant. There's a power footrest and stairwell cover, a large cup holder on the right, and solar shades for both the entry-door window and passenger



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window for comfortable travel on hot, sunny days. Above the passenger and to the right is the nerve center of the coach, consisting of the tank levels/ battery condition, controls for the 8-kW generator, water heater (gas or electric operation), inverter status, power control system, leveling system and thermostat. Front and center on the test coach was the optional 32-inch flat-screen TV, one of four in

Above from left: Power retractable king bed in a small slideout makes for abundant walk-through space in the bedroom. Overhead cabinets, reading lights and small night stands make the area comfortable and functional. Wardrobe at the end of the full-wall slide features two mirrored cabinets, LED TV and four large drawers.

this floorplan.

With the full-wall street slideout and opposing galley slideout open, the living space gives up nothing to a million-dollar coach in terms of elbow room. It's also a great floorplan for entertaining, with a roomy dinette

that will easily seat four, complemented by a sturdy table with a faux granite solid-surface top that matches the kitchen counters. The dinette is upholstered in cream-colored Ultra-leather and trimmed in matching cloth. Behind the dinette is a multi-

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function couch that extends to form an L, and pulls out to make a simple bed. Unlike many we've sampled, it works well with minimal effort. When the extension isn't deployed, the couch can seat two, or serve as a chaise lounge, with the end of the stowed extension serving as an armrest. With the extension deployed, four can sit in comfort and view the 42-inch LG LED TV on the opposing wall. It's a cozy place to relax and watch a movie in the evening, and there is a soundbar below the TV as well as speakers at each end underneath the streetside overhead cabinets to deliver decent sound quality.

The kitchen has plenty of solid-surface countertop space, and there's more if needed; to your left is a countertop extension, and both the stainless-steel sink and three-burner stove offer matching covers so you can really spread out if you want. Behind the stove is an attractive glass-tile backsplash, and above,

a Whirlpool residential convection microwave. The cabinetry fit and finish is good, but the drawers took a sharp tug to open and a deliberate shove to close completely — we suspect that they'll wear in over time. Moreover, there is adequate room for kitchen essentials, but we wouldn't call it plentiful; larger pots are going to have to be stored in the deep recesses beneath the sink.

Residential refrigerators are becoming increasingly popular, but in many cases they seem like an afterthought; using one of these units in a motorhome environment demands an adequate power supply when driving or camping without hookups. The Pace Arrow comes standard with a 19-cubic-foot Whirlpool residential refrigerator/icemaker powered by four six-volt batteries and a 2,000-watt inverter, so continuous operation while on the road will not pose a problem. To the right of the fridge is a smallish pantry with shelves that can

### WHAT'S HOT

Amazing standard features for the price, full-wall slideout, two baths, generous basement storage.

### WHAT'S NOT

340 horsepower might not be enough for some, kitchen could use more storage, bathrooms are on the small side.



be adjusted, but not pulled out.

The amidships guest bath is a bit on the tight side (as it is on many dual-bath floorplans) but with the toilet angled toward the door, there is adequate legroom. The corner-mounted lavatory has a solid-surface top and glass backsplash that matches the kitchen, and features a

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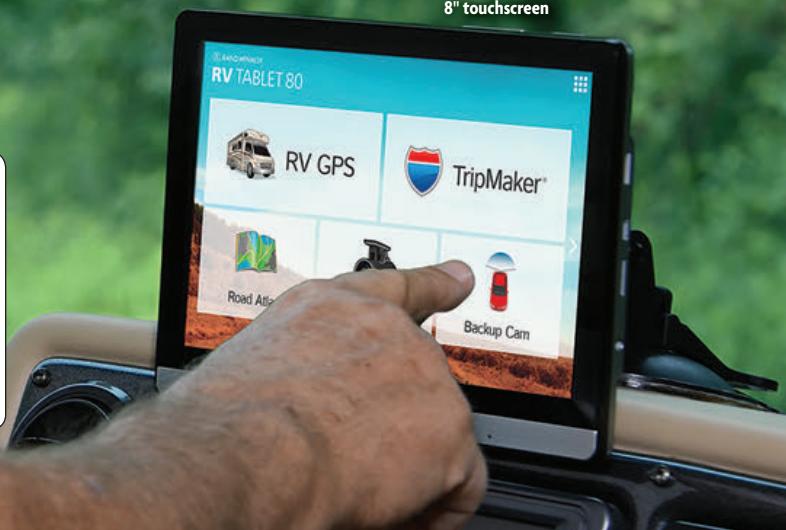
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# Specifications

## Chassis

Model	Freightliner XCM
Engine	Cummins ISB 6.7-liter
SAE HP	340 @ 2,600 rpm
Torque	700 lb.-ft. @ 1,600 rpm
Transmission	Allison 2500MH six-speed
Axle Ratio	4.78:1
Front Tires	275/80R22.5
Rear Tires	275/80R22.5
Wheelbase	252"
Brakes F/R	Air disc/drum with ABS
Suspension F/R	Neway Air
Fuel Capacity	100 gal
Fuel Economy	9.2 mpg
Warranty	3 years/50,000 miles

## Coach

Exterior Length	38' 7.5"
Exterior Width	8' 6"
Exterior Height	12' 10"
Interior Width	8'
Interior Height	7'
Construction	Welded aluminum framing, vacuum-bonded walls, TPO roof, interlocking aluminum wall, floor and roof frames, bead foam insulation
Freshwater Capacity	105 gal
Black-Water Capacity	50 gal
Gray-Water Capacity	75 gal
Water-Heater Capacity	10 gal
LP-Gas Capacity	38.7 gal
Air Conditioner (2)	15,000 Btu
Furnace (2)	25,000/34,000 Btu
Refrigerator	19-cubic-foot residential
Inverter/Charger	2,000-watt pure sine wave inverter with remote/100 amps
Battery	(2) 12-volt chassis, (4) 6-volt coach
AC generator	8-kW diesel
MSRP	\$238,500
MSRP as tested	\$247,865
Warranty	1 year/15,000 miles

## Wet Weight

(Water & Heater, Fuel, LP-Gas Tanks Full; No Supplies or Passengers)

Front Axle	9,640 lbs
Rear Axle	18,480 lbs
Total	28,120 lbs

## Chassis Ratings

GAWR F/R	12,400/20,000 lbs
GVWR/GCWR	32,400/33,000 lbs
ROCCC	4,280 lbs
GAWR	Gross Axle Weight Rating
GVWR	Gross Vehicle Weight Rating
GCWR	Gross Combination Weight Rating
ROCCC	Realistic Occupant And Cargo Carrying Capacity (Full Water, No Passengers)



Above from left: Counters and backsplash tile in both bathrooms echo the kitchen design for a cohesive look. Cabinetry looks good and is well-made; rear bath (right) might be a little tight for long stays or full-timing.

metal residential-style faucet. The sink is a gray plastic material that feels sturdy, and above are mirrored cabinets that are adequately sized for sundry items like pill bottles, etc. Beneath the sink is more storage. Switches are logically placed just inside the door, and the fan and water pump switches are likewise at eye level when perched on the throne. Directly across from the guest bath is a cabinet with standard washer/dryer prep, or in our case, a stackable washer/dryer combination.

Just a small step up from here and you're in the master bedroom, which can be segregated from the living area by sliding wood doors. The tail end of the full-wall slide, combined with an opposing bedroom slideout, makes this area feel very roomy, an effect that is magnified by the power bed that can be retracted into a sort of large lounge. With the bed in this position, there's a good four feet or so of walking space, which really makes a difference. Across from the bed is the wardrobe, which houses another 32-inch TV, a countertop, four large drawers and a mirrored cabinet on either side. The doors feel a bit

flimsy, but inside are shelves, room for hanging clothes, and two built-in drawers at the bottom.

The rear master bath fills the width of the interior, but isn't very deep. It should be enough space for most, however, and features a Thetford Tecma toilet, single sink (same equipment as the guest bath) and lots of cabinet/drawer space. The overhead cabinets are deep and are mirrored for easy primping. The shower is about the size of a small residential unit, but has a good-sized seat molded in at one end. The area also features a large skylight, Fan-Tastic Vent fan and switches for the fan, water pump, light and toilet (which flushes electronically) all within easy reach.

