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Snoqualmie Falls is one of Washington state's most popular attractions (see page 28).



Class C's are a popular choice for potential motorhome buyers due to their family-friendly appointments and familiar on-road manners. **Pg. 64**

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MotorHome Exclusive: The 2020 Fleetwood Pace Arrow 35RB features pleasant on-road manners, cutting-edge technology and multiple private living spaces (see test on page 56). Photo by Tyler Klassen.





# Exceeding

*Canyon Star Orleans Interior*



## **Gas Lineup**

Bay Star Sport  
Bay Star  
Canyon Star



# Expectations



20

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By Kristopher Bunker



# Something for Everyone

**E**ach month, we strive to offer a little something for everyone, including the newest motorhomes, most exciting products and scenic destinations that we all should visit. And each month, we receive feedback on how to improve that content; we are always interested in taking the pulse of the lifestyle from our readers. Well, the people have spoken, so we've selected some of the most popular topics/comments we normally receive in order to deliver "The people's issue."

Topic *numero uno* always seems to be dinghy towing. Our Guide to Dinghy Towing is by far our most popular creation, but its annual status means updates, news and new products may not be delivered as timely as we'd like. Until now.

Our brand-new "Dinghy Digest" is a monthly department that will be devoted to all things dinghy towing. We'll take a look at some of the best towing products, list recent updates to the latest guide and also focus on dinghy vehicles themselves whenever new and noteworthy information comes to light. Turn to page 16 for more information.

For even more in-depth information on dinghy-towing products, "A Brake in the Action," beginning on page 51, gives the scoop on seven portable auxiliary braking devices designed to slow your roll quickly and safely.

Another popular request is *MotorHome* exclusive tests and evaluations. This month's test on the all-new Fleetwood Pace Arrow

delivers on that front, so much so that we were required to keep quiet about its innovative floorplan until the publication of this issue. "Ahead of the Pace," beginning on page 56, explains how the new bunkhouse Class A diesel pusher maintains an impressive amount of privacy, even during family travels.

Speaking of which, we are often queried about the "best" motorhomes for families, and though we won't recommend any one motorhome over another (that choice is far too personal), we can let you be the judge. "Rooms to Grow," beginning on page 64, features 13 Class C motorhomes for your perusal, broken down into separate categories based upon the chassis foundation, which makes at-a-glance comparisons easier than ever.

Where to go is another common

question, naturally, and this issue serves up a number of delicious destinations. From the most visited state park in Illinois (page 14) to the sun-dappled coastal Maine region (page 20) to 10 of the most spectacular waterfalls in the U.S. (page 28), we're sure you will find a location worthy of hitching up the wagon and hitting the open road.

And, yes, we are often asked about traveling with firearms, and how to safely and legally do so. "Have Gun, Will Travel," beginning on page 36, offers expert insight and advice on how to properly transport firearms in your motorhome, whether for sport, competition or simply for personal protection.

And, for those who may prefer a non-lethal means of personal security, "Portable Protection" on page 47 features an evaluation of the PepperBall LifeLite launcher designed to thwart criminal trespassers.

As always, we welcome your feedback, be it to our [www.motorhome.com](http://www.motorhome.com) website, our *MotorHome* Magazine Facebook page, the TrailerLifeDIY YouTube channel or on Instagram at [motorhome\\_magazine](https://www.instagram.com/motorhome_magazine). We hope to hear from you soon! **M**

**"The people have spoken, so we've selected some of the most popular topics/comments we normally receive in order to deliver 'The people's issue.'"**

## Contributors | September



**Chris Hemer** has been an RV journalist and photographer for nearly 20 years. An avid outdoor enthusiast, he enjoys camping, motorcycle riding, mountain biking and hiking.



**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.



**Mary Zalmanek**, and her husband, Jim, enjoy traveling in their 2019 Winnebago Vista LX when they are not at home in Colorado. She has a new cooking blog for RVers at <https://cookinginaonebuttkitchen.com>

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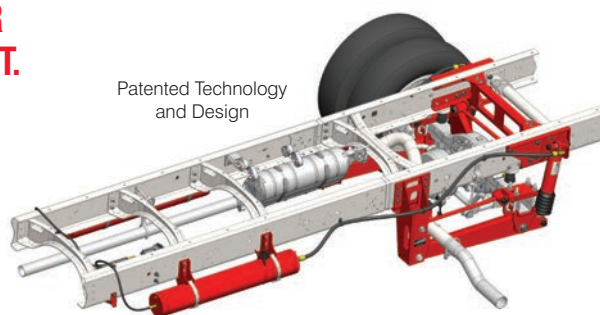
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## Are the cockpit seats in your motorhome uncomfortable? Have you replaced them? Or, do you use cushions, covers, etc., to improve comfort? If so, which brands work best for you?

Those are the questions we asked in the June issue, and here are some of the responses we received.



### Move it on Over

We have the same Ford E-450 chassis as George Woodside from the "Take a Seat" letter in the June issue. Our passenger seat was the worst in terms of comfort. To make the seat more comfortable, we moved the couch, which backed up to the front seat, farther aft toward the side door. This allowed the front passenger seat more room to recline and move back a few inches. I have looked online for better seats and there are plenty to choose from, but they would have to be custom fitted due to the small area you have to work with, and they aren't cheap.

**Dennis and Pat Repasi | via email**

### You Gellin'?

Last summer we completed a 15,000-mile trip to Alaska over five months. My wife and I used gel auto seat cushions that we purchased at BJ's Wholesale Club, but they are available at many other places. The cushions made the trip very comfortable; however, we

never drove more than five hours in any day. I would recommend gel seat cushions as the most economical fix.

**Bruce Leese | Fort Myers, Florida**

### Flex Time

I have a 1998 Class C Coachmen on a Ford E-350 chassis. Since it's basically a delivery van, I had the same experience as Mr. Woodside; after an hour, I was squirming in the seat. Our local shop is Dave & LJ's RV Furniture, and they showed me lots of choices. I decided on a Flexsteel seat. They have a lot of choices for material, so I was able to pick a cloth that matches the interior. I don't have any extra cushions, as the basic seat is very comfortable and supportive in the back and the seat. I can now drive for as long as my bladder holds out.

**Ed Pavone | Vancouver, Washington**

### Mercedes-Benz Luxury

The seats in our 2016 Itasca Navion motorhome on a Mercedes-Benz chassis are very comfortable, even on long drives. They are the seats

installed by Mercedes-Benz and although not power seats, they have a variety of adjustments to make finding a comfortable position easy.

**Ken and Diane Martin | Eugene, Oregon**

### Specialized Relief

I have back issues, and own a 2015 Forest River Sunseeker motorhome. My chiropractor suggested an Ayllo brand seat cushion, which I found on Amazon. It has a washable cover, and is about 1½ inches thick, plus there's a slot for tailbone relief. I drove for six hours without discomfort. At about \$39, it was worth every penny.

**Ken Alfrey | via email**

### Comfort by Phoenix

The cockpit seats in my Phoenix Cruiser are more comfortable than my recliner!

**John Reynolds | via email**

### Nothing Helps

We just purchased a 2016 Winnebago 31-footer and found that after an hour or so of driving, it was very uncomfortable. I added a piece of foam plus an

## Featured Letter

### Not to Exceed 100 Miles

We have a 2016 Thor A.C.E., and the cockpit driver's seat is not too uncomfortable, although occasionally I will use a back cushion. My problem with the seat is that it does not adjust up or down, only forward and backward. Because the RV seat does not adjust down, my wife, who is 5 feet tall, cannot reach the accelerator or brake pedals well enough to drive the RV, so the driving is left to me. Our driving time is limited to about 100 miles before we need to stop so I can stretch and relax, not to mention that I am unable to enjoy the scenery as we pass by. My wife would love to have the seat replaced so she could also drive. I have not checked on what it would cost to replace the seat, but I would assume it would be costly.

**Otto Feiler | Forney, Texas**





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## P.O. BOX

anti-fatigue cushion along with a back brace and that helped immensely, but did not solve the problem. I am barely 6 feet tall and weigh 220 pounds. I hope someone out there knows of a decent replacement seat.

**Jerry and Shelley Johnson | via email**

### DIY Adjustments

We own a 2016 Thor Axis 24.1 on a Ford E-450 chassis. The driver's seat slopes down toward the front, so we adjusted it. My husband removed the front bolts holding the seat in place and then, using a longer bolt, added a stack of large steel washers until he got the height exactly where he wanted it. When replacing the nut on the bottom of the bolt, he used Loctite, ensuring the job stays in place. On the passenger side, he could have done the same thing, but I asked him to cover a piece of landscaping timber about 18 inches long for me to rest my feet on during the drive. These adjustments have served us well for many years.

**Ron and Kay Beaman | via email**

### Ultraleather, Ultra Comfort

We purchased a 2016 Itasca Solei diesel pusher and after the first trip we both had sore backs. The captain's chairs had way too much lumbar support and no means of adjustment. First we tried pads on the upper portion of the seat to even out the chair; this helped, but not enough. Then we visited a Flexsteel outlet in Elkhart, Indiana, and found

14 different sets to choose from. We bought two and they took our "new" chairs in trade. While there we noticed a powered sofa/dual recliner to replace the original sofa bed. The result was new ultraleather, powered captain's chairs with pillow-top cushions that were narrower and fit much better along with new (also more comfortable) dual recliners/sofa. These match the coach interior and fit our lifestyle with extended driving comfort. Two years later we are looking at updating the dinette with ultraleather, too.

**Roy Aydelotte | via email**

### Safety Issues

We have a 2012 Winnebago Access Class C on a Ford E-450 chassis. We have found these seats to be much less comfortable than the seats we had in our Sprinter-based motorhome. For us, the seat backs are too concave and the nonadjustable headrest pushes the head forward. We tried to find replacement seats only to discover none are available. The problem is how the seat belts fasten to the seats and not the floor. It seems there is a liability to switch out seats due to the seat belt attachment. We had a local upholstery man rebuild the backs, which helped some, but we are still using cushions. This is especially prominent when the seats are swiveled and riser cushions are used. This will be the last motorhome we own on a Ford E-450 chassis because of these seats.

**Michael Wyatt | Henderson, Nevada**

### Visual Letter to the Editor



### Block Party

We have a 2015 Thor Freedom Elite Class C on a Ford E-350 chassis. On our first trip the driver's seat was so uncomfortable, I could not wait to get back home. Afterward, I went to work on the seat trying different things and came up with something that works for me. I put pieces of 1¼-inch wood under the rear part of the seat where the bolts hold the seat frame to the floor. That brings the rear of the seat cushion up a bit. I also use Wet Okole seat covers (they are a bear to put on) to soften the seat. Since then, I have made a few long trips and have had no back pain. Remember: A Class C is like driving a cabover semi; you are sitting over the front wheel and every bump the tire hits goes right up your back.

**Paul Harris** | via email

### No Support

I have a 2019 Jayco Redhawk on a Ford E-450 chassis. I'm 5 feet 1 inch tall and the driver's seat is manually operated. Can you say AWFUL?! I've never had any vehicle that did not have a lumbar support adjustment. As a result, the seat is tilted way too high at the thighs/knees for my petite body. I bought a 3-in-1 car seat cushion on Amazon. It helps, but not 100%.

**Cindy Miller** | via email

### Bench Warmers

We own a 2013 Coachmen Mirada and also have difficulties driving more than 100 miles due to the seats. While

by Joe Schmidt



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## P.O. BOX

the seats are slightly padded and have springs, we find the bottoms of the seats are level like a picnic-table bench. It might be more comfortable if the front end was elevated a bit, but these are not electric. The back can be tilted, but if it is, one's butt tends to slide forward. So we keep the back almost vertical thus causing stress on the back and shoulders.

I, too, would like to know of any good replacement seats that are available, and the best place to locate or obtain them. I thought about salvage yards, but I'm unsure what to ask for, and I don't want to end up with a similar replacement.

**Rick Wioskowski | White Lake, Michigan**

### **Musical Chairs**

Granted, RV manufacturers try to install cockpit seating that is "one size fits all." They generally work better as conversational seating for living room areas. But as driving seats, they are greatly lacking, primarily in that they don't provide sufficient bolster or lumbar support. After logging tens of thousands of miles in my Newmar Kountry Star diesel pusher with a Flexsteel (faux leather) seat, I could no longer put up with the constant sliding and shifting in the slick seat. My back was killing me at the end of the day. My solution was to install an over-the-road truck driver's seat. Mounted on the existing six-way power pedestal, it now keeps me in a firm, comfortable, secure position, and no tired back at the end of the day. The seats can be found at truck stores, Freightliner, etc., or online. They range in price from \$600-\$1,500. It's the best thing I've done to any of my RVs.

**Jerry Wagner | Fresno, California**

### **Space Jams**

We purchased a 2018 Class C on a Ford E-350 chassis with the factory seats. Our first impression was that the seats were too low and uncomfortable. I purchased a gel cushion that helped to raise the seat to a more comfortable level. This worked, but I was concerned with the safety of traveling while sitting

on a cushion. My final solution was raising the seat platforms 1½ inches using spacers and the appropriate bolts matching the factory specs. The increase in comfort and visibility made this project worthwhile.

**Jarry Kraft | via email**

### **It Really Works!**

Every issue of *MotorHome* has great Quick Tips that make sense to me. But I have to say that I was a bit skeptical about the use of bug repellent to remove film from headlights ("Neat DEET," June). But I'm here to say thank you to Paul Fryer who submitted this tip. I tried it and it WORKS! It was quick, easy and inexpensive, as promised. I even had a chance to share the information with someone else.

**Ira J. Elinson | Apple Valley, Minnesota**

In reference to the Quick Tip about DEET, bug spray with 10-15% DEET won't work well. I suggest buying Repel brand insect repellent spray with 40% DEET. Spray it liberally on a rag or old sock, wipe the headlight, and then wash thoroughly with soap and water. No need for scrubbing.

**Gene Nelson | Mora, Minnesota**

### **Wash and Wax**

I would like to query your readers as to why many RV parks will not allow owners to wash their own motorhomes in a campground. If it's about water waste, just charge, say, \$5 to \$10. I find that most RV detailers are not very careful, and I prefer to wash my own coach. What about you?

**James Thompson | Livingston, Texas**

### **Question of the Month**

**Would you be OK with other motorhome owners washing their coaches at the RV park or campground? Would you utilize this service if it were available for a fee?**

#### **Send your comments to:**

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



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# ESCAPE

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## Starved Rock State Park

With nearly 3 million visitors a year, Starved Rock State Park is the most visited state park in Illinois. Less than 100 miles southwest of Chicago, the main attractions here are the 18 canyons formed by glacial meltwater and stream erosion. Some 13 miles of hiking trails wander through these canyons in forests of white ash, northern red oak and hackberry trees, leading to 14 waterfalls in the park. The best time to see these waterfalls is in the spring. During the summer, the state park is a popular getaway, and in fall, autumn color is spectacular. In winter, the park is a destination for eagles that feed in the Illinois River, and the humans who watch them from the top of Starved Rock. The park's campground has 133 RV sites with electric hookups. — *Mary Zalmanek*

For more information: 815-667-4726, [www.starvedrockstatepark.org](http://www.starvedrockstatepark.org)





Baseplates are designed for each respective company's tow bars, like this Blue Ox setup. However, it is often possible to mix and match components.

## Baseplates: the Hidden Heroes

Let's begin at the beginning, shall we?

After you have verified that the vehicle you're considering can be towed on all four wheels behind a motorhome, the first step to actually towing it will be installing a suitable baseplate. Unlike a trailer, which is designed to be towed using a hitch, the only place a car, truck or SUV was designed originally to be towed was to the repair shop. As such, it must be equipped with some sort of a "coupler" for attaching to the rear of a motorhome. This connection is by means of a tow bar that can only be attached to the dinghy vehicle via a properly engineered baseplate that can handle the weight and road conditions, and ensure safe tracking.



⊕ Baseplates are often much more than the sum of their parts, incorporating computer-enhanced engineering, detail and rigorous testing. This Roadmaster baseplate kit (Part No. 524443-5) may look like it's designed to pull a tank, but it's actually for the 2015-2018 Ford Focus. Smaller, lighter cars typically require structural support to facilitate safe towing.

The term "baseplate" is actually a misnomer; it's not a plate, but a bracket to which a tow bar can be attached on a semi-permanent basis. Baseplates are carefully engineered to distribute the load of towing and braking evenly, and each are application-specific. For this reason, the leading manufacturers of baseplates, Blue Ox, Demco and Roadmaster, offer fit lists for matching baseplates based on the make, model and year of the dinghy vehicle. In addition, all companies also provide installation instructions for their baseplates, so you know what's involved in the installation — and can determine the aesthetic impact of adding hardware to the front of the vehicle. This is important because not all baseplates install in the same way. You'd think that a heavy truck or SUV would require a massive structure to cope with towing loads, while a compact car would need a small, simple bracket. Actually, the opposite may be true; trucks and SUVs tend to have large, heavy frames, while compact cars are made almost entirely of sheet metal. As a result, large vehicles often require a smaller bracket (or brackets) and a straightforward

## 2019 DINGHY TOWING GUIDE UPDATES ➔

It recently came to our attention that the information in our 2019 Guide to Dinghy Towing on the **Toyota Yaris** is incorrect; the sedan is not flat-towable. We were using information provided in the Yaris owner's manual; however, multiple versions of owner's manuals and mid-year engineering changes



do occur. This is why we always advise readers to check the owner's manual that comes with the vehicle that they intend to purchase to confirm that that specific vehicle is approved for flat towing. We have updated our online 2019 Guide to Dinghy Towing, and *MotorHome* apologizes for any confusion.

### ⊕ ADDITIONS

**Ford 2019 Edge ST with 2.7-liter EcoBoost** is flat-towable using the Manual Park Release procedure; do not exceed 65 mph

**Lincoln 2019 Nautilus with optional 2.7-liter engine** is flat-towable using the Manual Park Release procedure; do not exceed 65 mph

### ⊖ DELETIONS

**Ford 2019 Explorer with optional 2.3-liter EcoBoost** is NOT flat towable

**Toyota 2019 Yaris** is NOT flat towable

ward installation, while a compact car frame may need to be reinforced with specifically engineered components and be more complicated to install. Downloading or reading the installation instructions while shopping for a baseplate will give you a clear picture of what's involved in the installation, and also a better idea of expected labor costs.



Today's baseplate kits net a clean installation that's almost invisible, like this Demco baseplate for a GMC pickup.

These days, baseplates and tow-bar brackets are designed to be nearly invisible when not in use. However, they may require certain portions of the grille or fascia to be trimmed, so the overall success of the tow-bar installation is dependent on the installer's experience.

Finally, remember that a baseplate is not a "set it and forget it" component. Rough roads and the subsequent vibrations can cause bolts and nuts to loosen. That's why baseplate manufacturers recommend fasteners be inspected on a regular basis for proper torque and to be sure there are no signs of cracks, oblong holes or other signs of potential failure. If you don't have the experience to do this, have the system inspected by the installer periodically. Baseplate manufacturers can provide inspection/maintenance guidelines.

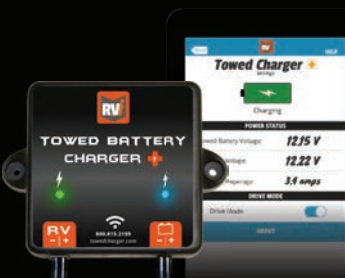
#### SOURCES

**Blue Ox**, 800-228-9289, [www.blueox.com](http://www.blueox.com)

**Demco**, 800-543-3626,  
[www.demco-products.com](http://www.demco-products.com)

**Roadmaster**, 800-669-9690,  
[www.roadmasterinc.com](http://www.roadmasterinc.com)

## NEW PRODUCTS



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**MSRP: \$85, [www.towedcharger.com](http://www.towedcharger.com)**

### Rhino-Rack Backbone for Jeep Wrangler JL

► The new Rhino-Rack Backbone system for the four-door Jeep Wrangler JL allows owners to carry more gear than ever with a single-person installation process that doesn't require removing the Hard Top. The Backbone is fitted to factory chassis points to distribute cargo weight more evenly through the body of the Jeep, enabling the ability to carry 264 pounds when installed in conjunction with a Pioneer Platform.

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**Burnie Grill | <https://burniegrill.com>**



## Hit the Road

Garmin introduces the new RV 785 GPS navigator that offers RV-specific navigation and a built-in dash camera.

The RV 785 features a high-resolution 7-inch display and the built-in camera records any incidents while also allowing for driver assistance features including lane departure and forward collision warnings. A customizable motorhome profile stores the size and weight of the RV, so drivers receive routes that take into account weight limits, steep grades, restricted space and more. The RV 785 also gives drivers access to RV-specific points of interest, and comes preloaded with a directory of RV parks and services, plus Garmin traffic, a database of notable sites, a U.S. National Parks directory, TripAdvisor traveler ratings and millions of Foursquare points of interest. And, with the Garmin Drive app on a compatible smart device, drivers are treated to live traffic updates, advanced weather forecasts, photoLive traffic cameras and even hands-free calling. MSRP: \$499.99.

**Garmin | [www.garmin.com](http://www.garmin.com)**



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Newcastle, located on U.S. Route 1 between the Sheepscot and Damariscotta rivers, is a picturesque Maine town.

## Lobsters, Lighthouses and Carriage Roads

Exploring coastal Maine by land and sea is a treat for the senses

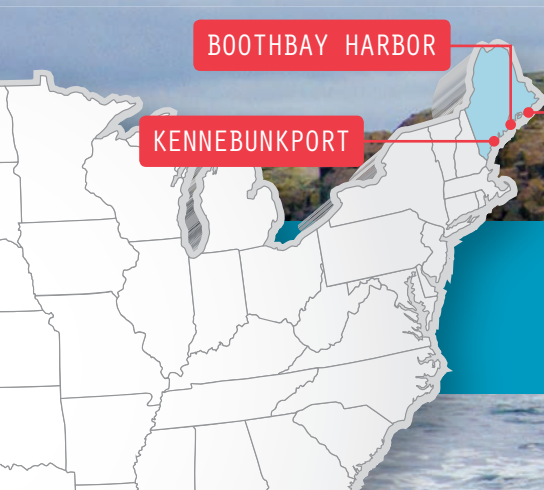
By Mary Zalmanek

**T**he coast of Maine had been high on my list of places to explore ever since we bought our first motorhome in 2002. Last October, my husband, Jim, and I finally made it happen.

Hadley's Point Campground was our home base on Mount Desert Island. It has more than 140 RV sites, plus cabins and tent sites. All of the RV sites have electric and water hookups; some have sewer, and a honey-wagon service is available. The campground is a five-minute walk to Hadley Point, a public saltwater beach. Island Explorer, a free shuttle service to Bar Harbor, Acadia National Park and other locations on the island, stops at the campground.

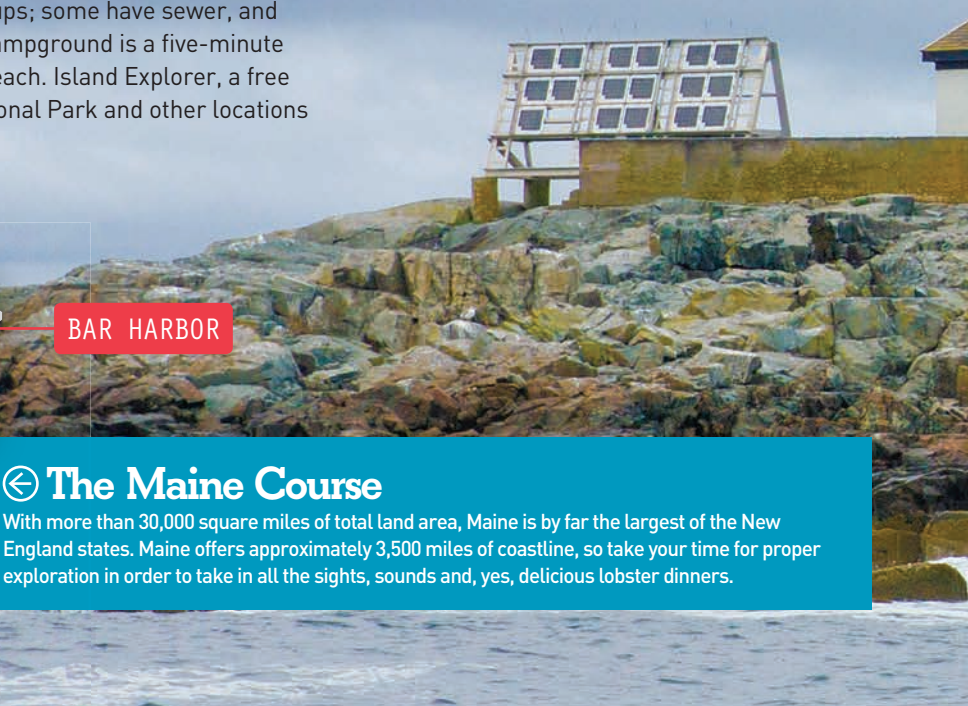
On our first morning, we hopped on the Island Explorer bus that dropped us at the Village Green in Bar Harbor. From there it was a short walk to the Town Pier, where we picked up our tickets to the Oli's Trolley 2½-hour narrated tour of Acadia National Park. Acadia covers more than 49,000 acres, which was all donated by wealthy families who wanted to preserve the land. John D. Rockefeller Jr. financed the construction of 45 miles of carriage roads and 16 bridges for people who wanted to travel by horse or carriage without encountering motor vehicles. The Fire of 1947 burned more than 10,000 acres

Photos: Mary and Jim Zalmanek



### 🕒 The Maine Course

With more than 30,000 square miles of total land area, Maine is by far the largest of the New England states. Maine offers approximately 3,500 miles of coastline, so take your time for proper exploration in order to take in all the sights, sounds and, yes, delicious lobster dinners.





in the park, in addition to 170 homes and five hotels in Bar Harbor. As a result of the fire, deciduous trees now outnumber coniferous, which means more brilliant colors in the fall.

The tour included three 15-minute stops. The first was Thunder Hole, a narrow inlet where water rushes into a small cave. When conditions are right, waves shoot up as high as 40 feet with a thunderous roar.

Jordan Pond, a tarn formed by a glacier, was our next stop. We took a quick hike down to the pond on the Shore Trail. The water is clear, with visibility normally 46 feet, sometimes more. Two mountains known as “The Bubbles” sit on the opposite shore. Visitors can enjoy popovers and tea on the lawn at the Jordan Pond House, a tradition since the 1890s. When all the passengers returned to the trolley on time, our tour guide rewarded our punctuality by showing an amazing photo he took of the Northern Lights over Jordan Pond.

Our final stop was the summit of Cadillac Mountain. At 1,530 feet, it's the highest peak on the North Atlantic seaboard. From October 7 to March 6, it's the first place to view the sunrise in the U.S. Even though we missed that, we enjoyed the panoramic view of the mountainside, and the islands and the cruise ships in Frenchman Bay. Seeing the long line of cars waiting for parking was one more reason to be glad we took Oli's Trolley. Another option is



Visitors stroll on the lawn at Jordan Pond House. At 1,530 feet, Cadillac Mountain in Acadia National Park is the highest peak on the North Atlantic seaboard. Egg Rock Light is perched on a small island in Frenchman Bay.





## GETAWAY

### COASTAL MAINE

the Island Explorer buses that pick up riders at the Hulls Cove Visitor Center in the park. If you want to leave the driving to someone else, there's plenty of room for RVs in that parking lot.

Back in Bar Harbor, we asked for a restaurant recommendation with good lobster. Our guide suggested the Side Street Cafe. As we were nearing the restaurant, I pointed to a building and said, "I think that's it." A couple passing us said, "If you're looking for great lobster, you found it." We shared the lobster mac and cheese and a lobster melt, which is a grilled cheese sandwich stuffed with lobster.

That delicious meal was the perfect prelude to a two-hour tour on the *Lulu* lobster boat. We boarded the Downeast-style lobster boat and headed out to sea. We passed Egg Rock Light, set on a small island in Frenchman Bay. The lighthouse was built in 1875 and is one of Maine's architecturally unique lights.

When it was time to check the lobster traps, there was a male big enough to keep. The narrator asked for a volunteer to band the lobster. I raised my hand and was instructed on how to use the banding tool to put rubber bands on the claws. The bands kept the passengers safe when the lobster was passed around for all to



Duck Brook Bridge in Acadia National Park is one of 16 bridges financed by John D. Rockefeller Jr. In Wiscasset, hour-long long lines are typical at Red's Eats — known as the "world's best lobster shack." But the wait is worth it for their delicious rolls piled high with lobster!



hold. Since this was an educational trip, the lobster went back into the water to live another day — without the bands, of course.

For dinner, we went to another restaurant Oli's guide recommended. Fish House Grill is a casual place, right on the waterfront. I ordered the



“Even though the flowers were no longer in bloom, and the trees were just starting to show their fall colors, it was a sight to behold.”

Trees are reflected in the glassy surface of Asticou Pond at Asticou Azalea Garden in Northeast Harbor.





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New England bake. For the first time in my life, I had lobster for lunch and dinner.

The next day we continued our exploration of the island in our dinghy vehicle. Asticou Azalea Garden in Northeast Harbor is reminiscent of a Japanese stroll garden. It was created in 1957 by Charles Savage, a Maine resident with a passion for Japanese gardens. Early financial support came from John D. Rockefeller Jr. From May to June, the garden is ablaze with colorful azaleas and rhododendrons. Even though the flowers were no longer in bloom, and the trees were just starting to show their fall colors, it was a sight to behold. Trees were reflected in the glassy surface of Asticou Pond. The carefully raked Sand Garden instilled a sense of calm.

On our last day in Bar Harbor, we went back to Acadia to check out those famous carriage roads. Our options were signing up for a horse-drawn carriage tour, or hiking or biking. We left our dinghy vehicle at Hulls Cove Visitor Center and rode our mountain bikes on a wide, gravel road past Witch Hole Pond. We stopped to admire Duck Brook Bridge, one of 16 Rockefeller bridges. This was the tallest and the most expensive to build. It has three arches and four turret-style viewing platforms. Some of the trees around the bridge had turned a brilliant red.

One of Jim's favorite places on Mount Desert Island was the Seal Cove Auto Museum. Richard Paine amassed an extraordinary collection of 200 automobiles, trucks and motorcycles. After his death in 2007, a portion of the collection was sold at auction to fund an endowment to care for the remaining vehicles. The nonprofit museum Paine established continues to preserve his core collection of more than 50 Brass Era cars built between 1895 and 1917. They feature prominent brass fittings for things like lights and radiators. The exhibits change every two years. In 2018 and 2019, the theme is "Art, Advertising and the Automobile." This exhibit "Tells the story of automobile advertising and design, the social trends that shaped the ads, and the talented artists and illustrators who created them."

The Happy Clam Shack caught our attention several times as we left the RV park. It's a small restaurant covered with lobster buoys; a little lighthouse sits out front. On our last evening in Bar Harbor, we stopped to order a to-go



Clockwise from top, left: One of the current exhibits at Seal Cove Auto Museum is "Art, Advertising and the Automobile," which features this 1910 Pierce-Arrow in front of a large-scale reproduction of the ad that promoted the automobile. The menu at the Happy Clam Shack, a small restaurant covered with lobster buoys, includes steamed and smoked lobster. A well-appointed lobby welcomes campers at Sandy Pines Campground in Kennebunkport. Free tours and tastings are offered at Allagash Brewing Co. in Portland.