Overall, there was really nothing to complain about in this coach, which is somewhat unusual. It's not trying to be the fanciest thing in the park, but it is well put together, tidily arranged, very well-equipped and comfortable. That, in our opinion, is more than enough. **M**

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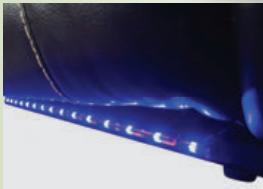
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Chocolate

Shown in Shark



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By Bob Livingston

# FLOORING UPGRADE

Replacing carpet with Infinity Luxury Woven Vinyl takes the décor to the next level and adds amazing durability

**N**ice flooring can make or break the décor aesthetics in any motorhome. In the last few years, tile and faux wood floors have pretty much displaced the use of traditional carpet fabrics and patterns, and for good reasons. Carpeting may feel good on our feet, but the reality of living in a home with fewer square feet and the use of materials that might not meet residential quality standards frequently lead to soiling that may not clean easily, and early signs of wear. Compound the effort — and labor costs — to maneuver around slideouts when it comes time to re-carpet, and it only makes sense that alternatives have become so popular.

The flooring of choice these days is overwhelmingly hard surfaces, but a company that specializes in marine trade decor, Infinity Luxury Woven Vinyl, has introduced a unique product to the RV industry that transforms floors into a look that rivals expensive yachts and extravagant homes.

As the name suggests, the product is made of vinyl and constructed in such a way as to provide long-term durability in high-traffic areas. The material is 100 percent recyclable and Certified Green, but that will probably be a moot point for most motorhome owners, since the flooring is guaranteed to perform without failure for 10 years.

What caught our attention is material's inherent resistance to

elements that typically soil carpet in a motorhome, especially if the owners are social and entertain frequently or have pets. Without question, hard surface flooring is easy to clean up, but the Luxury Woven Vinyl (LWV) offers close to the same convenience, without having to drag out a mop or carpet cleaner, and offers a softer, warmer surface that is comfortable on your feet.

The LWV repels fuel, grease, motor oil, spills (think red wine), and pet stains. It is designed not to fade and is unaffected by ultra violet rays and sun. And a key feature is its anti-microbial properties that resist mold and mildew, which can be problematic in motorhomes that are stored — or even used—in areas with high heat

and humidity. Bacteria will not grow in the vinyl, so there's little chance for unwanted odors. For these very reasons, LWV has become very popular among boat owners, and the flooring is used extensively in the aviation industry or other high traffic areas like in fitness centers, restaurants and retail stores. Infinity's LWV is now used by Airstream and a number of other RV manufacturers are looking at the feasibility of using this product.

Beyond the fact that the LWV has a clean look and lies nicely on any floor, we were enamored by the simplicity of the clean up. We've ruined plenty



of carpet over the years, and being pet friendly, the inevitable stains required constant attention. We found it easy to clean the LWV with common household products, especially those with Oxy formulations, and really liked the way Voom worked for most stains. Heavy stains, like tracked-in grease, can be cleaned with acetone or even carburetor cleaner, although expect the chemical odors to linger for a while.

To test the practicality of replacing existing carpet, we chose a rig with carpet in the slideout, under a free-standing table, four chairs and dual theater seating. This provided a good sampling of what an installer would face in the real world. Dealing with the slideout is usually a tough assignment for any installer, and frankly, the part of any RV installation dreaded by those who specialize in laying floor covering. The level of difficulty is always compounded when the slideout is not removed before the project; removing the slideout should only be done by trained technicians and will lift the labor costs substantially. The installation was completed by Advanced Canvas in Oxnard, California, experts in marine and automotive interior renovation.

Similar to choosing flooring for a stationary home, the process for finding the right LWV for your motorhome requires a lot of patience. There are 17 collections and 160

colors to choose from, and you'll likely have to rely on viewing the sample images on the company's website. We spent hours combing the collections online and settled on what we thought was a good match for the test RV. In the end, the material turned out to be too light and somewhat different from the online image. It's obviously better to view the collections in a live showroom, but until the flooring becomes more commonplace in the market, that might be difficult. To eliminate surprises, it's best to request swatches from the local RV dealer, upholstery or canvas shop that carries the Infinity line.

The LWV comes in 8½ and 10-foot widths and two cushion backing thicknesses. The thinner backing works best around corners and where sharp bends are necessary; it also may be best for use under the leading edge of the slideout. For our installation, measurements were sent to the company, which figured out the final cut size, but that process might be better left to professional carpet people who understand exactly what it takes to cover any given area.

Once the original carpet is removed, which takes some finesse to keep key sections in tact so that they can be used as a pattern, the area is prepped for the new LWV. Overall, the installation went without many

hiccups, although it turned out to be more time consuming than projected. The section of vinyl that was tucked under the slideout was installed first using staples and then the main floor was also stapled in place. Judicious use of staples that were concealed by the furniture allowed the vinyl to lay flat and smooth. Wood edge trim was used to finish the installation, which turned out better than expected. The leading edges of the vinyl were trimmed with a fabric binding, which turned out to be too light and picked up dirt almost immediately. In retrospect, a darker binding should have been used, and a darker style LWV would have been even better. A matching "throw rug" was cut to match the vinyl in the slideout, which really enhanced the look in the living room. However, since the LWV is virtually indestructible, it can also be used as a patio mat, which will really move the aesthetics up a notch.

The LWV is not inexpensive and sells for \$6-12 a square foot, depending on the collection. Installation labor must be added into the price structure. Since the vinyl is self-contained, it requires no additional padding.

After living with the LWV for more than a month, we found the material comfortable to walk on and pleasant to look at. Beyond the enhancement to the interior décor, we really liked how easily the dining table chairs moved around, and although indentations were created by the legs, they went away very quickly once the weight was taken off the chairs.

Here's how the tear down and installation of the LWV went in the test RV:



1



2



3



4

[1] The process starts by unscrewing and removing the theater chairs and dining table in the slideout area. [2] It took a few minutes to figure out how the original carpet was attached to the floor. A scissors was then used to make the first cuts. [3] A flat-blade screwdriver was used to free the corners to give the installer a good grip for pulling out the carpet. [4] A commercial-grade scissors made it easy to cut around a good portion of the carpet.

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24" H

▲ Lend-A-Hand Hand Rail, Polar White Finish

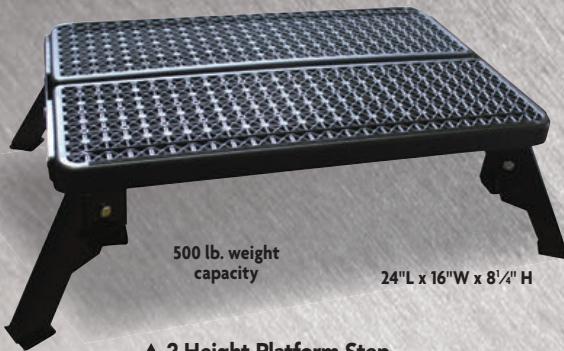


60" H

100" H

▲ Anodized Bunk Ladder

▲ Outdoor Universal Ladder



500 lb. weight capacity

24" L x 16" W x 8 1/4" H

▲ 2-Height Platform Step

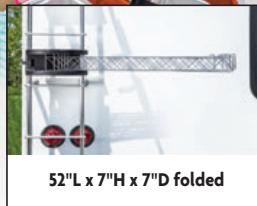


▲ Jack-in-a-Box Slideout Stabilizers, Set of 2

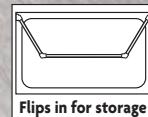


Six arms offer 18' of line space

▲ Extend-A-Line Clothes Dryer



52" L x 7" H x 7" D folded



Flips in for storage



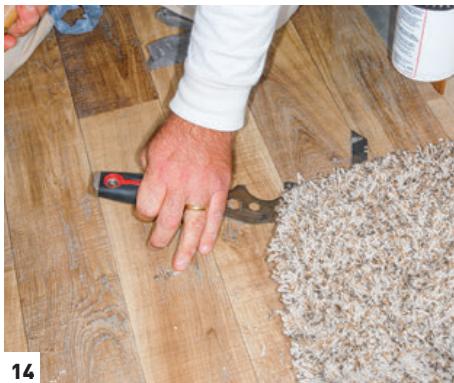
Great for towables

▲ Extend-A-Shower Rod, White  
Also available in Bronze and Satin Finish

[5] After the cuts were made, a razor knife was needed to free the carpet at the walls. [6] A power cutting tool was used to free sections of the carpet, which saved the installer's back and hands — and quite a bit of time. [7] Extra care was taken in removing the carpet without damaging the wood slideout structure at the transition points. [8,9,10] As an experienced installer in the marine trade, the technician strategically marked the old carpet so it could be used as a template when cutting the new LWV. Locations were also marked for the screws used to secure the furniture, especially since repositioning was critical to accommodate the clearance between the table and island galley counter when the slide is retracted.



[11] Once the carpet was completely free and marked, it was rolled up carefully for transporting to the Advanced Canvas shop where the LWV was cut. [12] Infinity LWV comes in rolls that are 8½ or 10 feet wide. For the test installation, 10-foot sections were cut, after the area was carefully measured. This is where the installer's expertise can make a big difference in ordering the proper amount of LWV with limited waste and additional expense. [13] Once the carpet was removed, the old staples were pulled and any ends that broke off were hammered flat. This is an important step to prevent any sharp protrusions through the LWV. [14] The carpet was installed by the RV manufacturer before the slideout was mounted, so to prevent a labor-intensive project, the exposed carpet when the slideout is extended is carefully cut away. [15] Removing the carpet from the main floor is a painstaking task, requiring a great amount of finesse to maintain the integrity of the section so it can be used as a template. [16] Hanging fibers must be removed from under the lip of the slideout to make room for the LWV and to prevent binding.





17



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19



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21



22

[17] Expect to collect a lot of these fibers during the process. [18] After cutting the LWV to match the templates and sewing on the edge binding, the first step was to install the vinyl on the main floor. [19] The material was carefully trimmed for placement under the slideout. This is a one-shot process; overcutting will require starting all over. [20] Location markings were made to insure placement accuracy and [21] the LWV was first stapled to the floor. [22] The contours of the LWV were carefully cut-in around the corners of the slideout using scissors.



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[23] A water based glue was applied to sandwich the two pieces of vinyl needed to fill the gap under the slideout. Using water-based glue eliminated any chemical odors inside the RV. [24] The edges were then tucked in between the slideout and main floor. Once completed, the LWV was neatly stapled to the main floor with no signs of buckling. [25] Cutting the LWV from a template made the section fit like a glove. [26] The edges were neatly tucked in along the walls [27] and any excess material was carefully trimmed for a perfect fit. This is another area where experience counts; making wrong cuts can be costly and create long delays. [28] A staple gun was used to attach the LWV to the slideout floor. It's important to use the right staples to prevent unsightly distractions in the final look.

# *Pleasure-Way*

## *30th Anniversary*

1986-2016



Pleasure Way , Circle 129 on Reader Service Card



29



30



31



32



33



34

[29] Wood edging was used to enhance the look of the LWV. This is not a necessary step since the vinyl can be cut and the ends will not unravel, but it makes for a much more finished look — and compensates for walls that are not perfectly straight. [30] It took a little doing to find edging that would match the overall look of the RV, but the material was located at a local store that specializes in home remodeling supplies. The edging is difficult to find in RV stores. [31, 32, 33, 34] The hardest part of fitting the LWV to the slideout floor was cutting in the material around the wide moldings that frame the room. This took quite a bit of time and careful cutting. Again, a wrong cut here can send the installer back to the shop.

[35] With the furniture back in place in the extended slideout, it was time to step back and enjoy the finished product. The LWV adds a handsome — and much more luxurious — look to the interior and is light years more attractive than the original carpet. The “throw rug,” with sewn-on bindings is a nice addition to the installation. [36] Roadmaster’s Voom all-purpose cleaner, available from Camping World and other RV dealers, worked the best when removing stains from the light color LWV. [37] A simple application of Voom and wiping with a microfiber towel restored the look of the LWV; the light color binding was harder to clean, but much of the dirt came out. [38] The vinyl material is very flexible and has a cushioned backing that is available in two sizes to accommodate installation requirements. 



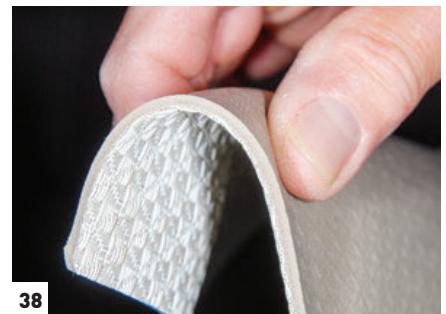
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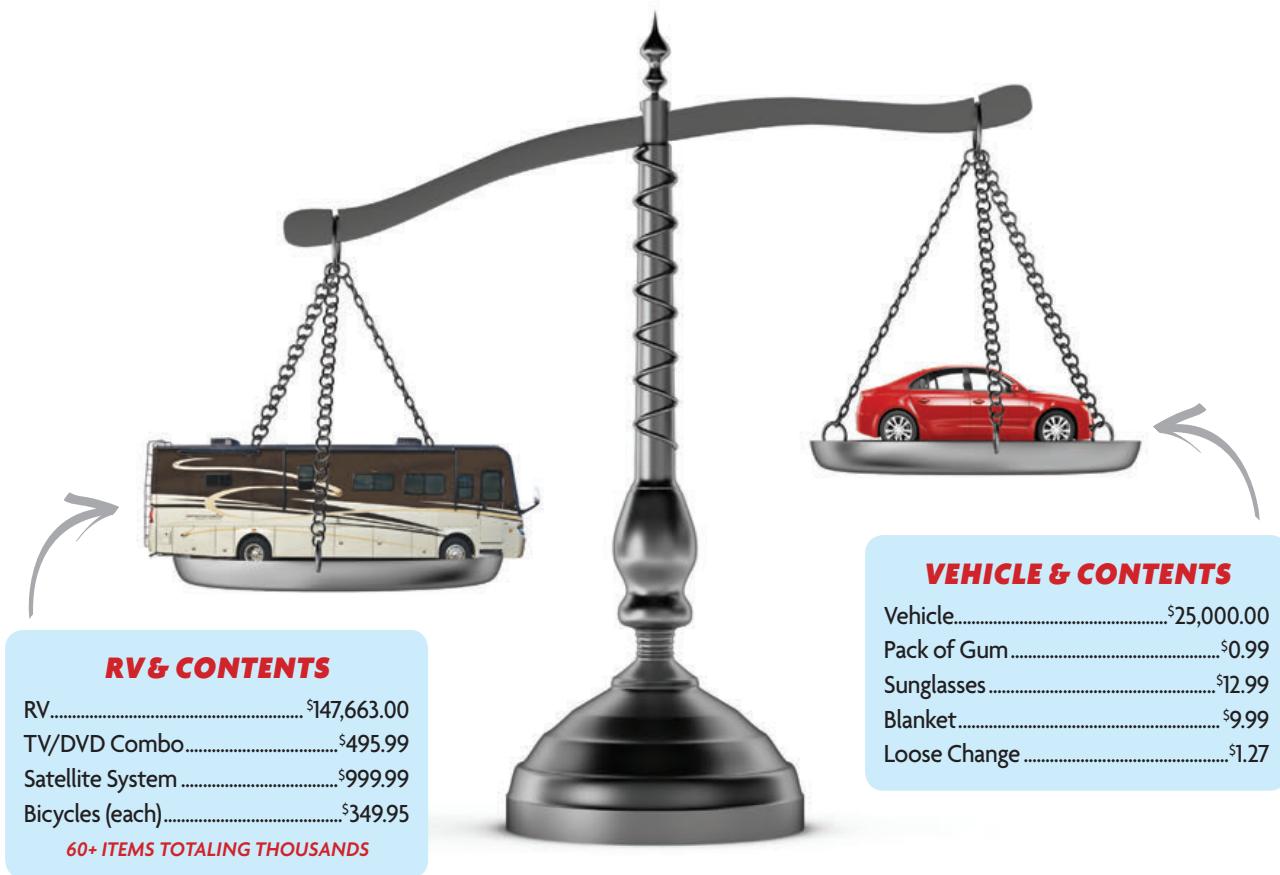