Shore Hills Campground has wooded, waterfront and open campsites.



meal: two smoked lobsters, clams and corn on the cob. We ate in our motorhome, marveling at how many ways there are to cook lobster.

I was surprised to learn this delicacy was once considered trash food. On the New England coast, these “cockroaches of the sea” were used as fish bait or fed to prisoners and servants. When railroads started to serve canned lobster, people who didn’t know they were eating “poor man’s food” found they liked it.

We moved the motorhome about 100 miles south to Shore Hills Campground in the Boothbay region. We had a nice pull-through spot next to a pond. Each site had its own trashcan, which always impresses me. The campground is just over 3 miles from Boothbay Harbor, a charming town worth visiting.

Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens occupied us for most of the next day. It sits on 295 acres of tidal shoreland near the Black River. In early October, there were still some flowers in bloom, but the predominant colors were green and orange, from the trees and pumpkins. Stacks of pumpkins were artistically arranged in numerous places. The trails wandered past themed gardens and sculptures by regional artists. In the Fairy Village, I wished I had some children along so we could build fairy houses together. Jim and I sat near the waterfall in the Giles Rhododendron and Perennial Garden and appreciated the serenity of our surroundings.



Portland Head Light on Cape Elizabeth began operating in 1791, making it one of the first lighthouses along the Eastern seaboard. Lily pads thrive in this pond at the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, which sits on 295 acres of tidal shoreland near the Black River.



The following day we headed to Portland, the U.S. city with the most craft breweries per capita. On the way, we noticed a crowd of people standing in line at Red’s Eats in Wiscasset. It’s a place I’d heard about from several people, but I didn’t think we’d have time to squeeze one more thing into our itinerary. “That’s Red’s Eats,” I said. “Let’s find a parking place.” I’d heard you could stand in line for two or three hours, but the line didn’t look that long to me. I was right. It “only” took an hour to get a lobster roll at the “world’s best lobster shack.”

Allagash Brewing Co. offers free tours and tastings. Reservations are recommended. In the mid-1990s, founder Rob Tod noticed that German-

and British-style beers had become popular in the U.S., but Belgian beers were hard to find. He sold his first batch of Allagash White, a Belgian-style wheat beer, in 1995. Today, the company is “dedicated to crafting the best Belgian-inspired beers in the world.” We learned about the brewing process, the company’s commitment to sustainability and giving back to the community.

Our Maine visit ended with a few days at Sandy Pines Campground in Kennebunkport. The lodge has one of the nicest lobbies I’ve ever seen at an RV resort. Sandy Pines has more than



Kayakers pass three islands in Casco Bay on L.L. Bean’s fall-foliage kayak tour.



300 sites, including glamping tents and park models. The RV sites are nestled among the trees so you only see a few of your neighbors. Amenities include a heated saltwater pool, playground, lawn games, bike and kayak rentals, and a general store with grocery and gift items.

The Ogunquit Marginal Way is a paved walking path about 20 miles south of the campground. The mile-long pathway follows the “margin” between the land and the sea in the artsy resort town of Ogunquit. There are 39 benches along the way where you can sit and admire the panoramic view.

We signed up for a fall-foliage kayak tour with L.L. Bean. After the group had assembled at the Flying Point Paddling Center in Freeport, our guides, Allie and Kelly, gave us a short paddling demo. Double kayaks were waiting for us on the dock in Casco Bay. We paddled out to Sisters Island,

where a herd of seals entertained us with their antics. At Williams Island, eagles soared overhead. On Pettengill Island, we stopped for snacks and watched loons, cormorants and great blue herons fishing for their next meal. Seeing the wildlife on this gorgeous fall day made up for the lack of color in the trees. Even though it was October, there were only a few trees on the shore in their fall splendor.

The Portland Head Light on Cape Elizabeth began operating in 1791, one of the first lighthouses along the Eastern seaboard. The former keepers’ house is now a museum, telling the history of the lighthouse with artifacts, photographs, models and Fresnel lenses.

We departed the same day that Sandy Pines Campground closed for the season. Lots of people were saying heartfelt goodbyes, promising to return. It made me want to run back and make reservation for next year. **M**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Acadia National Park**  
207-288-3338, [www.nps.gov/acad](http://www.nps.gov/acad)

**Allagash Brewing Co.**  
[www.allagash.com](http://www.allagash.com)

**Asticou Azalea Garden**  
[www.gardenpreserve.org/asticou-azalea-garden](http://www.gardenpreserve.org/asticou-azalea-garden)

**Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens**  
207-633-8000, [www.maine gardens.org](http://www.maine gardens.org)

**Hadley’s Point Campground**  
207-288-4808, [www.hadleyspoint.com](http://www.hadleyspoint.com)

**L.L. Bean’s Fall-Foliage Kayak Tour**  
[www.llbean.com/llb/event/83636?page=fall-foliage-kayak-tour](http://www.llbean.com/llb/event/83636?page=fall-foliage-kayak-tour)

**Lulu Lobster Boat**  
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**Red’s Eats**  
207-882-6128, [www.redseatsmaine.com](http://www.redseatsmaine.com)

**Sandy Pines Campground**  
207-967-2483, <https://sandypinescamping.com>

**Seal Cove Auto Museum**  
207-244-9242, [www.sealcoveautomuseum.org](http://www.sealcoveautomuseum.org)

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# OVER THE

## Exploring 10 of the best waterfalls in the U.S.

**W**hat makes a waterfall great? What makes for a “best” waterfall? There are probably as many different opinions of “great” and “best” as there are people to ask. One thing is for sure — there is something special and alluring about waterfalls. They make great destinations for hikes and beautiful subjects for photography.

First, let’s get one thing out of the way: My opinion is just that, my opinion. While I have visited many waterfalls in person and have seen hundreds of waterfalls on many web pages, I make no claim that mine is the definitive list of the 10 best waterfalls. America is truly “the Beautiful” when it comes to the natural world. It is filled with great waterfalls,

Perhaps the most famous falls in North America, Niagara Falls is comprised of three falls: Horseshoe on the Canadian side, and American and Bridal Veil on the U.S. side.

regardless of the definition. I limited the 10 best waterfalls to the continental U.S., excluding Canada and Hawaii. Well, maybe one just on the border of Canada.

### What is “Best”?

For the benefit of this article and to establish some means of determining my list of the 10 best waterfalls, I came up with a working definition. I believe the “best” waterfall should inspire the viewer, should not be seasonal (it should be relatively consistent year-round) and should be unique in some way. Several elements and variables went into the decision to choose one waterfall over another: height, width, power, location, surroundings, type, volume and season. Following, in no particular order, is my list of the 10 Best Waterfalls in the U.S.





# FALLS

## Niagara Falls 🇺🇸

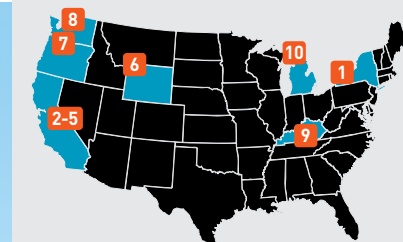
The waterfall by which all others are rated and measured is Niagara Falls. Even though Niagara is located partly in Canada in addition to the U.S., it simply must make my list. Many waterfalls are billed as “Niagara of the (fill in the blank),” but there is only one Niagara Falls. There are words that describe why Niagara is the basis for comparison. Huge. Magnificent. Breathtaking. In every sense, Niagara has all the characteristics of what makes a “best” waterfall.

Niagara, according to my list, is a triple falls — Horseshoe on the Canadian side, and the American and Bridal Veil on the U.S. side.

Horseshoe and the American falls are both impressive. The Canadian Horseshoe Falls plunges 170 feet into the Maid of the Mist Pool. The American on the U.S. side plunges at a range from 70 to 110 feet onto the rocks at the base of the falls. More than 600,000 gallons of water go over Horseshoe Falls alone every minute during peak daytime tourist hours.

## The Falls of Yosemite National Park

For the purpose of this list, I am combining the Upper Falls, the Middle Cascades and the Lower Falls of California’s Yosemite Falls into a single entry. Yosemite Falls



## Going Down

The numbers here are for location only and are not rankings. Each waterfall is worth a visit in its own right, and choosing a favorite is far too subjective.

- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Niagara Falls   | 6) Yellowstone Falls  |
| 2) Yosemite Falls  | 7) Multnomah Falls    |
| 3) Nevada Fall     | 8) Snoqualmie Falls   |
| 4) Vernal Fall     | 9) Cumberland Falls   |
| 5) Bridalveil Fall | 10) Tahquamenon Falls |

has a combined height of 2,425 feet (Upper at 1,430 feet, Middle at 675 and Lower at 320 feet) and is set against the magnificent backdrop of Yosemite National Park. Although Yosemite Falls does not hold the same volume yearlong (most waterfalls don’t), it makes up for any lack of volume during the spring months, and also with its impressive height.

Three other Yosemite waterfalls make my “best” list. The Merced River contains a series of falls







Yosemite Falls can be viewed from numerous locations across Yosemite Valley. A 1-mile loop trail leads to the base of the Lower Yosemite Fall. A strenuous day-long hike on Yosemite Falls Trail leads adventurers to the top.

## OVER THE FALLS

Vernal Fall



— Nevada, Vernal and Illilouette (the latter of which doesn't quite make our list). Nevada Fall, at 594 feet, has a maximum width of 200 feet and flows year-round. Vernal Fall, whose name means "springtime," has a maximum height of 317 feet. In order to see Nevada and Vernal falls,

hikers must take the appropriately named Mist Trail.

Bridalveil Fall, a popular name among waterfalls, softly plunges 620 feet. This is the waterfall that travelers arriving from the south see first.

That first view of the valley from the Wawona Tunnel is one of the most famous in California.

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Yellowstone Falls

Yellowstone Falls consists of two separate falls, both of which are viewable from the roadside or after short hikes.



### Yellowstone Falls Ⓢ

Wyoming's Yellowstone National Park is home to Yellowstone Falls, which fall a total of 417 feet when combining the upper and lower portions. The Lower Falls (308 feet) is viewable from the roadside or by hiking a short distance. Uncle Tom's Trail provides a unique, close-up view.

The Upper Falls drops 109 feet and is also viewable from the roadside or from a ¼-mile hike. Upper Falls is often overlooked because of its proximity to its greater downstream sibling. As a side note, sandwiched between Upper and Lower falls is another smaller waterfall — the graceful Crystal Falls.

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**Multnomah Falls** ➞

Oregon's Columbia Gorge is the home of the impressive column known as Multnomah Falls. From either side of the gorge, a visitor can view Multnomah Falls as it plunges 620 feet from high cliffs to the river below. The water actually spills down in two tiers; the first 542 feet, the second 68 feet. A pedestrian bridge crosses in front of the top of the lower level, so close that walkers get damp crossing it. Another vantage point is a little more distant and dry.

**Snoqualmie Falls** ➞

Located in Washington state 25 miles east of Seattle, Snoqualmie Falls plunges from the Snoqualmie River 268 feet into a 65-foot-deep pool. The volume does fluctuate throughout the year, but Snoqualmie Falls is one of Washington state's most popular scenic attractions. When enjoying the falls from the adjoining park, visitors may not be aware of the power plant under the falls. It consists of two power houses, Plant 1 and Plant 2. Plant 1 was completed in 1899 and is underground. Even though Snoqualmie Falls is a developed area, the size and the history associated with its power plant make this falls notable.



Multnomah Falls

“I BELIEVE THE ‘BEST’ WATERFALL SHOULD INSPIRE THE VIEWER, SHOULD NOT BE SEASONAL AND SHOULD BE UNIQUE IN SOME WAY.”



Snoqualmie Falls plays host to more than 1.5 million visitors each year. Located on-site are a 2-acre park, an observation deck, a gift shop and the Salish Lodge.



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To locate the last two “best” waterfalls one must cross the country from the waterfall-dominated West. Eastern waterfalls are different from their Western relatives mainly because of the contrast of terrains of the East and West. While the majority of my top 10 waterfalls are in the western region characterized by rugged and rocky mountains, only two, besides Niagara, are located in the east.



Cumberland Falls

### Cumberland Falls ⬆

Dubbed the “Niagara of the South,” Kentucky’s Cumberland Falls has a special distinction that qualifies it for our list. Being 60 feet tall with a width of about 120 feet hardly qualifies it as a large waterfall, but it flows year-round and is rather impressive. However, what really makes Cumberland Falls distinctive is its moonbow. Cumberland

is the only waterfall in the Western Hemisphere that regularly exhibits a moonbow on clear nights with a full moon. Other waterfalls have moonbows that appear on occasion, but not with the consistency of Cumberland Falls. Visit the Kentucky State park website for a schedule of moonbows (<https://parks.ky.gov/parks/resortparks/cumberland-falls/>).



Havasupai Falls

## Honorable Mentions

It is a very difficult task to choose only 10 best waterfalls of the U.S., so here are a few more that are just too good to pass up. They receive an honorable mention as one way of noting their greatness.

Palouse Falls in Washington state at 198 feet; Havasupai Falls in Arizona for its remoteness and beauty; Upper Mesa Falls and Shoshone Falls in Idaho; and Burgess Falls in Tennessee.

### Tahquamenon Falls ⬇

Located on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Tahquamenon Falls State Park encompasses close to 50,000 acres, most of which is undeveloped woodland. Four miles downstream in the Tahquamenon River is the Lower Falls, which is a series of five smaller falls cascading around an island. Upper Falls is nearly 50 feet tall and 200 feet wide, with a maximum flow of more than 50,000 gallons of water per second. The water is notably brown in color due to the tannins from cedar swamps that drain into the river. **M**



At nearly 50 feet tall and 200 feet wide, maximum flow on Upper Tahquamenon Falls has been recorded at more than 50,000 gallons of water per second.



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# HAVE GUN,

## TRANSPORTING FIREARMS IN YOUR MOTORHOME

By E. Don Smith

Whether your firearms are for hunting, competitive shooting or simply personal protection, transporting them requires carefully following state and local laws.



# WILL TRAVEL

**T**o some people, traveling with firearms is just as normal as traveling with pets. Many motorhome owners enjoy the sporting aspects of firearms and therefore want to travel with their competition or hunting firearms. Others want to have a personal protection weapon while on the road to feel safe from either animal or criminal attacks. We don't want to be political and we want to make it clear that we are not offering legal advice because we are not lawyers. Also, our explanations of firearms laws are not intended to be legal interpretations or restatements of the law.

Even though we at *MotorHome* are not lawyers,

we will help you decide the best way to travel with firearms in your motorhome, should you choose to do so. Due to the complexity of this topic we will not be able to tell you exactly how or where you can travel in your motorhome, or with which weapons you can take with you. It's just not that easy, but we will point you toward some credible sources that will help you along the way. For this article we are only focusing on travel in the USA. If you plan on hunting in Canada or driving to Alaska and going through Canada, this presents additional challenges that are outside the scope of this article. Mexico is yet another complicated topic we will not be covering.

## TRANSPORTING OR CONCEALED CARRY?

The first distinction is the difference in traveling with a firearm, which is transporting, versus traveling with a concealed carry weapon on or off your body in a manner that is readily accessible and/or loaded. These are very different ways of transporting firearms involving various types of weapons and, of course, the laws covering transporting versus concealed carry are also very different. Usually if someone is carrying or concealing a weapon it is

(but is not always) a handgun. A handgun, however, can be transported in a manner that is not considered concealed carry if you follow the right rules.

Although it is commonly thought that a motorhome is an extension of the "home" (and exempt from police searches without a warrant), when those motorhomes are on the road being used for transportation they are treated exactly like a car or truck. When a car or motorhome is on the road it is only subject to "probable cause" as the legal standard for searching.

The safest bet when traveling with firearms (long guns or handguns) is to contact the state police, or the attorney general for the state(s) you are traveling through and make sure you completely understand the laws as they pertain to your specific situation (concealed carry or otherwise) and type of gun, magazines and ammo. Most states have websites with this information as well. Another great resource is [www.concealedcarry.com](http://www.concealedcarry.com), where you will find an interactive map that provides a lot of information about the laws in all states.