37



38

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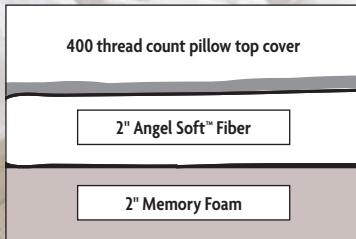
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By Bob Livingston

# 5 STAR TUNING TALK

Programming the Ford V-10 computer ups the horsepower and torque, while changing shifting habits for better drivability



**C**lass A motorhomes built on the Ford F53 chassis and powered by the venerable V-10 gas engine get along fairly well on the highways and hills, with the expected slowdowns depending on conditions. While owners have resigned themselves to accept the inherent performance characteristic of the chassis, there's always that wish list in the back of their minds that explores the need for more power. The reasoning is pretty simple: Drive-by-wire technology should allow all owners to tweak their gasoline-powered engines to pump out more horses and torque. But, until 5 Star Tuning came on the scene, that space was void.

Capitalizing on proven technology for boosting horsepower and torque, 5 Star Tuning has dedicated credible effort into developing a simple-to-use tuning device for the Ford 2V and 3V V-10 engines, which encompasses all

the motors built between 1998 and 2016.

The RV X4 Tuner/Programmer is the result of capturing specialized engine computer algorithms perfected by the performance giant Bully Dog/SCT; the two companies worked together in developing the programming. Once the computer in the V-10 engine has been re-flashed for a modified fuel curve, additional horsepower and torque team up with re-configured transmission shift points and torque converter lock-up for an enhanced driving experience.

When developing the programming for reflashing the V-10 engine, 5 Star Tuning looked at key areas where improvements could be realized. Knowing that the Ford factory restrains power levels for various reasons, which include fuel economy and overall engine durability, 5 Star Tuning took advantage of the ability to make modifications based on extensive testing.

Above: A large screen clearly maps out the steps for reflashing the computer. Part of the sequence will involve turning the ignition switch on and off as prompted. Although it's not necessary to keep the RV X4 connected continuously, drivers can do so and view the screen (when safe) for information.

Drive-by-wire improvements are directly related to throttle response. In this department, torque is regulated by throttle application, so the right amount of torque is provided to combat throttle lag, improving overall drivability. While the 2V models get the most out of fuel modification, the 3V engines respond better to the higher torque output.

As we discovered in our testing, the modifications in torque converter strategies paid off handsomely with more precise shifting. When reprogrammed, the torque converter stays locked up longer, which translates into more power to the rear wheels, especially when pulling hills. On the steeper grades, downshifting works in favor of keeping the power band right.

Increasing line pressures and modifying shift schedules keeps the motorhome on pace at highway speeds, without bogging down on the slightest inclines.

Installation could not be any easier. The device plugs into the motorhome's OBDII port and the user simply follows the prompts to re-flash the computer. It takes about 15 minutes to complete the process and requires no mechanical expertise or tools. The nice feature of this programming process is that it can be reversed at any time, restoring the computer to stock settings. While owners are protected by the Moss-Magnuson Warranty Act of 1975, whereby dealers and manufacturers must prove that any aftermarket device created an issue before voiding the warranty, some dealers will push the envelope. At this juncture the RV X4 cannot be sold to residents of California.

For our test, we enlisted a 2014 Bouncer 36-foot motorhome with 10,213 miles on the odometer. We

---

Once the RV X4 tuner is plugged into the OBDII port under the dash, the user simply turns on the device and follows the prompts. The entire process should take about 15 minutes, but it's important to complete the steps exactly as indicated on the screen.

## THE SEAT-OF-THE PANTS DRIVING EXPERIENCE WAS BETTER ON ALL PORTIONS OF THE TEST LOOP...

ran back-to-back comparison tests with the engine in stock form and then re-flashed the computer with the information that was preloaded into the RV X4 device. The company offers tuners for a number of Ford V-10s, including those for Super Duty pickups and Class C motorhomes. When dealers order product for stocking, the programming includes the latest information for the best performance and fuel economy for the particular vehicle. Depending on how long the tuner has been on the shelf, it may be necessary to update the software before starting, but that's a simple process if you have access to a PC and Internet service.

To establish baselines, we ran a 65-mile course that included flat highway, rolling hills and a few moderate grades. From the onset, the transmission downshifted too quickly to compensate for slowdowns on the hills. The engine felt boggy on even the slightest grades and wanted to downshift at around 50 MPH. Once downshifted, the transmission stayed in the lower gear until the highway flattened out.

The constant, early downshifting has become an irritant to drivers

because when the engine turns at a higher rpm, it makes a lot of noise, drowning out any possible conversation in the cockpit — and what seems like over-revving of the engine can be disconcerting to drivers who are not familiar with engines that run at a higher rpm.

With the computer under the influence of the RV X4 tuner, the downshifting came at higher speeds, and in many cases, the additional horsepower and torque kept the transmission from downshifting altogether. We found that on steeper mountain grades under heavy to full throttle, when it was necessary to downshift, the program kept the rpm at a point where the engine seemed to deliver the best power, and that also helped reduce noise.

In all cases, on the more moderate (rolling) hills, the transmission downshifted later and upshifted sooner, and we crested all the hills at faster speeds. The seat-of-the-pants driving experience was better on all portions of the test loop and the engine didn't sound like it was going to blast out of its compartment because of long periods of high-rpm operation.





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- Most Vehicles
- Weighs 32 lbs.

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Customer Rating **★★★★**

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1/2"	62431/239

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Customer Rating **★★★★**

LOT 69397/61427/95272 shown

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**SOLAR ROPE LIGHT**  
one stop gardens

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**SAVE 66%**

**\$999** comp at \$29.97

• 16 ft. lit, 22 ft. long

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**FOLDABLE ALUMINUM SPORTS CHAIR**

Customer Rating **★★★★**

LOT 62314/63066  
66383 shown

**SAVE 55%**

**\$2199** ~~\$2799~~ comp at \$49.97

• 250 lb. capacity

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**SUPER COUPON**

**1500 WATT DUAL TEMPERATURE HEAT GUN**  
drillmaster

Customer Rating **★★★★**

LOT 62340/62546  
63104/96289 shown

**SAVE 70%**

**\$899** comp at \$29.97

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Customer Rating **★★★★**

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Customer Rating **★★★★**

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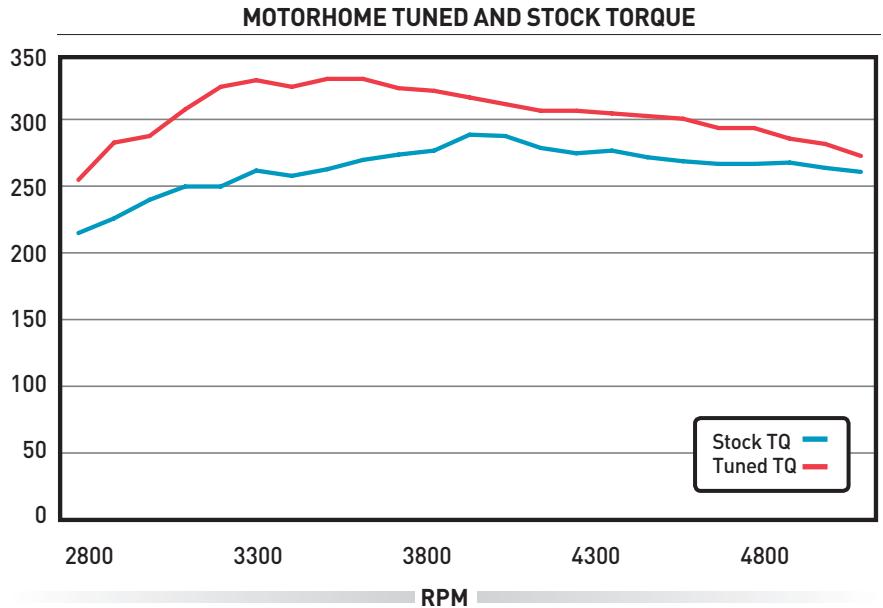
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To confirm throttle response, we recorded 0-60 MPH and 40-60 MPH acceleration tests on a long flat road, with and without the reprogramming. While the improvements are not neck snapping, we did see more than two seconds shaved off the 0-60 segment. It was clear that the motorhome had improved throttle response from a stop and low-to-medium speeds, a result of better engine output and more aggressive transmission shifting.