They also offer a free app called “Concealed Carry Gun Tools” to help navigate the maze of legally carrying a concealed weapon as you travel in the USA on a state-by-state basis.

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

We are covering the topic of transporting legally owned firearms, which means you must be allowed to own a firearm first. Federal law requires that a person must be 18 years old to purchase a “long gun” or long gun ammunition, and 21 years of age in order to purchase a handgun or handgun ammunition. Some states require owners to be 21 years old to purchase, own and possess long guns, so even the legal age is a topic of disagreement among the various states. There are several other situations that prevent gun and ammunition ownership: a felony conviction, illegal alien status, a dishonorable discharge from the military, an individual being mentally defective or who has been committed to a mental institution, and an individual convicted of a domestic violence offense.

Of course, drivers should always follow all traffic laws any time they are on the road. When you are carrying a weapon, one way of avoiding a potential lengthy delay, (explaining why you have a weapon to an officer) is to drive in the safest way possible while obeying all traffic laws. Speeding, distracted driving or road rage incidents have no place on the

### CONCEALED CARRY

If you decide to carry a weapon (which means anything other than keeping it in a locked case), a whole new set of laws come into play with terms such as concealed carry versus open carry becoming very important. It's a virtual mine field of laws and it varies tremendously from state to state, and even within a state. Before you decide to carry a weapon, open or concealed, make sure you know the laws and, if required, obtain a concealed carry permit. In some states, open carry is legal and no permit is required; other states are not so friendly when it comes to carrying a weapon of any type. Following the laws to the letter will avoid felony charges.

road at any time, so avoid anything that could cause you to be in a position of having to explain why you are legally carrying or transporting a weapon.

### THE RIGHT TO BEAR (AND TRANSPORT) ARMS

The first and most common law that is often mentioned regarding the transportation of firearms is the 1986 Firearm Owners Protection Act (FOPA). Section 18 of this act is known as the safe passage act. In summary, what the FOPA provides is the ability for certain people (legal owners) to transport firearms from one state where they are allowed to possess that weapon, to another state in which they can legally possess it.

To legally transport a firearm in compliance with the FOPA, it should be unloaded and locked in a case, and not easily accessible to the occupants. The ammunition also needs to be locked in a separate case and not easily accessible. Since the entire “house”

of the motorhome is open to the occupants, this is more difficult than a car, where operators can lock the items in the trunk, making them inaccessible. The term “unloaded” is also subject to interpretation, but the common logic is that the magazine(s), and the weapon (including the chamber or cylinder) need to be empty. Unloaded could also mean no loaded speed loaders, moon clips, magazines, etc.



Conforming to the FOPA is difficult in a motorhome because the entire motorhome is accessible to its occupants. Separate, locked cases must be kept out of easy reach, and the key(s) should be placed in an area that is not easily retrieved by the driver or passengers.

Photo: E. Don Smith

## FIREARMS COMPETITIONS

► Throughout the U.S. there are numerous types of firearms competitions and events, just as there are with other sports such as golf, softball, soccer, etc. Competitions include Trap, Skeet, Precision Rifle Series (PRS), IDPA, F-Class, FTR, Smallbore, Silhouette, 3-Gun, Benchrest, Western, Muzzle loading and many more. The National Rifle Association (NRA), which is only one organization that conducts shooting events, sanctions more than 11,000 competitions and crowns 50 national champions every year. According to the NRA, there are more than 300 colleges/

universities that offer shooting programs for students. Shooting sports may not be as popular as football or basketball, but they are common. Of course, the Olympic games feature shooting events in both the summer and winter events, and it is estimated that there are more than 390 million firearms in the U.S. With numbers like these, it's obvious why the topic of traveling legally with a firearm is an important one. Many shooting ranges even have RV parking on-site, which makes it a perfect combination to travel to these competitions in a motorhome.







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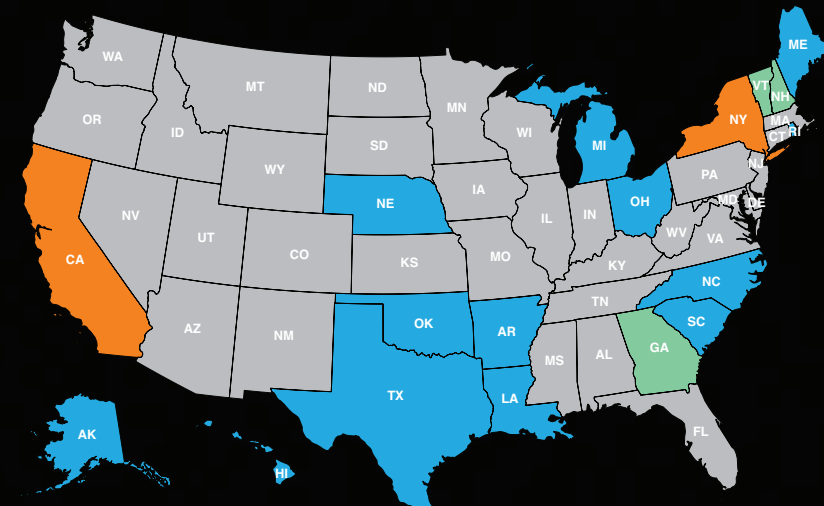
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## LOCAL LAWS

Transporting your weapon through some states gets tricky if you are passing through areas with stringent gun, ammunition and/or magazine capacity laws, such as New York, Massachusetts, California, Maryland, New Jersey and Washington D.C., particularly as it pertains to handguns. Most interpretations of FOPA state that a trip through these states needs to be uninterrupted, meaning you can't stay overnight while in possession of the firearm. That means no overnight camping or hotel stays in these states where possession of the weapon can be an issue. It would also be a great idea to keep a copy of the FOPA laws in the locked case with your firearms just in case the officer is not familiar with them. State laws can still have implications as well, so this is why it's important to know the law in every state you plan to travel. If you have any other documentation that supports your legal carry, such as a concealed carry permit, make sure you always have those documents with you, plus your state laws and/or the state you are traveling to and their laws pertaining to weapons. Documentation of this type may not always help, but it does show the officer that you are attempting to follow the law and could help you in some circumstances.

High-capacity magazines present another challenge if you are passing through certain cities or states that have stringent laws. It's important to be aware of those laws and make sure



## DUTY TO INFORM MAP

► Some states have specific laws in place requiring you to inform an officer if you have a concealed carry permit and/or gun. Pay special attention to states in which you will be traveling, and refer to [www.concealedcarry.com](http://www.concealedcarry.com) for up-to-date information.

- Duty to Inform varies by city or county
- Duty to Inform required
- No Duty to Inform
- Duty to Inform if asked

you comply. A pistol with a 15-round magazine (or certain types of ammo) that is legal in one state may not be in another. If you are a firearms competitor, some areas even have laws that pertain to you and there are additional requirements — such as a specified window of time before and after the event, and requirements that you be able to document this event — as it relates to your trip.

Depending on the state that issues your concealed carry permit, it gives you certain rights of reciprocity in other

states. Make sure you check out the interactive map previously mentioned so you can understand where you can and can't carry a weapon. As an example, Maryland (as well as California, Illinois and several others) doesn't recognize any other state's carry permits. Maryland is one of the states that issues on a "may" basis and "may" issue residents a carry permit if they have a "good and substantial reason."

Simply possessing a carry permit doesn't give you the legal right to carry that weapon everywhere within

**" TO LEGALLY TRANSPORT A FIREARM IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE FIREARMS OWNERS PROTECTION ACT, IT SHOULD BE UNLOADED AND LOCKED IN A CASE, AND NOT EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO THE OCCUPANTS. THE AMMUNITION ALSO NEEDS TO BE LOCKED IN A SEPARATE CASE AND NOT EASILY ACCESSIBLE. "**







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## HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL



Photo: E. Don Smith

When traveling with specialized weapons such as a competition rifle, there may be additional restrictions involved in transportation, depending on the state and city. Since this rifle has a threaded muzzle device and it has high-capacity magazines, it could be problematic in some areas even though it is a small-caliber semi-automatic rifle, which is considered legal by most states.

that state. For example, many state or national parks have specific restrictions, such as weapons being prohibited inside certain buildings, or even in parking lots, so those laws have to be followed. It is your responsibility to know these laws and follow them on a state-by-state and city-by-city basis. Normally, areas or buildings that have special restrictions are posted with signage, but the absence of a sign prohibiting a firearm is not always permission to have one there.

## STAY CURRENT

Another thing that makes carrying a weapon or transporting one more difficult is that laws and reciprocity agreements are constantly changing; therefore, it is essential to check for these updates before traveling. Another important law to understand is when you are required to inform law enforcement that you are carrying a weapon. These laws are commonly referred to as "Duty to Inform Laws." There are currently 13 states that require that you notify law enforcement (during any encounter, such as a moving-violation stop) that you have a weapon, even if they don't ask. The majority of states require that you notify law enforcement only if asked, while three states don't require you to inform an officer. Please be aware that California and New York have many variations of the notification laws which vary by city and county. This map can



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be found on page 40, and can also be viewed at [www.concealedcarry.com](http://www.concealedcarry.com).

## DO THE RESEARCH

While we all wish there was a simple answer to legally carrying or transporting a firearm, this is a topic that is not simple at all. Use the resources mentioned previously to fully research the laws in the states you are traveling through to avoid any potential problem. After contacting the state police and/or the attorney general's office/webpages, if you are still not comfortable, get the opinion of a firearms attorney. Remember, we at *MotorHome* are not attorneys, and the tips we have provided should not be considered as legal advice or interpretations of the law. You may think that hiring an attorney is expensive or overboard, but if you make a mistake and are charged with a felony, a small consultation fee up front with a good attorney will be a small price to pay.

## EXPERT ADVICE

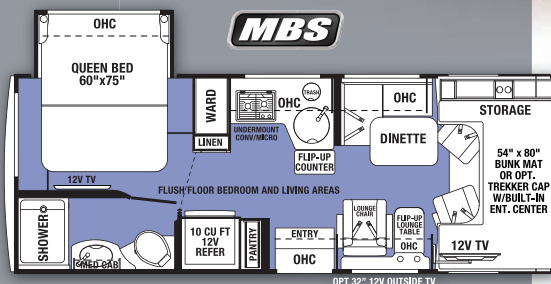
Jacob Paulsen, founder of [www.concealedcarry.com](http://www.concealedcarry.com), is a national firearms expert and has been teaching firearms training classes since 2007. He has multiple NRA certifications and is a graduate and certified instructor for "The Law of Self Defense," and is also a USCCA instructor and training counselor. He has been interviewed multiple times related to the topic of firearms. He sat down with *MotorHome* to answer our questions.

**Q** When traveling through states or areas that have strict laws pertaining to high-capacity magazines or certain types of guns, such as AR-15, etc., is a legal traveler still protected under FOPA if they have everything locked up and are legal in their state of departure and arrival, etc.?

**Paulsen:** *The really short answer is yes, but the long answer is more complex. 926A of FOPA only speaks to protecting the person's transportation of a firearm. It doesn't reference ammunition or magazines. So, in New Jersey, for example, hollow-point ammunition is illegal. So, if I travel through New Jersey and follow the requirements of FOPA but have hollow-point ammunition with me, then while FOPA protects my possession of the firearm, it does not protect me from charges related to the possession of hollow-point ammunition. The same would be true of possession of a magazine that is illegal in a state. However, many (but not all) of the states that have magazine capacity limitations have allowances for non-residents or have written the law such that it only applies to residents of the state. When traveling, it is best to be aware of magazine capacity limitations and ammunition-related restrictions in the states through which you intend to travel.*

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**Q** Which state is the best one(s) to obtain a non-resident carry permit from to get the most coverage throughout the USA?

**Paulsen:** There isn't a best non-resident permit to obtain but there several that are likely the most useful for most travelers. Non-resident permits from Arizona, Florida, Utah and Virginia are all very compelling. Each of those four are recognized in approximately 30 states, though the specific recognized states vary among them and they can all be obtained via the mail without traveling to the state.

**Q** If pulled over while traveling in an RV, and an officer asks you to consent to a vehicle search while carrying a weapon legally, should you consent to the search? Realizing this is separate from duty to inform laws that may require you to inform them in some states.

**Paulsen:** As a matter of personal opinion, I strongly discourage anyone from ever waiving their constitutional rights, including the protections against unlawful searches and seizures. While law-abiding people tend to feel they have nothing to hide and want to be cooperative with law-enforcement officials, nothing is to be gained by agreeing to a vehicle search. I encourage all to consult with a competent local attorney if they have questions about this kind of situation.

**Q** Is there any advantage to joining organizations or clubs that offer legal advice or protection related to firearm use or travel advice?

**Paulsen:** The "Self-Defense Insurance" industry that has sprouted over the last decade includes about 10 companies that offer member benefits designed to cover costs and provide resources in the event that one is involved in any legal weapon-related charges. Coverage and costs vary by provider, but generally speaking I feel strongly that American gun owners can greatly benefit from researching

and joining one of these membership programs. A strong legal defense can cost tens of thousands, to hundreds of thousands, of dollars depending on the charge and, like other forms of insurance, I'm inclined to pay an annual or monthly "premium" to have the peace of mind of knowing I can bring very strong resources to bear should they be needed in my own legal defense. More information about these providers can be found at [www.concealedcarry.com/insurance](http://www.concealedcarry.com/insurance). In addition to "insurance-like" benefits, many of the same providers, as well as other third-party organizations, provide legal advice or general firearm-related training or advice. That content and advice are as good as the people who offer it. Always vet the leadership and content providers of any training or legal entity before retaining their services and, where possible, confirm all legal related advice with a local, competent attorney. **M**

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\* According to NHTSA, 'The 100-Car Naturalistic Driving Study', at [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov)



By Bob Livingston

# Portable Protection

PepperBall LifeLite launcher offers a non-lethal solution with fewer legal consequences against intruders and criminal aggression

**P**ersonal protection is a subject that is constantly debated among the RV community. The sheer nature of using lethal force to prevent or stop an attack by an unscrupulous person is controversial, and motorhome owners must make critical decisions on whether to carry a weapon to protect themselves. Guns, of course, are at the forefront of this debate, and are usually the weapon of choice. But, what if you are not comfortable with handling a gun? After all, there is tremendous responsibility that goes along with gun ownership. And, unless properly trained, using a gun can be dangerous, and in some cases lead to personal injury and issues with legality — possession and the use of lethal force, depending on the state.

An alternative, or even a supplement, to owning a gun is to use pepper to stop aggression that can lead to bodily injury or death. PepperBall, a company that supplies non-lethal weapons to law enforcement agencies, markets a uniquely designed propellant device, logically called the LifeLite launcher, which “shoots” pepper balls at assailants



1



2



3

[1] PepperBall LifeLite launcher has the look and heft of a large flashlight. Once the safety is pushed forward, the red button is used to trigger the firing of the pepper balls. [2] Pepper balls are packaged five in a plastic sleeve. The purple balls are inert and are used as practice rounds. Packages are clearly marked; bright red color of live rounds [3] makes it easy to distinguish when loading the launcher.

to stop aggression and defuse a bad situation immediately.

Packaged into a device that looks like a large flashlight, the LifeLite launcher has built-in LED and laser beams that make hitting the target easy, even for those who are not experienced with the use of weapons. The launcher uses CO2 cartridges as a propellant and can be loaded with five pepper balls that explode on impact. When the red laser dot is on the subject, the pepper ball will hit the intended target as long as the

person is within a range of 60 feet. To put that distance into prospective, that's about three car lengths, which means users need to be well versed when interpreting what constitutes a threat to one's self, family and even friends. The performance of the LifeLite projectile far surpasses the capability of pepper spray or a taser, which have effective ranges of 12 and 15 feet, respectively, according to PepperBall.



PepperBall's LifeLite launcher is packaged with three CO2 cartridges, 10 purple inert balls (used for practice rounds) and five red, live rounds. Additional rounds and CO2 cartridges are available from the company.



To test the accuracy of the LifeLite launcher, inert practice balls are provided with the kit. We set up a target at a distance that would be easily recognized as “close enough” for an assailant to be a real threat, and test fired the launcher. Accuracy was good, and getting acclimated to the flashlight, laser and trigger took only a few minutes after removing from the packaging. While the launcher is on the heavy side, it’s ergonomic enough to be handled by just about anyone.

The pepper is pharmaceutical-grade (PAVA) and when it explodes, the powder immediately affects the nose, throat, chest and eyes. After impacting the target, the ball bursts allowing the pepper powder to disperse into the air, forming a 12-foot “cloud” around the attacker. While the laser is accurate, adrenaline can easily impact aiming accuracy, so as long as the ball bursts close to the assailant, the pepper cloud is designed to build an adequate defense zone. The debilitating effects last for 15 minutes, according to the company, which gives the user enough time to diffuse the situation or retreat. And the impact alone on one’s chest might be enough to encourage

the assailant to retreat, since it’s equivalent to the sting of a paintball.

Most people, and especially crooks, have good respect for a red laser dot. There’s a profound psychological effect one experiences when seeing a red dot on his or her chest, which could help defuse the situation. Bad people will not want to stick around long enough to find out if the other end of the red dot is a gun, which in a crook’s world, is likely the case.

As far as the effectiveness of pepper is concerned, we were not able to find a willing volunteer to test the product, for obvious reasons. The company has a strong track record and I checked with a couple of law enforcement officers who confirmed that pepper in the concentrations provided by PepperBall will do the trick. Both officers were impressed with the design and feel of the device.

While it’s easy to build confidence in the capability of the launcher, firing the projectile inside the close confines of a motorhome might result in collateral irritation for the user. Since the pepper powder is said to produce the aforementioned 12-foot cloud, there is a good chance of getting a


**8**

**9**

**10**

**11**

**[8]** LED flashlight is built into the launcher and activated by a button built in to the lower portion of the handle. A CR123 battery powers the flashlight and laser beam. **[9]** Laser beam is activated when the safety is pushed forward. Red dot on one’s chest has a strong psychological effect; pepper ball will follow trajectory of red dot, making aiming easier for those not experienced with weapons. **[10]** LifeLite launcher can be snapped into a bracket that mounts on a wall, offering immediate access when needed. **[11]** Holster is bulky, but comes in handy when walking. Material is high-quality, and a unique buckle can be used to attach to a belt.


**4**

**5**

**6**

**7**

**[4, 5]** Plunger is unscrewed and removed from front of the launcher for loading the CO2 cartridge, which is not punctured until the first round is triggered. Cartridge is good for launching five pepper balls. **[6, 7]** Removing the rod in the rear of the launcher makes it possible to load five rounds.

rebound effect from the pepper inside a motorhome. For example, if the launcher is fired from the bedroom at an intruder who forced open the entry door, the pepper will likely also impact the residents until the powder is dispersed into the air. That scenario could be even more serious if fired from the living room. But that might be a small price to pay in preventing a serious crime.

Loading the launcher is a pretty



simple process. The CO2 cartridge loads from the front through a screw-down plunger. The end of the cartridge is not punctured until the trigger is pushed for the first time, and after that it will propel the other four pepper balls. Five balls, stored in a sleeve used for transporting, are loaded through the end of the handle. The live "rounds" are red and the practice (inert) balls are purple. One CR123 battery powers the flashlight and laser sight only. Depending on flashlight time, the battery should last for a while, but a rechargeable version is available for an additional \$24.95.

An accessory that we found useful is the mounting bracket for storing the launcher in a logical, easy-to-grab location on the wall near the entryway. At night the LifeLite launcher is carried into the bedroom and stored on the nightstand. There's also a holster available (\$29.99) that has a clever design for hanging on a belt. It's on the larger side, but the holster comes in handy while on walks. Refill kits, including five inert and five live balls, and two CO2 cartridges, sell for \$19.95. Practice balls are available in packages of 20, but live rounds are not sold independent of the refill kit.

PepperBall's LifeLite launcher provides good peace of mind when it comes to self-defense. While any weapon comes with certain responsibilities, using a non-lethal device may create fewer legal headaches, depending on the situation and local laws, versus defending yourself with a gun. In any case, it's prudent to check with local and state laws as to possession and firing legality.

The LifeLite kit retails for \$229.99, which is cheap insurance for self-protection. Obviously, it's best to never have to be in a situation where a weapon is needed for self-defense, but reality suggests that it's best to be prepared. **M**

## Source

PepperBall

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# A BRAKE IN THE ACTION

PORTABLE BRAKING SYSTEMS PROVIDE AN EASY WAY TO REDUCE STOPPING DISTANCE FOR SAFER TRAVELS WHEN DINGHY TOWING

By Chris Hemer

## To tow a dinghy vehicle or a trailer?

**T**hat is the question that faces many RVers as they grapple with just one of the many choices the RV lifestyle has to offer. But if a motorhome is your rig of choice, and you want to take a car with you, at some point you're going to have to go shopping for a dinghy-braking system.

Unlike a trailer, which is designed to be towed and is equipped with a wiring harness for connecting a controller that activates the brakes in concert with the tow vehicle, a car pulled behind a motorhome wasn't, and isn't. That means you'll need a method by which to slow the towed vehicle as the motorhome's brakes

are applied in order to keep stopping distance to a minimum. Depending on the size of the motorhome and dinghy vehicle you own, you may think it unnecessary to use a supplemental brake system. After all, what difference is an itty-bitty Chevy Spark going to make behind your diesel pusher? The difference between a safe stop and an accident, that's what. The inertia generated by even the lightest car at highway speeds will increase stopping distances significantly — and when you come over a rise at 65 mph and find the traffic stopped dead in front of you, you'll be thankful for every inch of available braking power. Besides that, auxiliary braking systems are now required in 49 of these United States and in all Canadian provinces, so towing without a dinghy braking system isn't even an option anymore.





Obviously, you can't have someone riding in your towed vehicle to apply the brakes whenever you do (well, you could ... but beside the fact that it's unsafe, the highway patrol would frown on that) so that's what a dinghy brake system does. As you apply the brakes in the motorhome, it presses down on the towed vehicle's brake pedal, then releases when brake pressure is no longer needed.

There are two basic types of dinghy braking systems: those that are permanent (the system is permanently installed in the towed vehicle) and those that are portable.

Permanent systems are generally more expensive and are more labor-intensive to install, but are a good solution if you tow frequently and will only be towing that one vehicle. For the purpose of this guide, however, we're going to focus on portable systems. Portable systems are often preferable for those who only tow a car occasionally, and/or those who may like to take different vehicles along for the ride (for example, a Jeep for off-road journeys, or a sedan for family visits). We'll cover each in alphabetical order, along with features, benefits and MSRP. Happy stopping!



### BLUE OX PATRIOT II

The all-electric Patriot II from Blue Ox operates via a super capacity lifetime battery, and works on all vehicles, including hybrids (those that are flat-towable, of course). It's lightweight and easy to handle, and installation is a breeze as well. Simply place it on the floor, attach the claw to the brake pedal, then slide the seat forward until it makes contact with the push pads on the housing. Then, plug it in to a constant 12-volt DC outlet; green lights on the cord will glow to verify that you've got juice. Press the power button, then "set-up" and you're good to go. An in-cab controller with extended RV range allows adjustability from the cockpit if necessary, and a breakaway cable is included. MSRP: \$1,540.

Blue Ox, 800-228-9289, [www.blueox.com](http://www.blueox.com)



### BRAKE BUDDY CLASSIC 3 AND SELECT 3

One of the most recognizable names in dinghy braking systems, Brake Buddy recently released two new portable systems: the Classic 3 and the Select 3. Because the floorboards in many of today's vehicles may have unique curvatures and uneven surfaces, these new systems come with what the company calls TruFit riser technology — independently adjustable legs that allow the units to be correctly positioned on any floorboard. A new universal Quick-Lock clevis, meanwhile, is designed to fit brake pedals of all sizes and shapes, and an AutoStart

feature automatically performs a diagnostic system check and cycles the brake pedal. Both systems offer proportional braking; a towed vehicle battery charger; an Easy-Pull cord for power/breakaway; and a compact, low-profile design with carrying handle. The chief difference between the two is that the Select 3 features an interactive remote that allows the user to adjust settings from the cab of the motorhome, and also provides alerts if anything goes wrong. MSRP: Classic 3, \$1,149; Select 3, \$1,499.

Brake Buddy, Hopkins Manufacturing Corp., 800-470-2287, [www.brakebuddy.com](http://www.brakebuddy.com)

#### CLASSIC 3 ▶



### MAKE A LIST AND CHECK IT TWICE

There's a lot to remember when connecting a dinghy vehicle: the tow bar, auxiliary braking system, 6-7-way connector, breakaway cable, tethers, pins and brackets, ignition switch, battery disconnect, etc. Make yourself a checklist for connecting the vehicle, and go through it twice (without distractions) to make sure you're truly ready to hit the road.



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### DEMCO PRODUCTS DELTA FORCE

Introduced in 1999, the Delta Force system's claim to fame is its dual-signal technology, which uses the brakelight signal and inertia to trigger proportionate braking in the towed vehicle. It also allows the user to choose between inertia-only or dual-signal activation. Designed for fast but secure mounting, the Delta Force features a ball-and-socket actuator, which makes it easy to work with irregular floorboards and offset transmission tunnels when mounting to the brake pedal. And, instead of wedging against the driver's seat, Delta Force uses a cable tether that attaches to the floorboard with just one self-drilling screw. There's no need to fuss with the brake pedal clamp either, because the Set-It-Once design requires only that you adjust the clamp during the initial installation. The wireless CoachLink system monitors connectivity to the towed vehicle, displays braking effort, and offers visual/audible alerts for fault codes and the breakaway circuit. The Intuitive User Interface, meanwhile, checks the unit's functionality when the "initialize" button is pressed and offers different user profiles. A "boost" button adds 15% more braking power when desired, according to the manufacturer. MSRP: \$1,329.

**Demco Manufacturing Co.,**  
800-543-3626,  
[www.demco-products.com](http://www.demco-products.com)

9700 ▶



EVEN BRAKE ▶

### ROADMASTER EVEN BRAKE AND 9700

Roadmaster's Even Brake system provides full-time proportional braking in the dinghy vehicle and features constant self-diagnostic testing, with system status transmitted to an easy-to-read monitor located in the motorhome cockpit. Power Save low-battery protection has LED and LCD alerts, and a "sleep mode" preserves battery power while maintaining emergency braking if battery juice gets too low. Automatic brake protection warns the driver of dragging brakes, then will release brake pressure to avoid excessive wear. Easily installed and lightweight, Even Brake is also equipped with on-board memory that "remembers" adjustment settings. For more basic needs, Roadmaster also offers its 9700 portable braking system, which is similar in design to the Even Brake and has some of the same features. The main difference is that, instead of proportional braking, the 9700 incorporates user-selectable levels of light, medium or heavy braking when the motorhome's brakelights are activated. Both systems include emergency breakaway. MSRP: Even Brake, \$1,575; 9700, \$1,250. **Roadmaster Inc., 800-669-9690, [www.roadmasterinc.com](http://www.roadmasterinc.com)**



### RVi RVIBRAKE3

The RVibrake3 is designed to make flat-towing simpler with an Audio Assistant that requires only a 30-second setup with the push of just one button. Small and lightweight, the RVibrake3 incorporates inertia-based proportional braking and brake lock detection that prevents damage to the dinghy vehicle's brake system. The RVibrake3 includes the company's Command Center tablet and hub, which walks the user through the correct settings, monitors proportional braking in real time and alerts the driver of the breakaway connection using a proprietary Wi-Fi connection. Optional sensors can be added to the system to monitor tire air pressure. MSRP: \$1,225.

**RVi, 800-815-2159, <https://rvibrake.com>**



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MOTORHOME EXCLUSIVE



# Ahead of the Pace

Fleetwood introduces an innovative bunkhouse that raises the bar for family-friendly diesel pushers By Chris Dougherty

**B**unk beds in a diesel pusher? I know what you're thinking: Kids or guests just a curtain away from the master bed? Not interested. But, what if an RV manufacturer came up with a genuinely different solution? A solution so different that we were asked to sign confidentiality agreements to keep it secret before publishing this evaluation. Now are you interested?

The 2020 Pace Arrow 35RB, built by REV Recreation Group's Fleetwood division, has taken the concept of completely separate multi-zone living and laid it down in a 37½-foot diesel pusher.

For years, Pace Arrow was Fleetwood's premier gasser, known for luxurious appointments and a quality build, mostly for extended travelers. Traditionally, Class A motorhomes have only been set up for comfortable family living by using convertible dinettes and couches, and maybe pulling a bed down over the cockpit. If bunks were desired, a Class C was the motorhome of choice.

A few years back, motorhome

manufacturers started testing bunks in Class A's and found a strong market, not just for families but owners who took the grandkids along and needed space that could convert when extra sleeping was not needed. To accomplish this, the top bunks often folded up so the space could be used as a closet, which was a win-win.

The downside, for some, is that the separation of these bunks from the master bed was typically a curtain. While not necessarily a game ender for most RVers, those who prefer a Class A would appreciate alternatives, and the 35RB is one that really shines.

## The Inside Scoop

The 35RB is a mid-coach side-entry model, which many find preferable to having the bus-style door up front. In lieu of the visibility usually afforded by the front door, a low-mount "doggy window" offers an excellent view of the curb.

Stepping up into the motorhome, occupants will be greeted with a charming, luxurious interior. For 2020, the Pace Arrow has three interior and cabinet package choices. The test motorhome was fitted with the Oxford cabinets and Mystic décor package. Looking straight ahead into the galley, the deep dark Oxford cabinets were topped with a white-marble-like solid-surface material. A long fixed window is recessed behind the glass tile backsplash with an integrated manual MCD window shade. The farmer's style, two-bowl stainless-steel sink is deep and ready to handle the spaghetti pot with ease, and the pull-down

**ABOVE:** The full-body paint treatment on the 2020 Pace Arrow is a busy, yet attractive, abstract design.



Clockwise, from right: The bathroom closes off with solid wood doors. Beyond is the hallway, which serves as a dressing room and a second vanity. A closet at the end of the slideout doubles as the washer/dryer cabinet. The master bedroom can be a pass-through or be closed off from the rest. Above the king bed, the CPAP cabinet has power and a cutout for hoses and ventilation for the unit. No CPAP? You can charge devices or just use the cabinet for storage. The bunk beds are located along the rear wall, and feature lighted cubbies with full electronics connections. The king memory foam mattress folds to allow the slideout to retract.



gooseneck kitchen faucet further aids in easy cleanup chores, which can be completed while looking outside through the tinted window.

Drawer and cabinet space is decent, although not over the moon. The cabinets and drawers are well made, and the aforementioned counter has a double-round-over edge for an elegant touch. AC receptacles and USB charge ports pull up from the counter.

Appliances in the kitchen include a dual-burner induction cooktop, which works nicely. An over-the-range High Pointe convection microwave handles oven duties, although we didn't exactly cook a turkey in it, and being from the old school, we lamented the lack of a gas range. The Whirlpool 18.7-cubic-foot bottom-drawer residential refrigerator/freezer with icemaker is an excellent unit and can run on the inverter, generator or shorepower.

The living room has family-friendly touches, like the comfortable dinette with child safety-seat tether, which is a rare feature in a Class A motorhome. Above the convertible dinette is the LG 43-inch LED TV, which can be seen most comfortably from the opposing theater seating.