**ACCELERATION**

STOCK	REPROGRAMMED
0-60: 25.73 sec	0-60: 23.56 sec
40-60: 14.96 sec	40-60: 13.80 sec

As expected, the additional horsepower and revised shifting programming affected mileage somewhat, but the loss was minor and worth the improvement in drivability. The baseline fuel economy over flat



highway with a few low hills resulted in 6.75 MPG. After reprogramming the computer, we recorded 6.50 MPG.

After running the series of road tests in stock and tuned form, we drove the motorhome to a chassis dynamom-

eter to confirm horsepower and torque gains. Unlike the huge gains usually experienced when tuning diesel engines, the Ford V-10 gasser picked up decent gains with the best improvement at 3,200 RPM. At this engine speed,

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**PLATINUM**  
Ford E-450 Super Duty chassis



**PLATINUM II**  
Mercedes Sprinter chassis

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### PLATINUM

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### Arriva



Ford  
Class B+



Mercedes  
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Mercedes  
Class B

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DYNO RESULTS FOR 2014 BOUNDER F53 FORD V-10 GAS ENGINE

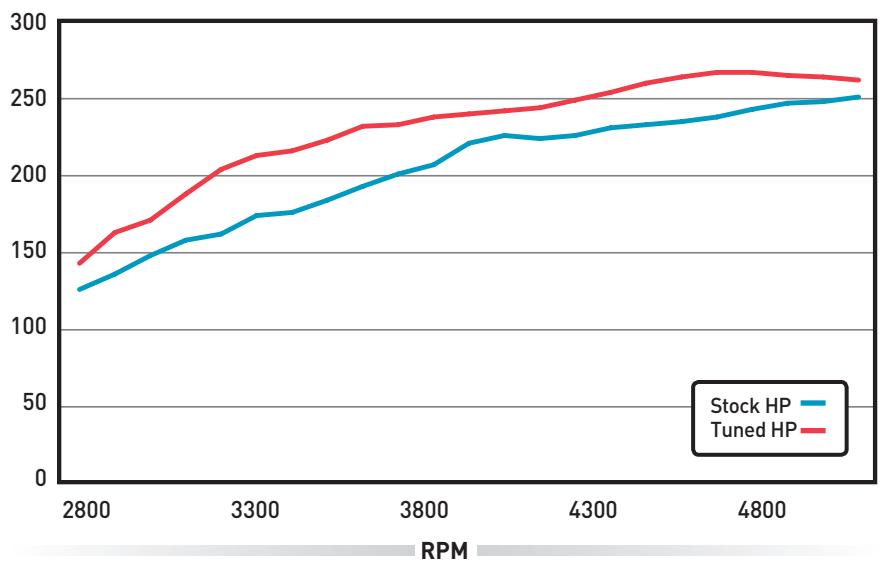
RPM	STOCK HP	STOCK TQ	TUNED HP	TUNED TQ	DELTA TUNED HP	DELTA TUNED TQ
2800	126	216	143	256	17	40
2900	136	227	163	284	27	57
3000	148	241	171	289	23	48
3100	158	251	188	309	30	58
3200	162	251	204	326	42	75
3300	174	263	213	331	39	68
3400	176	259	216	326	40	67
3500	184	264	223	332	39	64
3600	193	271	232	332	39	61
3700	201	275	233	325	32	50
3800	207	278	238	323	31	45
3900	221	290	240	318	19	28
4000	226	289	242	313	16	24
4100	224	280	244	308	20	28
4200	226	276	249	308	23	32
4300	231	278	254	306	23	28
4400	233	273	260	304	27	31
4500	235	270	264	302	29	32
4600	238	268	267	295	29	30
4700	243	268	267	295	24	27
4800	247	269	265	287	18	18
4900	248	265	264	283	16	18
5000	251	262	262	274	11	12

rear-wheel horsepower went from 162 stock to 204, for a delta of 42 HP. Torque went from 251 LB-FT to 326 LB-FT, a gain of 75 LB-FT, which is respectable for a gas engine, especially the V-10. Adding a more efficient cold air intake and/or a cat back exhaust system will likely boost the performance specs.

The accompanying horsepower and torque charts showing the results of the dyno runs can be used to evaluate improvements at different rpm and speed levels.

The 5 Star Tuning RV X4 model we tested is not designed to mount on a dashboard for constant monitoring. Once the user installs the new programming, the device can be unplugged and stored until needed—although it can remain connected if desired. The RV X4 retails for \$479.95; adding a 4-inch color-monitoring screen raises the MSRP to \$599. **M**

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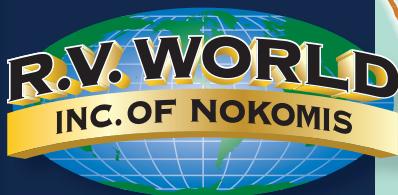
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## Dashboard Dish

We recently purchased a Rand-McNally Good Sam RV GPS. Its sole mount is a large suction cup, inconveniently intended for windows or windshields only. To make the GPS readily movable yet stable, we mounted it on an inverted salad plate and set it on the dash in our motorhome. The glossy, porcelain surface works well with the suction cup. The wide base of the inverted plate stabilizes the unit anywhere on the dash, but makes it easily movable. When stored, the GPS can be upended and the plate becomes dash decoration.

**Michael and Eileen Rande | Farmington Hills, Michigan**



## Freshwater Flume

We had a problem in our Class C motorhome with the gravity-fill freshwater tank taking a long time to accept water. The freshwater tank is under the bed and the fill is on the same side of the motorhome. A plastic hose, 4 or 5 feet long, channels water from the outside fill port to the freshwater tank and a smaller plastic tube vents air from the freshwater tank to the freshwater fill port.

When I lifted the mattress and removed the panels to see the hoses, I found two problems. The water fill inlet on the freshwater tank was only a bit lower, maybe an inch or two, than the outside fill port. The weight of the water in the plastic fill pipe caused the pipe to drop and collect water, which meant water coming into the fill pipe had to push the water that had pooled in the fill pipe out of the pipe into the tank. The second problem was that the vent tube also drooped and collected water, blocking the release of air from the freshwater tank.

I used a section of lightweight, 2-inch electrical conduit to make a trough (or guide) for the freshwater fill tube to rest in so that it would maintain a constant slope to improve water flow through the fill pipe. I had a scrap piece of lightweight

(schedule 20), 2-inch electrical conduit. You can use standard weight (schedule 40) if you can't find the thinner walled conduit or water pipe. At the home improvement center, a 10-foot standard length of either 2-inch PVC water pipe or 2-inch electrical conduit is \$10 or so. Often, you can buy shorter lengths.

I set the table saw blade depth at about a half-inch and cut the PVC conduit/pipe along its length to make an opening wide enough to allow the freshwater fill pipe to fit inside. I then used scrap electrical wire and screws to mount the conduit/pipe to the supports under the bed. I also replaced the vent tube with new clear tubing and tied the vent tube to the freshwater fill guide so any water that got into the vent tube would either drain back into the freshwater tank or out of the vent opening at the freshwater fill port. The tubing connects at both ends (the water fill port and the freshwater tank) with a simple clamp. I removed the tubing and took it to the local home improvement center and bought a 10-foot roll of tubing for less than \$10. I needed less than half of that, so I left the remainder rolled up next to the freshwater tank in the RV for the next replacement.