The theater seating option (\$2,217) is a solid disappoint-

ment in this unit and is ripe for replacement consideration. Its flimsy build, short stature and necessary positioning well away from the wall to recline make this seating a pass for anyone but the shortest of people. Not to mention, it's almost impossible to recline in comfort, at least for this 6-footer.

Turning aft is where the rubber meets the road with this floorplan. In a rather thoughtful use of slideouts and floor space, much of which is enabled by the flat-floor capabilities of the Freightliner XCS straight-rail chassis, Fleetwood has managed to make three separate, accessible, rooms in the rear. The master bedroom, side-aisle bathroom, and rear-wall bunkroom and closets are all separated by solid-wood sliding doors, keeping each space private (or all open, if desired).

A look straight back from the galley reveals the master bedroom with foldable 72-by-75-inch RV king bed (optional queen) and 32-inch LED TV. The folding requirement of the bed to make room when retracting the slideout precludes using a standard mattress; however, we found this one to be quite comfortable. Airflow across the bed was exceptional thanks to the two side windows.

A great feature in the bedroom is a CPAP compartment, centered directly over the bed. This powered cabinet has a



Far left: The galley has adequate space for most cooking duties, with matching solid-surface sink covers. Left: The optional theater seating is a disappointment, being too short for all but the shortest folks. The cockpit chairs rotate to join the living space, and the passenger seat features a recliner.





Above, left: The new Freightliner digital cockpit and smart wheel is a big win, and contributes to the overall driving experience. Above, right: The new transmission control stalk requires a bit of getting used to, but is a great addition.

cutout in its floor that allows a CPAP hose to pass through, so noise from the unit is reduced. The compartment can alternatively be used to charge devices or store items. When it's closed, the cabinet is seamless. Bedside tables are minimal, but a storage area is provided. Lighting and controls are easily accessed.

Looking toward the curb side of the rig you'll see the two-room bathroom. The toilet, shower and a small sink are in the first room by the galley, reminiscent of a mid-coach half-bath that can be closed off for privacy. Open the second door, and you're in the dressing room/hallway, which includes a larger countertop, porcelain-bowl sink and vanity. There are also two wardrobe closets, one of which houses an optional combination or stackable washer and dryer (\$2,054 for the stackable on the test rig). Follow it straight back and right, and you enter the bunk bedroom, where there is another closet and sizable individual cubbies with charging ports. If you don't have kids along, the top bunk folds up, and a clothing rod pulls out to convert the space to a larger closet. More importantly, a series

of solid-wood doors isolate each area from the other, and when it's showering and dressing time, there's ample room and closet access.

The bathroom is accessible with the slides retracted, but otherwise, the rear half of the motorhome is inaccessible. This is a reasonable trade-off, as bedroom access is seldom needed, and overnight Flying J stops will either require parking where the bed slide can be extended or the dinette can be used for sleeping. The galley is completely accessible with the slides retracted.

Control of the motorhome's primary functions is via a Precision Circuits Illuma-Plex multiplexing system, with the main control panel near the entry door; remote panels are placed throughout the interior. A mobile smart-device app is available to allow portable control of the system.

### Behind the Wheel

Chassis manufacturers have committed to continual refinements, and Daimler's Freightliner Custom Chassis division has been busy doing just that, integrating a Mercedes-like experience for motorhomes.

The Pace Arrow is built on a 252-inch wheelbase XC straight-rail chassis, with a 340-hp Cummins diesel engine tied to an Allison 2500MH six-speed automatic transmission. All these features are outstanding in their own right and provide an excellent platform for the Pace Arrow.

### WHAT'S HOT

Innovative multi-zone living design, interior appointments, technology package, drivability and handling, awning coverage, exterior appearance, child safety seat tether, CPAP/charging cabinet

### WHAT'S NOT

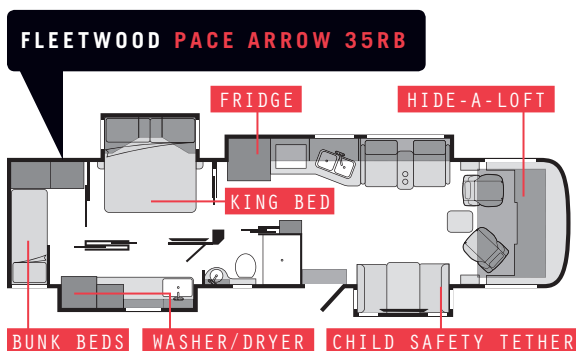
Solar charger display placement, shore-power cord storage, theater seating option



For 2019, Mercedes-Benz raised the bar for driver technology and handling across its lines and brands, and the motorhome XC chassis was not left out. Through collaboration between Freightliner and Mercedes-Benz, the Pace Arrow features a new Mercedes-Benz designed OptiView all-digital LCD instrument cluster and information center, with a smart steering wheel and TRW adjustable steering column. A bright touchscreen display integrates everything a motorhome driver would need, from all the engine and chassis parameters to a pre-trip checklist. The system can link to a smart device for connectivity and proprietary apps, and the system also has an integrated diagnostic feature that aids technicians who have access to the company's 24/7, 365 technical service center.

The four-spoke sport style smart steering wheel has a great feel and look, with a big Freightliner badge for continual name recognition. In fact, this wheel is the same one they use in big-rigs. The infinitely adjustable steering column, along with the power driver's seat virtually guarantees a good fit for the driver.

One thing experienced diesel coach owners will notice is that the dashboard and sideboard are far less cluttered, and there's no Allison shifter touchpad. Instead, the transmission





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# Specifications

## Chassis

Model	Freightliner XCS
Engine	Cummins ISB 6.7L
SAE Hp	340 @ 2,600 rpm
Torque	700 lb-ft @1,600 rpm
Transmission	Allison 6-speed
Axle Ratio	5.13:1
Tires	255/70R22.5 LRH
Wheelbase	252"
Brakes Front/Rear	Air disc
Suspension Front/Rear	Standard 4-air bag with V-Ride
Fuel Capacity	90 gal
Fuel Economy	9 mpg
Warranty	3 years/50,000 miles

## Coach

Exterior Length	37' 7"
Exterior Width	8' 6"
Exterior Height	12' 2"
Interior Width	8'
Interior Height	7'
Construction	Laminated fiberglass/aluminum frame, laminated roof with TPO membrane
Freshwater Capacity	100 gal
Black-water Capacity	40 gal
Gray-water Capacity	52 gal
Water-heater Capacity	On-demand
Propane Capacity	28.2 gal
Air Conditioner	(2) 15,000-Btu
Furnace	(1) 30,000-Btu, (1) 20,000-Btu
Refrigerator	18.7-cu-ft residential
Inverter/Charger	2,000-watt, 100-amp charger
Batteries	(4) 6-volt FLA
AC Generator	6-kW diesel
Seat Belts	8 seat belts; (1) child seat tether
MSRP	\$274,339
MSRP As Tested	\$284,515
Warranty	1 year, 15,000 miles, 3 years, 45,000 miles structural

## Wet Weight

(Water and water heater, fuel, propane tanks full; no supplies or passengers)

Total	26,856 lbs
Maximum trailer weight	10,000 lbs

## Chassis Ratings

GGAWR, F/R	10,500 lbs/19,000 lbs
GVWR/GCWR	29,500 lbs/33,000 lbs
ROCCC	2,644 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)

TEST

## 2020 FLEETWOOD PACE ARROW 35RB

controls have been moved to a multi-function control stalk on the right side of the steering-wheel column. This takes some adjustment for us old-timers, but it's a great feature — German simplicity and engineering. The only controls on the sideboard are the headlight, auxiliary start, ICC switch and electric mirror controls.

The center portion of the dash is similarly simple, with just three rocker switches, a monitor for the side and rearview cameras, and the Kenwood touchscreen DVD stereo with SiriusXM.

A nondescript pod sticks up from the top-left side of the dashboard, reminiscent of performance engine tuners and monitors, but it's actually a Mobileye 630 collision avoidance system. This advanced system, part of the optional technology package, features a camera mounted to the dashboard that watches the road ahead and provides drivers with five real-time alerts; forward collision warning, lane departure, following time, pedestrian and cyclist warning, and a speed-limit indicator.

## The Outside Story

The Pace Arrow's exterior full-body paint is attractive, and goes beyond the typical graphic swirls and stripes using a larger, abstract design. Frameless, tinted dual-pane windows and a large panoramic windshield allow plenty of viewing to the outdoor surroundings.

Basement storage is ample with one pass-through compartment and several smaller box compartments, all lighted and fitted with slam-latch doors. The motorhome is equipped with a central-vacuum system, solar panels, a built-in Southwire Surge Guard power protection and transfer switch, and an outside entertainment system under the rear of two fully automatic, wireless remote-controlled patio awnings. Coverage provides shade to around 90% of the body length.

From a systems standpoint, the Pace Arrow has plenty to make travel more comfortable and convenient. The foundation of the 12-volt DC system is provided by four 6-volt deep-cycle



A child safety seat tether is standard; however, the table must be lowered to use it, eliminating many of the seat-belted positions.

batteries, connected to a Magnum 2,000-watt inverter/charger. There's also a Cummins Onan Quiet Diesel 6kW generator for mobile power. Hot water is delivered by an optional Girard tankless water heater (\$1,263).

The optional technology package (\$4,642) is pricey but worthwhile, especially for extended travelers. Componentry includes the aforementioned Mobileye collision avoidance system, WiFiRanger SkyPro Pack with LTE, weBoost cellular booster and a 265-watt solar charging system. The solar system controller is located in the shorepower cord bay, and was getting beat up by the stowed cable. The display ideally should be installed near the aforementioned control panel for the coach so users can easily see the status of the solar charging system, or at the very least, keep the display out of danger.

## The Final Word

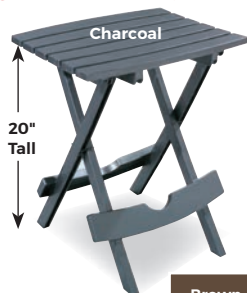
The Class A motorhome market has become more competitive in recent years, especially as manufacturers try to make their products more appealing to a broader variety of users, including families. Bunk beds, child safety seat tethers and advanced technology, as well as exceptional chassis handling and attractive interiors, are driving Fleetwood's vision to make the Pace Arrow appealing to a new generation of clients. The effort is paying off nicely. **M**

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Sage

Portobello

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# HOT DEALS ON THOR MOTORHOMES

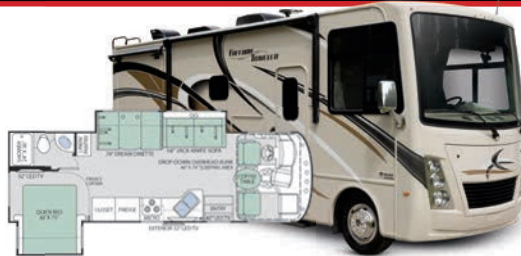


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# ROOMS TO

WITH MORE VARIETY THAN EVER, THE NEW BREED OF CLASS C MOTORHOMES OFFERS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

**W**hen we mention the term “Class C,” what comes to mind? Is it a cabover sleeping arrangement and some bunk beds for the kids? Perhaps it’s a Mercedes-Benz luxury experience with all the driver-assist bells and whistles. Or maybe it’s a throaty diesel rumble of a go-nearly-anywhere big rig with maximum towing power and torque to spare? The answer, of course, is all of the above. Class C motorhomes not only continue to reign supreme among motorhoming families, but they are leaning more and more into Class A territory in terms of options, appointments and even luxury.

By definition, a Class C motorhome is built on a cutaway

chassis, which retains the front cab of a van or truck body. From the cab, rearward, the chassis is stripped, providing a platform for the motorhome body. To ensure you get a sampling of all types of Class C’s, we’ve collected a baker’s dozen of the wide range of models that are available, and broken them down into three categories for apples-to-apples comparison in terms of chassis: Compact Cutaways (which would include so-called “B-plus” motorhomes), Classic Cutaways and Medium Duty Cutaways (also referred to as “Super C” motorhomes).

Not all Class C’s are created equal, but fun-factor-wise, you would be hard-pressed to go wrong with any of the following:

## ➔ COMPACT CUTAWAYS

For the most part, motorhomes built on compact cutaway chassis are easy to maneuver and are familiar to operate to many drivers, making them a popular choice due to the simple transition from passenger car to RV. Ever heard the term “B-plus?” It’s novel, but in definition, it’s nonexistent. B-plus is a sales pitch. When a motorhome is built on a cutaway chassis, it’s a Class C. Period. B-plus is bandied about because of the inference that they’re easy to drive, but offer a little more space than a Class B.

## COACH HOUSE PLATINUM III 250 ST

Coach House’s all-new Platinum III is built on the Ford Transit 3500 chassis and powered by a 3.2-liter Power Stroke turbodiesel. Like all Coach House Platinum motorhomes, the 250 ST features a one-piece, hand-laid molded fiberglass body that’s reinforced with carbon-fiber and is designed specifically for the chassis. The Platinum III is offered in two center twin-bed floorplans, with a choice of a sofa (250 ST) or dinette (250 DT). The Platinum III 250 ST shown here features a power sofa-bed at the front of the motorhome. Removable tables can be set up in the aisle for dining, while just aft of the sofa is a well-equipped galley, featuring a stainless-steel sink with cover, a stainless-look three-way refrigerator, a stainless microwave/convection oven, a two-burner propane cooktop and a pantry.

Behind the galley are two twin beds with generous storage above each bed.

Chassis	Ford Transit 3500
Engine	3.2L I-5 Power Stroke turbodiesel
GVWR	10,360 lbs
Exterior length	25' 6"
Exterior height with A/C	10' 5"
Freshwater cap	31 gal
Black-/gray-water cap	19 gal/28 gal
Base MSRP	\$159,827

### Coach House Inc.

941-200-3063,  
[www.coachhousesrv.com](http://www.coachhousesrv.com)

Behind a pocket door at the rear of the motorhome is the private bath with a separate full-size standup shower with a glass door, and a porcelain toilet and sink. Additional features include a 32-inch flat-panel HDTV mounted on a storage cabinet across from the sofa, a Blu-ray player, day/night shades, hitch receiver, exterior storage, cable TV jack, legless power awning, ducted air conditioner with heat pump, two roof vents, heavy-duty insulation, four-season plumbing, on-demand propane water heater, 3.6-kW propane generator, LED lighting throughout, two 6-volt auxiliary batteries in a slide-out tray, navigation system, 1,200-watt power inverter and more.





# GROW



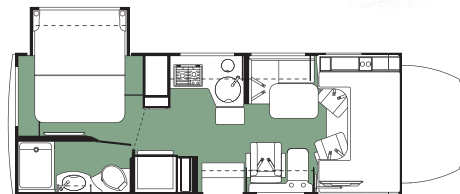
## FOREST RIVER FORESTER 2401Q

The Forester brand offers a complete lineup of Class C motorhomes. The Forester LE Series is available on both the Ford and Chevy cutaways, while the Classic series Foresters are built with upgraded premium suspension,

Chassis	Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 3500
Engine	3.0L V-6 turbodiesel
GVWR	11,030 lbs
Exterior length	25' 3"
Exterior height	11' 3"
Freshwater cap	35 gal
Black-/gray-water cap	30 gal/30 gal
Base MSRP	\$119,000

**Forest River, Forester MBS division**  
574-343-5178, [www.forestriverinc.com](http://www.forestriverinc.com)

lane-detection warning system and a multiplex system that allows owners to control functions via Bluetooth through a mobile device. Forester MBS series, including the 2401Q shown here, are built on the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter cutaway chassis and offer a standard cabover bunk or optional aerodynamic Trekker Cap options. Sprinter-series motorhomes come standard with lane-detection and a multiplex system, plus two full-paint exterior options. The 2401Q features a laminated fiberglass roof, laminated side walls and floor, plus 12-volt DC TVs and a large 10-cubic-foot refrigerator. The cab is outfitted with swiveling captain's chairs, a folding workstation and rear- and sideview cameras. A single slideout houses the rear queen bed, with the large rear bathroom close at hand.