**Dennis Jauch | Tampa, Florida M**



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# Bad Reception



Attempting to secure compensation from a manufacturer for replacement of what he believed to be substandard equipment on his new motorhome, a reader asked Hot Line to get involved. He wrote:

“ Last August, I traded my 2011 Winnebago Vista for a 2016 Forest River RV Sunseeker 2800QS. The Sunseeker came with a Jensen AM/FM radio with CD player and a GPS. The system had the following problems: It only played through the driver’s side door, it lost stations after 30 miles, and the preset stations reset each time I turned on the motorhome.

I first contacted the dealer, who informed me they would not do anything about the radio. Next I contacted Travis Logan at Forest River, and we exchanged numerous emails. His bottom line was, “The replacement to a new stereo would be at your regard.”

I took the motorhome back to the dealer, where technicians offered to install the new radio with no charge for labor if I bought the radio from them. I paid for the new radio and it works great. Can Hot Line help me get a refund for the cost of the new radio?

**G.J. Glime | Hobart, Wisconsin**

Forest River RV was contacted to see if it would reconsider its position in Glime’s situation. Forest River RV and Glime responded as follows:

Thank you for your letter regarding Mr. Glime’s concerns with his motorhome. Forest River strives to build the best product for the price in today’s market and takes our customer’s satisfaction very seriously. We have reviewed Glime’s concerns and have communicated with him directly in regard to his motorhome.

**Rod Batts**

Warranty Manager, Forest River Inc.  
Elkhart, Indiana

“ After three trips to the RV dealer, 100 miles away, and three months of emails with Logan at Forest River, I finally received a check in the amount of \$300 for “customer satisfaction for your troubles.” It doesn’t

cover all of my costs, but it’s better than nothing.

**G.J.G.**

## Crossed Wires

Unsuccessfully struggling to secure warranty work for repairs to his new RV, a reader asked Hot Line for help. He wrote:

“ In 2014, I purchased a new Holiday Rambler Alupalite from Best RV Center in Turlock, California. Nine months later, I called Best RV Center to make an appointment to have some repair work done under warranty. The

person I spoke with said Holiday Rambler was out of business and I would have to pay for all repair work. I would appreciate Hot Line’s assistance to get my RV repaired.

**Harold Watkins | Stockton, California**

Hot Line sent a letter of inquiry to Allied Recreation Group/Holiday Rambler (now under the corporate name REV Group Inc.) to see if it could help Watkins. Soon thereafter, we received a copy of the company’s letter to Watkins as well as a follow-up from him filling us in on the outcome of his case. They wrote:

We received a copy of your letter to Hot Line. I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you regarding this letter, however, I have not been able to contact you at the number listed on your letter.

Additionally, while attempting to review the file for this unit, we found that we do not have your ownership information in our computer system. Please send a copy of your purchase agreement or other document to my attention. This will ensure you receive any notices pertaining to your RV and enable us to better assist you in the future.

**Taylor Spike**

Owner Relations Supervisor  
Allied Recreation Group  
Coburg, Oregon

“ I am happy to say that all of the items have been fixed on my RV. I appreciate all the help Hot Line provided in getting the repairs completed under warranty.

**H.W. M**

## Take Action Contact Hot Line for Help

Hot Line assists in mediating conflicts between consumers and RV dealers and manufacturers, accessories suppliers and service providers. After exhausting all other resources, send typed letters to *MotorHome* Hot Line, 2750 Park View Court, Suite 240, Oxnard, CA 93036 and enclose copies of appropriate bills and correspondence, plus a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Selected letters will be edited and published unless otherwise requested.

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# Banish the Bugs

An infestation of the little-known larder beetle can cause major damage; here's how to eradicate the problem

By Jenn Gehr



Mix I.G. Regulator and D-Fense SC together for long-lasting protection against the larder beetle. Pesticide-free insect traps with pheromone attractant are used for continuing protection.



**PEST CONTROL**

Cost: \$85 (1 trap)

Time: 1 hour

Difficulty: 2/10

**N**othing else produces the heebie-jeebies more than the sight of creepy crawlies in an RV. In addition to being highly unsanitary and destructive, household pests can literally eat you right out of house and home, even if your home is on wheels. Case in point: the larder, or bacon, beetle.

Found all over the world, the larder beetle is a household and commercial pest that has a history of gorging itself on cured meats in the U.S., Europe and Canada. Apparently, we are not the only migratory species with a hankering for good foods. Over the years, the reduction in the use of cured meats and, of course, the widespread use of refrigerators, has significantly decreased the spread of the larder beetle.

These bugs are plentiful in the Pacific Northwest and since we spend a lot of time in this area, we discovered an infestation quite by accident. Dark brown in color, the adult beetles are about one-third of an inch in length and are lovers of anything dead or decaying and are often found in homes, livestock mills, museums or where there is a suitable food source. Animal byproducts such as furs, hides, pet foods and even feathers are top choices for the larder beetle. In our case, the little beetles took up

residency, Beverly Hills-style, in our overhead cupboard near the couch that housed several dried "Moozles," or pig snouts, commercially used as dog chews — offered to our two Boston terriers. These beetles have voracious appetites and made their home in the wood structure of the cabinet. We later learned that the beetles do best when the environment includes a perfect combination of an ideal food source, along with warm surroundings and undisturbed accommodations.

Larder beetle larvae feed continuously during their molts. The beetle larvae can easily damage wood as they bore into protected spaces for the purpose of pupation, not feeding. As soon as we identified the larder beetle as our live-in pest, the hunt was on to safely and effectively eradicate the scavengers.

The larder beetles must be treated in 21-day life cycles in order to attack each stage of development. After much



From above: Before pupating into a larder beetle, the larvae has fine brown hair that protrudes from its body making it easy to identify and locate in carpet fibers. The extremely ravenous larvae can destroy carpets, wood, natural fibers and synthetics. They have even been known to chew through tin! Most motorhome cupboards have false bottoms that will need to be removed to gain access to additional eggs and/or larvae that will need to be vacuumed up before spraying with pesticide. Thorough vacuuming is essential to eradicate this beetle. Every square inch of the affected areas must be vacuumed daily and resprayed every 21 days to ensure each life cycle phase is treated.

research, we found U-Spray Inc., out of Lilburn, Georgia, a company that has a lot of experience with bugs and was willing to help guide us along with the do-it-yourself extermination process. We were told that the combination of NyLar IGR Insert Growth Regulator (I.G. Nyguard) and D-Fense SC is a safe and powerful treatment for the control of a wide variety of household, commercial and landscape-type pests.

To ready the pesticides for application to the affected areas, a spray cocktail was made using the required dosage of each liquid diluted in a gallon of water. The mixture was then transferred to an industrial, all-purpose sprayer found at a local hardware store. Once mixed, it's necessary to shake the bottle regularly during use. It is critical that precautions are taken to keep humans and animals safe when using this pesticide. Carefully read and understand all of the warnings and directions prior to use.

To apply, the user must wear a

mask, eye protection and a long-sleeved shirt and pants. Allow for plenty of ventilation during and after the spray has been applied. Once the area is covered, the occupants must leave the motorhome for two hours to allow for the spray to completely dry; it is important not to re-enter the motorhome before the pesticide cocktail is completely dry. Although this pesticide is regularly used in commercial use for homes and kennels, be sure that you and your pets do not come into contact with the areas of floor that have been treated with the spray until it is safe to do so.

Once this process is completed, larder beetle traps must be placed in protected areas to keep track of the infestation. The basic rule of thumb is that if you see one beetle, you have a problem. For a household, which applies to motorhomes, it is suggested to only treat the edges of the carpet and the cracks and crevices on the insides of the cupboards.

Repeat the spray treatment every 21 days until any signs of the beetles are gone and there are no beetles appearing in the pheromone (substance that attracts insects) sticky traps. We thoroughly cleaned and treated the affected areas and the traps did their job killing stray beetles that returned for more food.