## LEISURE TRAVEL VANS UNITY REAR LOUNGE

Built on the all-new Mercedes-Benz Sprinter cab chassis, the 2020 Unity Rear Lounge features a first-of-its-kind innovative layout with two separate living areas, seat belts and sleeping for four, and a host of new technology, including the all-new Dometic Internet of Things touch-screen solution. The true highlight of the floorplan is the spacious rear lounge with a residential-like sectional

sofa, 57-by-75-inch Murphy bed, entertainment center and near floor-to-ceiling windows. Power-reclining sofa chairs offer a cozy location for reading, while owners can set up a mobile workstation with the removable swivel table in the living area. Technology

such as a built-in wireless charging pad and touchscreen multiplex controls adds a new level of convenience, and also allows control of nearly all RV components from any of the six displays throughout the motorhome or via an app on a smart device.



Chassis	Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 3500
Engine	3.0L V-6 turbodiesel
GVWR	11,030 lbs
Exterior length	25' 1"
Exterior height with A/C	10' 6"
Freshwater cap	24.5 gal
Black-/gray-water cap	29 gal/37 gal
Base MSRP	\$139,100

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## WINNEBAGO VIEW/NAVION 524J

With a 50-by-79-inch rear bed, convertible dinette (with three seat belts) and 49-by-75-inch cabover bunk, the View and Navion sister motorhomes are designed with the whole family in mind. Featuring plenty of storage and smart uses of space, the 524J floorplan lives larger than its sub-26-foot length, and does so on the popular Mercedes-Benz Sprinter chassis. Along with that comes an all-new 10-inch MBUX Infotainment system with voice interface, and advanced safety features like brake- and lane-keeping assist. Options include lithium batteries, solar power and a 2,000-watt power inverter. A 32-inch HDTV and USB charging stations throughout ensure



Chassis	Mercedes-Benz Sprinter
Engine	3.0L V-6 turbodiesel
GVWR	11,030 lbs
Exterior length	25' 5"
Exterior height with A/C	10' 8"
Freshwater cap	37 gal
Black-/gray-water cap	41 gal/41 gal
Base MSRP	\$154,715

### Winnebago Industries Inc.

641-585-3535,  
www.winnebagoind.com

owners remain entertained, while a powered roof vent, laminated countertops, double-door 12-volt DC refrigerator and an Oxygenics flexible showerhead all help keep occupants comfortable. Highlights also include curved cabinetry and lighted galley drawers.



## WINNEBAGO VITA/PORTO

The Winnebago Vita and Porto motorhomes combine impressive appointments with a spacious interior and plenty of useful storage. Designed specifically for the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter chassis, the Vita and Porto's two all-new floorplans boast what Winnebago calls "the largest galley, the largest bed and the largest holding tanks in its class." Galley highlights include a large counter-space, double sink, ample storage and a panoramic window. The 24P floorplan utilizes a full-wall slide, which houses the expandable dinette, large refrigerator and queen-size bed, complete with nightstands on each side. The cockpit features



Chassis	Mercedes-Benz Sprinter
Engine	3.0L V-6 turbodiesel
GVWR	11,030 lbs
Exterior length	24' 7"
Exterior height with A/C	11' 6"
Freshwater cap	37 gal
Black-/gray-water cap	41 gal/41 gal
Base MSRP	\$119,670

### Winnebago Industries Inc.

641-585-3535,  
www.winnebagoind.com

a 6.5-inch touch-screen stereo/rearview monitor system, while touches like the retractable self-cleaning shower screen, plus the sliding bathroom door, add to the residential feel. With the overhead bunk area and convertible dinette, there's plenty of space for overnight visitors.

## ➔ CLASSIC CUTAWAYS

These are the most recognizable, and tried-and-true, chassis in the Class C market. The classic cabover bed, plus the familiar ride and handling of the chassis, make these motorhomes readily accessible to Class C buyers.

## FOREST RIVER SUNSEEKER 2550DSLE

Forest River's Sunseeker is available in a variety of configurations. The classic Sunseeker offers standard cabover bunks or optional aerodynamic Trekker Cap option, and is built with upgraded premium suspension system, lane-detection warning system and two optional full-body paint color schemes. The Sunseeker LE Series, built on Ford and Chevy chassis, are budget-friendly without scrimping on niceties. The 2550DSLE shown here is equipped with a 40-inch 12-volt DC TV (with a workstation below), 10-cubic-foot refrigerator, updated interior design and a one-piece molded fiberglass cap. The Sunseeker MBS series motorhomes are built on the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter cutaway and also offer standard cabover bunk or optional Trekker Cap. Finally, the TS series is a nimble Class C built on the Ford Transit chassis.

Chassis	Ford E-450
Engine	6.8L Triton V-10
GVWR	14,500 lbs
Exterior length	29' 2"
Exterior height	11' 3"
Freshwater cap	44 gal
Black-/gray-water cap	39 gal/32 gal
Base MSRP	\$89,900

**Forest River Inc., Sunseeker division**  
574-343-5178, www.forestriverinc.com





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Chassis	Ford E-450
Engine	6.8L Triton V-10
GVWR	14,500 lbs
Exterior length	31' 8.5"
Exterior height with A/C	12'
Freshwater cap	49 gal
Black-/gray-water cap	35 gal/35 gal
Base MSRP	\$131,595

**Holiday Rambler, a division of REV Recreation Group**  
800-854-1344, [www.holidayrambler.com](http://www.holidayrambler.com)

## HOLIDAY RAMBLER AUGUSTA 30F

With three full-body paint options, a king bed in a spacious master bedroom and a residential refrigerator in the galley, the Holiday Rambler Augusta has been designed to offer a residential experience without busting the budget. The streetside full-wall slide opens the interior for entertaining, while the solid-surface galley countertop and upgraded cabinetry lend a feel of true luxury. Livability plusses include a whole-house water-filtration system, two LED TVs, Girard on-demand water heater and even heated holding tanks for four-season camping. Holiday Rambler motorhomes are backed by a 12-month/15,000-mile basic warranty, plus a 36-month/45,000-mile limited structural warranty.

## JAYCO GREYHAWK PRESTIGE 30XP

The first thing you'll notice on the Greyhawk Prestige 30XP is the window in the front cap. The automotive-bonded windshield looks great on the outside, but really shines indoors, where it allows plenty of light when you need it, plus a power shade for when you don't. You'll also notice the bold full-body paint and exterior graphics, and the 18-foot electric awning with integrated LED lights. But inside, the Prestige features residential flourishes like the Furrion all-in-one cooktop and stove, 12-cubic-foot residential fridge, decorative shower surround, kitchen backsplash and upgraded solid-surface countertops. The 30XP is equipped with a full-wall slide to expand the living, galley and bedroom areas, while an amidships split bathroom features a shower enclosure and toilet curbside, with the sink located across the aisle. The cabover bunk offers a stout 750-pound capacity. Like all Jayco motorhomes, the Greyhawk Prestige is equipped with Jayco's JRide Plus system to improve ride and handling.



Chassis	Ford E-450
Engine	6.8L Triton V-10
GVWR	14,500 lbs
Exterior length	32' 6"
Exterior height with A/C	11' 8"
Freshwater cap	47 gal
Black-/gray-water cap	31 gal/41 gal
Base MSRP	\$120,368

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## WINNEBAGO MINNIE WINNIE/SPIRIT 22M

When it comes to family RVing, the more flexible the floorplan, the better. You never know when the little ones want to sleep in a different setting. Winnebago's Minnie Winnie and Spirit motorhomes offer plenty of variety, with five different floorplans. Each floorplan features a private rear bedroom and cabover bunk for added sleeping flexibility, plus a large rear trunk for all your gear. The 22M shown here includes a U-shaped dinette that converts to a comfortable bed. The single rear slideout expands the

Chassis	Ford E-350
Engine	6.8L Triton V-10
GVWR	11,500 lbs
Exterior length	24' 2"
Exterior height with A/C	11'
Freshwater cap	40 gal
Black-/gray-water cap	40 gal/45 gal
Base MSRP	\$96,977

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

master bedroom, while the rear-corner lavatory is large enough to get the job done. The vinyl-touch ceiling, LED lighting and vinyl flooring offer a contemporary feel, and the cab is equipped with a 6.2-inch touch-screen rearview monitor system featuring DVD, Bluetooth and SiriusXM radio.



## PHOENIX CRUISER 2552

Phoenix Cruiser prides itself on craftsmanship. The company claims to build only two motorhomes a week, in-house, so it can focus on details to improve the ownership experience. The 206-inch extended wheelbase, and attention given to distributing the proper weight to front and rear axles with minimum overhang, lead to an impressive ride. All Phoenix Cruisers feature a choice of solid wood cabinets and custom leather furniture. The popular 2552 shown here is equipped with dual twin electric beds that can be combined to form a king bed. The large rear bathroom runs the width of the motorhome and includes a roomy shower and sizable wardrobe. Comfort standards include leather pilot's and copilot's seats, an electronic updated front dash from Ford, a heavy-duty 250-amp alternator and limited-slip differential. Plus, a 4x4 option is available on all Phoenix Cruiser floorplans.

Chassis	Ford E-450
Engine	6.8L Triton V-10
GVWR	14,500 lbs
Exterior length	27' 10"
Exterior height with A/C	10' 1"
Freshwater cap	41.5 gal
Black-/gray-water cap	35 gal/23 gal
Base MSRP	\$121,500

**Phoenix Cruiser**  
877-754-8535,  
[www.phoenixusarv.com](http://www.phoenixusarv.com)



## MEDIUM DUTY CUTAWAYS

These are commonly referred to as Super C's, which are simply Class C motorhomes on larger chassis. Their impressive GVWRs and tow ratings make them popular among those who wish to bring along a little more fun to the party, like boats, cargo trailers and, of course, dinghy vehicles.

## DYNAMAX FORCE HD 37BH

The Dynamax Force HD is armed with a Cummins 8.9-liter ISL turbodiesel engine and Allison 3200 TRV transmission. All that power results in 20,000 pounds of towing capacity and a performance-driven journey. The Force HD continues the tradition of eye-catching Dynamax exteriors with its full-body paint package with cut and buffed finish. Step inside the Force HD and you'll find hardwood cabinetry with soft-close drawer guides, solid-surface countertops, upgraded upholstery and premium appliances. Each bunk in the Force HD 37BH has its own CD/DVD player with monitor. The master bedroom features a king bed with gel-infused memory-foam mattress and a 32-inch LED



TV. The bathroom is equipped with a porcelain toilet, under-mount sink with residential brushed-nickel faucet, large corner shower with glass shower door and an upgraded Oxygenics BodySpa RV showerhead. Galley highlights include under-cabinet lighting, double-bowl stainless-steel sink with a gooseneck faucet and a 16-cubic-foot residential refrigerator with icemaker.



Chassis	Freightliner M2106
Engine	Cummins 8.9L ISL turbodiesel
GVWR	33,000 lbs
Exterior length	39' 2"
Exterior height with A/C	12' 9"
Freshwater cap	94 gal
Black-/gray-water cap	52 gal/52 gal
Base MSRP	\$284,286

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## NEWMAR SUPER STAR SSCC4061

Already well-known for its Class A offerings, Newmar recently burst onto the Class C scene with the introduction of the Super Star. The comfortable air-ride cab (think bus drivers), provided by Freightliner chassis for a smoother and more comfortable ride, is maintained by Newmar with a uniquely innovative design not found in other so-called Super C's. The ante is then upped with more first-in-class offerings, including a full-wall slideout and rear pass-through storage. A flush floor from the cab to the living area is a welcome change, and the larger front cabover area helps convey a sense of more space. Three interior/décor packages and four interior solid-wood cabinetry choices are available.

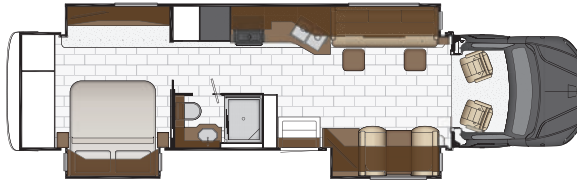
The 4061 shown here is equipped with the Windwood décor and Newport Glazed Maple cabinets. The Super Star is also equipped with multiple luxury appointments, and brand-name appliances and electronics.

Chassis	Freightliner M2 106
Engine	Cummins 8.9L turbodiesel
GVWR	40,000 lbs
Exterior length	40' 11"
Exterior height with A/C	13' 2"
Freshwater cap	150 gal
Black-/gray-water cap	40 gal/60 gal
Base MSRP	\$350,828

**Newmar Corp.**

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

Maple cabinets. The Super Star is also equipped with multiple luxury appointments, and brand-name appliances and electronics.



## RENEGADE VERONA 34VQB

At a shade under 34 feet in length, the Renegade Verona 34VQB is the most compact of the "Super C's" in this roundup. But that doesn't mean it lacks the power and capabilities of the others. The Cummins L9 diesel produces 350 hp and 1,150 lb-ft torque, and the Freightliner M2 HD chassis means 20,000 pounds of towing capacity. The 34VQB is an all-electric coach and features an AquaHot hydronic system. Plus, the Firefly Integrations multiplex electrical and Equalizer Systems automatic leveling systems now have Bluetooth capabilities to allow control from smart devices. The floorplan features a large

living-room slideout housing the sofa and dinette, opposite a functional galley with an 18-cubic-foot residential refrigerator, full-size convection microwave and a recessed two-burner electric induction cooktop. The driver and passenger seats swivel to include the cockpit as

part of the living space. A spacious split bath features a large, private enclosed shower and toilet area, with the sink in the outer half, while the bedroom has a 60-by-75-inch queen bed, his-and-hers wardrobes, a large central dresser with A/V storage and a 32-inch LED TV.



Chassis	Freightliner M2 106
Engine	Cummins 8.9L turbodiesel
GVWR	34,300 lbs
Exterior length	33' 11"
Exterior height with A/C	12' 8"
Freshwater cap	150 gal
Black-/gray-water cap	75 gal/75 gal
Base MSRP	\$292,900

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# HAIL TO THE CHIEFTAIN

AN RVING COUPLE ENJOYS RETIREMENT — TWICE — WHILE SEEING THE SIGHTS IN THEIR 1999 WINNEBAGO CLASS A

**R**emember when retirement conjured up visions of a gold watch and a front-porch rocking chair? Times have changed and so have retirees' expectations. Some 70% of Americans say they will work at least part-time during their retirement, while 80% list traveling as one of their top "bucket list" goals. Wondering how to do both for the 18 years (or more) of your retirement? Just ask Ken Harris and Miki Murray. They've been doing it for two decades, and it all started with buying a motorhome.

The year was 1999. Both were stationed at Hill Air Force Base in Utah, preparing to retire. They decided they wanted to live full-time in an RV for the first year, seeing the country they had spent their careers serving. While neither had ever owned a motorhome, Miki grew up tent camping in Hawaii, and Ken's family had graduated from a tent to an Apache folding camping trailer when he was a child. "It was a real luxury

to be off the ground," he remembers, laughing.

They liked the idea of being self-contained, and already had a small Toyota truck for dinghy vehicle service. "We did a lot of homework, and we kept coming back to the Winnebago Chieftain 35U, to this particular floorplan and interior color scheme," Miki says.

The couple searched for dealers with a Chieftain in stock, and found



Ken Harris and Miki Murray have used their Chieftain through two decades of on-and-off retirement.

what they were looking for in Vancouver, Washington. While the exterior plum color wasn't their first choice, the light interior was perfect. Plus, the dealership offered financing as well as the ability to modify their Toyota to tow four down. In the end, the convenience of "one-stop



The new full-body paint was custom-designed to echo the owners' U.S. Air Force backgrounds.

# The Classic Ride



New laminate flooring allows for a seamless open floorplan for the living room and galley. The light-wood finish and mirrored wardrobe give the rear bedroom a spacious, airy feel.

shopping” helped them to make their decision.