These pesticides are not cheap, but the concentrated liquid goes a long way. The I.G. Nyguard sells for \$12 an ounce, but that's enough to make a gallon of treatment. D-Fense SC is \$60 for 16 ounces and the traps sell for \$12.95.

The best defense is a good offense, and being prepared with the necessary information and chemicals in hand to help trap, kill and ward off pests such as larder beetles is critical to maintaining a home space with or without wheels. **M**

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CA047188

By Ken Freund

## Another Electrical Mystery

**Q** I own a 2010 Freedom Elite made by Thor. Everything electrically worked fine until a recent trip. When not connected to shorepower, the inside lights don't work, nor does the refrigerator — anything not off the starting battery is inoperative. However, when parked and plugged in, or with the generator running, it all works. After I noticed this, I replaced the coach batteries, as they would not hold a charge to start the generator. The work was done at an Interstate battery dealer that has done other motorhomes. I checked, and all cables on those batteries were tight. I have checked all circuit breakers, fuses and obvious things I know. I have flicked the battery disconnect switch by the door on/off with no change. Nothing works; what do you think it is? Can converters cause issues like this?

**Gary Warden | Kingston, Tennessee**

**A** You haven't made it clear if only the 12-volt DC circuits are dead without shorepower or the genset running, but from your limited description of what doesn't work, I'm going to assume that the 120-volt AC system is working normally and that the problem is confined to the 12-volt DC system. You also didn't say how long ago the batteries were replaced, or if that

got things working, at least temporarily. Since you get 12-volt DC power when you're on shorepower and genset power, the transfer switch and power converter are working. So basically, the only other source of 12-volt DC power is from the batteries.

So, you need to start at the batteries, with a voltage test to see if they've gone dead. They should have about 12.6 volts when fully charged. If they are charged, then you need to follow the cables from the batteries to the fuse panel and see if you have power there (which is doubtful, except when the shorepower and the converter, or the genset and converter, are powering things). It's likely power is not getting through the protective circuit breaker or the battery disconnect switch, either because it is faulty, or not getting switched on. A jumper cable could temporarily bypass the relay, but if you aren't sure what you're doing, have an auto electrician do it.



## Frosty Fridge

**Q** We have a 2012 Itasca Rey motorhome. The refrigerator ices up with frost after about 10 days of use. Is there a product I can put in the refrigerator to help with this problem, or should I buy a new refrigerator for longer trips?

**Thomas McCall | Smithsburg, Maryland**

**A** The refrigerator you have is a Dometic RML8555 three-way model, which realistically is as good as you're going to get in the motorhome world (without replacing it with a residential unit). The first thing to ask is, "Where's the moisture coming from?" Some users are in and out of the refrig-

erator constantly, and the complaint that usually parallels a frosty interior is that the refrigerator doesn't cool correctly. Many owners have an unrealistic expectation that these absorption refrigerators should perform similarly to a compressor-powered residential unit, which is part of the learning curve. You didn't mention if you have had other motorhomes with absorption refrigerators. Additionally, with the small cubic feet of interior space inside a motorhome compared to a home, ambient moisture is normally a bigger issue. Often owners cook, shower and hang wet clothes in their motorhomes and many do so without opening roof vents or windows, and it lends to a high humidity level inside the coach and con-

densation on interior surfaces when it's cooler. It's reasonable to expect each time the refrigerator door gets opened, a new charge of humid air is introduced and the frost begins to build up. This is considered normal, but behavior can be modified to improve the time between defrosting efforts.

Another possibility is a mechanical issue that could be a simple door seal that's constantly leaking air. I'd have a good look at that door seal first. Ensure the seal isn't distorted or twisted, nor has any high or low points and no gaps exist. I recommend a tried-and-true procedure; use a strip of paper (a dollar bill for example) and shut the door on the paper and do a series of pull tests (you should feel drag). Additionally,

## COACH & POWERTRAIN

the frost doesn't always build up at the source of an air leak, so inspect for other leaks in the cabinet.

### 12-Volt DC System Failure

**Q** We have a 2008 CT Coachworks Siena motorhome that we bought used. Earlier this year we had an electrical blackout at our house and decided to sleep in the motorhome. We ran the genset for an hour or so, shut it down and went to bed. Next morning nothing worked and the genset wouldn't start. I took both deep-cycle batteries to have them charged. After six hours I went to pick them up, and was advised one would only hold a 50 percent charge; the other wouldn't charge at all. I bought two new Interstate deep-cycle batteries. At first, the inverter had fault code 36 and the charger had fault code 71. It's an Onan 2000. The remote battery disconnect doesn't work. With shorepower connected, the inverter blinks and the charger still faults to

71. I took it to two RV service centers and neither one could figure out the problem. The engine and genset work, but the 12-volt DC system just doesn't work. I changed the fuse to the inverter/charger but that didn't help.

**Frank Tavares | Portola, California**

**A** Before you can get the system working, you need to have a battery bank that's charged and working. A basic approach is to start at the batteries and measure voltage there, then at the disconnect relays, and then on to the power panel and fuse box. From your description, it sounds like you may have more than one problem.

I called CT Coachworks and the company is willing to help you even if you are not the original owner. CT is located in Riverside, California, phone number 951-343-8787. The Onan model 2000 is discontinued, so if it has failed, unless you can find a good used one for a reasonable price, your best option will probably be to replace it.

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**Low Battery Power**

**Q** While I was on battery power today in my 2012 Georgetown Class A motorhome, the 12-volt DC inside lights dimmed and the power step slowed down. However, the Onan genset cranks over and starts fine. My coach has dual batteries. If I start the motorhome engine or the Onan genset, the power comes back OK but then the lights fade again when I turn either engine off. Could it be bad batteries? Also, my dealer did not advise me to check the water level in the batteries, so I have not yet done this. Could it be that?

**John James | Via email**

**A** You didn't mention what happens if you plug in to shorepower. The power converter should also bring voltage up sufficiently to power the 12-volt DC system. Take the batteries out, and if they have removable caps, check the electrolyte levels. Add only distilled water. If the batteries were

run very low, they may be ruined. Put them on a charger, and after they have been charged for a day or so, have them load tested. Many auto parts stores and other places that sell batteries will test them for free while you wait. It's likely that your batteries, especially if they are original equipment, are at the end of their lives. If you dry camp a lot and run off battery power, this might be a good time to upgrade to a pair of six-volt golf cart batteries, if you haven't done so already.

**General Comments**

I have two items on which to comment. The first is about a letter asking about the ABS system on a Class C. We had the same problem on our 1995 Tioga; the ABS light stayed on all the time. I asked several sources about it and was told the brakes will still work, but they might lock up under heavy braking. I put a piece of dark tape over the light and

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## COACH & POWERTRAIN

drove it for another few years. I never had a problem with the brakes.

My second comment is about the RVer who lost power to three outlets in a Class A. We had the same problem in our 2006 Monaco and it turned out to be a circuit breaker on the side of the inverter. We reset it and it works fine as long as we don't run too many things at once.

**Ronald Ellis | Lakeside, Oregon**

The mechanic in me cringed when I read about your taping over the antilock brake system (ABS) warning lamp. This is a safety system, and when that light is on, the ABS is disabled due to its computer detecting a fault during a self-diagnostic check. The majority of these faults are caused by wheel-speed sensor problems, often as simple as corrosion or metal filings from brake-wear building up. Having the trouble codes read should point the technician in the right direction to solve this and get the system working again. If you ever have to make a panic stop, there's a greater likelihood of losing control during a resulting skid and this could put you, your passengers and others around you in greater jeopardy.

Regarding the second comment, besides a tripped ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI), hidden circuit breakers are often the culprits, and many owners fail to check their owner's manuals, don't have them, or these details are not included. So thanks for writing and sharing your experiences.

### Dead Dinghy Battery

**Q** Every time I tow my 2013 Honda CR-V after following the towing instructions, upon arriving at the campsite the car's battery is dead. Any suggestions?

**Richard Janson | Via email**

**A** This is a common problem across many brands and models and often requires pulling fuses. You didn't mention if you run an auxiliary braking system. Most of these draw a considerable amount of current and run batteries down. On the 2013 Honda CR-V, the owner's manual calls for

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pulling fuse number 19. If you remove fuse 19 you will lose power to the 12-volt DC outlets, which some people use to power auxiliary brake devices. You could also run a separate wire and fuse to it. If you don't want to hassle with removing the fuse, you can install a fuse bypass kit such as Roadmaster's FuseMaster ([www.roadmasterinc.com](http://www.roadmasterinc.com)).

However, even without an auxiliary braking system, many dinghy vehicle batteries go dead after a day's towing. If your battery goes dead, but the ignition switch is in the correct position according to the towing instructions, accessories are off and you're not running an auxiliary brake system, which draws power from the battery, you may need to install a charge line from the alternator output on the motorhome to the CR-V's battery.

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A system for this is available from Roadmaster or ISL ([www.islproducts.net/toadchargepage.html](http://www.islproducts.net/toadchargepage.html)). Even with the fuse out, there are still loads like the brake system and various parasitic loads. With a charging line, the CR-V battery will stay charged all the time.

**Hydrogen and Oxygen Fuel**

**Q** In the September 2015 issue under “Diesel Propane Injection,” David Rolley asked about propane injection for power/economy, and you said it’s not worth it. I agree, but how about hydrogen/oxygen (HHO)? Not water in its liquid form, but in its molecular form. Split water into its atoms and dump it into the air intake. It sounds crazy, yes, but it does work. Check out the website [www.HHO2U.com](http://www.HHO2U.com). The site sells the units needed to produce the gas. I built my unit from scratch and got 3.2 MPG better on my F-350 diesel dually and 1.1 MPG better on my 38-foot Pace Arrow with an 8.1-liter gas engine. The factory units need a little modification (in my opinion), but they do work. Pepsi-Cola has a fleet of trucks with hydrogen generators on them (I have seen them in the Freightliner dealership I work for).

**Paul Fredrick**  
East Providence, Rhode Island

**A** Sorry to bust your bubble so to speak, but it takes more energy to break the bonds between oxygen and hydrogen atoms that compose water than you can ever get back by burning the two gases. Ask any chemistry or physics teacher, and they should confirm this. Just because somebody has a website and is selling something doesn’t prove that it truly has a benefit for the end user. Also, just because Pepsi-Cola is testing these devices does not mean they have proven themselves effective. One of the things I have seen over and over again, is that when people are trying out products, they often pay more attention to their driving, and this awareness results in smoother, more careful driving and has the effect of getting better fuel economy. That’s why scientific testing

(continued on page 136)

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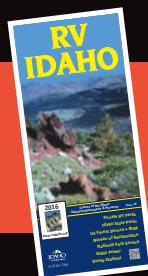


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## COACH & POWERTRAIN

(continued from page 133)

requires double-blind comparisons,  
among other procedures.

### Towing a Grand Cherokee

**Q** I have a 2000 Jeep Grand Cherokee Laredo. Can I flat-tow it behind my motorhome? I have received as many yes answers as no answers from the mechanics I've asked.

**E. Bedrick | Cranston, Rhode Island**

**A** This information is readily available on *MotorHome's* website and goes back to 2000 model-year vehicles. See <http://webcontent.goodsam.com/dinghyguide2000.pdf>. As long as you have a 4x4 version, it should be towable. See the procedures listed in your owner's manual under Flat Towing or Recreational Towing.

### Battery Storage Concern

**Q** I have a 2015 Winnebago ERA motorhome. Every two weeks I take it out on the road for a 25-mile run, after which I run the generator for 45 minutes. Is it wise to leave the motorhome on shorepower the rest of the time, or should I buy some other charger?

**Paul Scharf | Bellaire, Texas**

**A** Winnebago uses power converters that have built-in smart charging circuitry, with a float charge for storage. So just check the converter and verify proper operation, and you should be OK to leave the unit plugged in during storage. For motorhomes that don't have "smart" charging converters, it's best to leave the unit unplugged and connect a special maintenance charger (not an ordinary trickle charger). **M**

### Have a Tech Question?

Contact our experts:

Email [tech@motorhomemagazine.com](mailto:tech@motorhomemagazine.com)

or write to *MotorHome*, 2750

Park View Court, Suite 240, Oxnard,

CA 93036 (please include your name,

city and state). Selected letters will be

answered in the magazine, but time does

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# The Middle of Nowhere

In praise of destinations that leave everyone but the motorhome-savvy scratching their heads

By Alan Rider

Is it just me, or do you ever feel like you're willing to go anywhere — and I do mean anywhere — just for the sake of going? My most recent bout with this fundamental restlessness came when my niece decided to move to the other side of the country. Before my rational brain could object, I found myself offering to drive her there. Not a practical idea as it turned out, but true to form for someone whose motto is "any day on the road is a good day."

I've written before in this space about the so-called wanderlust gene, otherwise known as DRD4-7R, that makes the afflicted among us regularly crave new sights and experiences. In short, when it comes to traveling, geneticists have shown that apparently some of us really are just wired differently.

Which got me thinking about both some of the places I've been over the years and the readers of this magazine. It seems to me that we motorhome owners, with our abiding passion for seeking out new horizons, are more likely than not better-than-average examples of this proclivity for wandering.

But where do we wander to? In an overwhelming majority of cases our perambulations take us to places of great scenic beauty or historical significance. And rightly so.

I am here to confess, however, that this predisposition to go somewhere, anywhere, has often led me on some interesting adventures. Including seeking out destinations that might

sound downright odd to ordinary folks, whose response is often "Why would you want to go there?" The straightforward — and entirely sensible — answer, of course, is "Because I've never been!"

Take the Middle of Nowhere, for example. As you might expect there's nothing much to see there, just a billboard welcome sign off a lonely two-lane country road. But for me the satisfaction lies in the fact that, not only do I know exactly where this much-talked-about place is, I have the photos to prove I've been there. So when people refer to someplace as the middle of nowhere, I can respectfully correct them by saying, no it's actually

**"Why would you want to go there?" The straightforward — and entirely sensible — answer, of course, is "Because I've never been!"**

along U.S. Highway 20 just west of Johnstown, Nebraska.

Same goes for the geographic center of the U.S. I found it 20 miles north of Belle Fourche, South Dakota, while poking around the Black Hills recently. Again, the marker in a farm field was nothing much to write home about, but the town itself does have a more elaborate memorial and visitor center that makes for a nice photo op. If like me you're the curious sort, it's worth the 15-minute detour off the highway.

And I'd be remiss if I didn't bring up one of my all-time favorite off-the-wall destinations, namely Hell, Michigan. The general store in this tiny town 15 miles northwest of Ann Arbor sells T-shirts emblazoned with the logo "I've Been to Hell and Back!" While I find that amusing, when all is said and done, the real appeal is the smug satisfaction I get knowing that, were someone to tell me in a fit of anger where to go, I can now say with authority, "No thanks, I've already been there."

What all three of these locations have in common is the idea that, with the right mindset, any destination can be an adventure. Which is what keeps me — and, I reckon, a lot of you — on the lookout for our next flimsy excuse to wander along The Road Ahead. **M**

## Middle Ground ☺

From right: The Middle of Nowhere is actually located in Nebraska, west of Johnstown off Highway 20. Hell Country Store sells T-shirts with the logo "I've Been to Hell and Back!"



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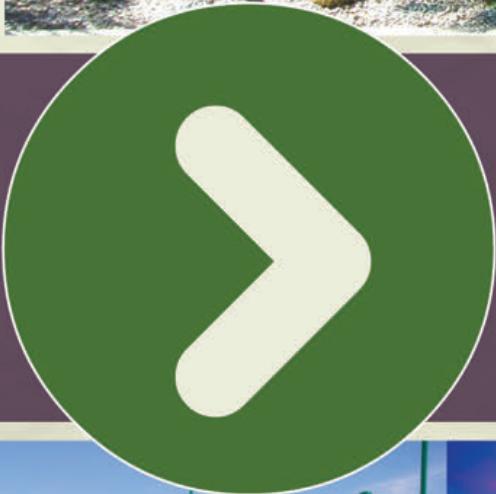
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