“We would spend more time inside looking at the interior than the exterior anyway, so we decided this was the one,” Ken explains.

There were several features that drew them to the Chieftain. They liked the open layout, which made the interior easy to navigate even when traveling with the slideouts retracted. Miki was also impressed with the interior storage and the full-length pullout pantry in the kitchen. Overall, they both felt the Chieftain would make a comfortable living space for their one-year full-timing adventure.

The couple retired, sold their

house and set off on their journey, but when the year ended, they decided they were having too much fun to stop. They continued full-timing for five more years, at which point, “we figured we should either get rid of all the household stuff in storage or settle down,” Ken laughs. The couple lived for two more years in their Chieftain while their new house was being built and, like so many young retirees, returned to full-time employment. Now officially retired again, Miki works as a National Park Service ranger during the summer season and Ken does volunteer work for the Park Service, leaving the couple free to snowbird and sightsee

**“SOME 70% OF AMERICANS SAY THEY WILL WORK AT LEAST PART-TIME DURING THEIR RETIREMENT, WHILE 80% LIST TRAVELING AS ONE OF THEIR TOP ‘BUCKET LIST’ GOALS.”**

the rest of the year — all possible because of their motorhome.

While their 1999 Chieftain has weathered two decades of modern “retirement” well, Ken and Miki admit they have contemplated replacing their motorhome with a newer model.

“We just couldn’t find anything we liked as well as the motorhome we have,” Miki notes.

That is, in part, because they have made numerous modifications to their Chieftain over the years, updating and customizing their motorhome so that it has remained contemporary despite its age. These changes include replacing the carpet and vinyl in the living room, kitchen and hallway with laminate wood flooring; replacing RV sink fixtures with residential faucets; and switching out the old analog TVs for flat-screen TVs. In addition, the couple added a faux-glass backsplash to the kitchen and bath, upgraded the bathroom tile and replaced under-cabinet lighting with flush-mount LEDs. Ken has also customized storage areas by rebuilding cabinets to give greater depth, installing metal drawer glides capable of holding 250 pounds, creating organizers to allow more efficient use of storage space and adding a knife drawer next to the stovetop.

Since finding a new unit with the customized features of their Chieftain would be difficult, they turned their attention to full-body paint, the last major upgrade needed to make their

The full-body paint transformed the Winnebago into a like-new motorhome.





classic ride look good as new, and they even built an RV barn to protect their motorhome when it was finished. They see both as an investment in their future with the Chieftain.

"We do not plan on ever getting another RV," Ken explains.

The new paint was done by Precision Painting ([www.precisionpaintingrv.com](http://www.precisionpaintingrv.com)) and included Diamond Shield RV paint protection film on the front and the back of the mirrors. Prep work and exterior lighting upgrades to exterior lights, headlights and RV running lights were completed by New Debut RV (<http://new-debut.com>). The exterior design was created by Ken and Miki, and their color choice is reflective of their U.S. Air Force backgrounds. The couple also added new slideout awnings from Tough Top Awnings ([www.toughtopawnings.com](http://www.toughtopawnings.com)) in a heavier fabric to match their new gray/blue exterior.

For other prospective retirees looking for a motorhome to fulfill their dream of travel flexibly and affordably, Ken and Miki recommend taking the time to think about how you will live in a motorhome. They tend to stay no longer than a week in any one place, and they favor military RV parks, and national, state and community campgrounds over commercial facilities. Because they spend so much time on the road, they focused on the ease of moving around with the slides closed. They also tend to eat in, since many of the places they visit are in isolated

areas, so a good galley and dining area were important factors.

"Our goal is to see the sights and move on," Miki explains.

If your budget limits you to an older, used motorhome, Ken says you need to consider "how much of a DIY-er you are." The couple has saved money by doing most of their renovations and repairs themselves, but that work should be something you enjoy.

"You have to ask yourself, do you want to spend the time needed to do the work," Ken points out.

Even if you buy a new unit, the couple recommends purchasing an extended warranty. They had several issues with their HWH leveling system (now resolved), and that policy helped cover repairs when the regular warranty had expired.

If you're on the fence about a motorhome versus a fifth-wheel, Ken and Miki agree that a motorhome is the best choice for full-timing. Over 20 years they have had both RV and dinghy-vehicle issues, and it was a relief to be able to take care of each one individually while still having transportation. As for the gas versus-diesel-issue, the couple is satisfied with their Ford V-10 engine, which currently has more than 90,000 miles on the odometer.

"We haven't been stuck on any mountain passes yet," Ken jokes. "You just need to understand that it's going to take a while. Go slow, and plan for it."

One feature of Ken and Miki's camping style that other RVers might



### CLASSY GASSER

The 1999 Winnebago Chieftain was produced in 33- to 36-foot lengths, with either one or two slides. Base sticker prices new ranged from \$100,000 for a 33U to \$140,000 for the 36L diesel model. On the used market, expect to pay between \$10,500 and \$29,000 for a Chieftain, depending on the model and condition of the motorhome.

▲ The original plum exterior was representative of the 1990s.

want to copy is their "theme traveling." One of their goals was to learn as much as they could about the United States and its history, and so they create an itinerary around specific themes. In 2004-2005, they followed the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. They have also followed the "fort system" on the East Coast from north to south, even going out to Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas. They have retraced the Trail of Tears and done a study of sites from the Mexican-American War. Recently the couple completed a six-year project to visit all 21 California missions.

They have done all of this and more in their 1999 Winnebago Chieftain — their first and only classic ride. **M**

Customized under-dinette drawers provide ample storage space. A custom wine-glass rack is tucked in an above-window cabinet.





## Recess Time

My new motorhome has a sliding door to close off the washer and dryer, but did not have an easy way to grip the door to pull it open. I installed a recessed pull-handle to make it easier. It required a 2-inch diameter,  $\frac{5}{16}$ -inch-deep recess to be cut in the door, which I did with a router. A 2-inch hole saw could also be used.

**Bill Schertz | Lolo, Montana**

## Drawer Lock

I was irritated by the kitchen drawers sliding open in my 2017 Winnebago View when making right turns. After one of the drawer guides finally broke, I came up with this simple idea on how to keep the drawers closed while driving. I used two flat corner braces for brackets that are

screwed into the underside of the countertop and lower frame. I cut them to size and drilled holes for the rod. The rod is made from a fiberglass driveway marker cut to size and should not leave any marks on the drawer faces. The whole project cost me about \$5 in parts from Home Depot. We added the "Remove Before Flight" banner as a remembrance of our visit to EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and a reminder to put it in place before hitting the road.

**John Peterson | Centennial, Colorado**



## The Classics: Door Wedgie

The pocket door on our motorhome made quite a racket when we were on the road. To stop the clatter, we purchased a doorstop wedge (available at any hardware store) and wedged it between the floor lock and the door. This fix is simple, inexpensive and effective.

**F. Juanito Terwilliger | Livingston, Texas**

## Hook 'Em!

I am a "young-at-heart" senior who drives a Jayco Greyhawk 31DS Class C. One of the most frustrating things that I have encountered is putting the wheel covers on. I had to spend all kinds of time on my hands and knees trying to thread the strap to the other side or

between the dual wheels in order to secure the hook-and-loop closure. I have come up with a solution that works very well for me. I took an old wooden yardstick (or equivalent length of 1-by-3-inch wood), stapled a piece of hook-and-loop fastener to the end (making sure it was the

opposite fastener side to the one on the strap). Now I simply affix the strap's hook fastener to the stick's loop fastener and slide it behind or between the wheels. The strap is then detached from the stick and attached to the wheel cover.

**Charlotte McClanahan | via email**



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Quick Tips is looking for submissions. Please send your ideas to: *MotorHome* Quick Tips, 2750 Park View Ct., Ste. 240, Oxnard, CA 93036, or email [letters@motorhomemagazine.com](mailto:letters@motorhomemagazine.com). Photos must be high-resolution, at a minimum of 1,400 by 1,400 pixels. If your tip is published, you will receive \$35. All payments require an FEIN or SSN.



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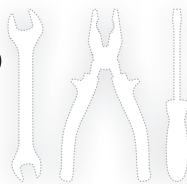
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# Phantom Service?

While at the Winnebago factory for a necessary repair, a reader asked for an oil change on his generator.

Months later, he thought he might have been charged for a service that wasn't performed, so he turned to Hot Line for help. He included the following copy of his letter to the Winnebago service department:



“ Due to a faulty slider valve pressure solenoid, we made an emergency stop at your facility for servicing, which was coincidental because we were already en route to the Winnebago manufacturing plant for a tour. Since we were at the facility, I decided to have the generator's oil changed because I had tried to change the oil prior to leaving Arizona and noticed the oil drain plug was stripped and rounded off. I mentioned this issue to the service technician and gave him a new oil plug to replace the existing one. Needless to say, I assumed that the oil plug was removed and replaced when the oil and filter were [said to be] changed at a charge of \$104.

After I had arrived home, I noticed that the same damaged oil plug was still installed, indicating [to me] that it was never replaced. I took my motorhome to Velocity Truck Centers in Tucson and requested they check the generator oil plug to confirm my suspicion that the oil plug was never addressed, much less replaced. If the oil plug was not removed/replaced, how was the oil changed?

I feel I am entitled to reimbursement for the service not rendered by Winnebago and for the work having to be done by Velocity.

**Ignacio Hermosillo | Tucson, Arizona**

Hot Line contacted Winnebago on Hermosillo's behalf and received the following letter from the company:

Since review of Hot Line's letter, I am pleased to advise that Winnebago has offered a reimbursement for the generator oil change in the amount of \$150.79; and Mr. Hermosillo has accepted our offer.

**Michael R. Wigern**  
Winnebago Customer Service  
Supervisor | Forest City, Iowa

## Unpleasant Upholstery Redux

When a reader noticed that his motorhome's cockpit seats were prematurely showing signs of wear, he asked Hot Line for assistance. He wrote:

“ I purchased a 2010 Newmar Bay Star new in 2011. At the time of

purchase, I was told by the dealership that the seats were covered with ultra-leather (by Flexsteel). About two years after purchase, the cockpit seats gradually started chipping and flaking. I knew my warranty had long expired, but I mentioned this issue to Newmar customer service, not really expecting them to do anything. They recommended that I contact Flexsteel for a solution. I wasn't successful reaching anyone at Flexsteel. As time went by, the flaking and chipping worsened, and the seats became unsightly. I did some research and found that a lot of other motorhome owners were also having

issues with seat material chipping, so I contacted Newmar customer service again and my request for replacement covers was denied because the warranty had long run out.

I realize a period of time has passed, but as a result of recent information coming to my attention from other owners, I feel I am due for new coverings.

**Bobby G. Ratliff | Bedford, Virginia**

Ratliff is not alone; *MotorHome* has heard from a number of other readers about the same upholstery issue, which we addressed in our April and August issues. Although the warranty on Ratliff's motorhome had indeed long since expired, we contacted Newmar to see if the company could help Ratliff with replacement material. We heard back from Ratliff shortly after sending out our letter to Newmar.

“ The same day I received a copy of Hot Line's letter to Newmar, I received a call from Newmar customer service. I was advised the manufacturer has agreed to provide replacement covering for my cockpit seats, and will ship it to my address at no cost to me, as I had previously requested. The representative agreed to send several sample swatches to choose from since my material had been discontinued. He further advised me the cost to Newmar for each seat covering replacement is close to \$900 for each cockpit seat. I feel confident that I will receive the seat covers soon. Thanks again for Hot Line's assistance in this matter.

**B.G.R. ■**

## 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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By Ken Freund

# Heat Distribution



**Q** We own a 2014 Coachmen Encounter 36A motorhome. When I turn on the furnace, there is great heat in the back bedroom and the bathroom turns into a sauna, but I get nothing in the front vent. I can feel a very slight warmth out of the vent, but zero airflow. Is there a safe way to increase that frontal airflow? My issue doesn't seem to be unique after talking to several other travelers last winter.

**Bob Krafft | Alpena, Michigan**

**A** You need to follow the heat ducting from the furnace to the last register at the front. It's normal to have less airflow from the register at the far end from

the furnace, but you should have something. It's likely you will find that the ducting is crushed, closed off or otherwise blocking flow. It's also possible that the heat ducting was poorly designed. Unlike home residential builders, some RV manufacturers, regardless of manufacturing experience or price point on the market, miss the mark when implementing ducting systems that will deliver the right volume of warm air to the right places. A certified technician should be able to diagnose and repair your motorhome's system.

## Freightliner Alarm Sounding

**Q** We have a used 2007 Tiffin Phaeton 40QSH on a Freightliner chassis. When I start it up, an alarm goes off until the air pressure builds up, then shuts off. I assume this alarm is only connected to the air system and no other systems such as temperature, oil, etc. The alarm also sounds occasionally while we are driving. Many times, after we hit a bad patch of the road, it will go off, but may stop in a couple of minutes or even an hour or so. Other times it goes off when the road is smooth. When it does, all the gauges read correctly and the coach runs fine. On other trips, it never goes off.

I wonder if it's a loose wire, but it's probably more than that, possibly a faulty sensor. If it sounds and I shut off the coach for a minute or two, it doesn't come on again when I start it up. The top air gauge is somewhat faulty. Once in a while, the needle seems to be loose, but most of the time it reads correctly and when the alarm goes off it doesn't move.

I am planning to have the gauge replaced and the alarm looked at but I'm not sure if this is the cause. It's

hard for a mechanic to find out what is wrong if the alarm doesn't sound while it is in the shop. Any ideas?

**Ray Killen | Mountain Home, Arkansas**

**A** This is a known Freightliner chassis problem. It's likely faulty wiring on the back of the dash, but it may also be a gauge problem. Contact the call center at 800-385-4357 and a representative will ask you some questions to determine which fix is needed. Have the vehicle identification number (VIN) on hand when calling.

## Tire Life

**Q** Given that tires are so expensive, does covering them (with tire covers) affect the lifespan? It's usually about six years when they time out. Our coach is stored most of the time and I go for a drive at least once a month.

**Steve O'Brien | Redwood City, California**

**A** How tires are used and stored definitely affects their condition. Tires that are left out in the sun deteriorate faster than those stored indoors or in the shade. I've seen tires that were stored lying on the ground

in the desert that were totally cracked and dried out on the side exposed to the sun, while the side facing down showed no weathering. I recommend tire covers when parked for long periods of time outdoors, and if you want to go one step further, treat the sidewalls with a coating of silicone-free protectant before adding the covers. Tires still age, though, and they should be inspected by a tire expert once they reach about six years of age.

## Ford F-53 Steering

This is in regard to the Ford F-53 steering article ("Straight as an Arrow," June). The off-center steering wheel on the Ford F-53 chassis, in my opinion, is a safety issue. My eyes are straight ahead while driving, but when I glance at the instrument panel I see the steering wheel center bar is crooked, and it causes me to move the steering wheel to get it straight, and off the road or into the other lane we go. Ford has known about this for years and has done nothing to correct the 6-degree spline design. Why must I pay over \$500 to correct Ford's design flaw? I wonder why the National Highway Traffic Safety

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## COACH & POWERTRAIN

Administration (NHTSA) has not forced Ford to do a recall, repair and redesign? This is a design flaw and Ford should be held accountable to fix it.

**Vince Povia | Pompano Beach, Florida**

**A** Although I didn't write the article you mention, I do feel your pain. Many vehicles have a way to adjust for this, either with an adjustable drag link or individually adjustable tie rod ends. While it is annoying, I don't think it meets the criteria of dangerous or life-threatening, which might trigger an NHTSA investigation and perhaps a safety recall. You might consider a formal complaint to Ford, the NHTSA or a letter to our Hot Line column.

### Boiling Batteries

**Q** There is a battery boil-over problem on my 1997 Monaco. When I plug in to 120-volt AC power, my coach batteries boil over. Is this an amperage problem from the 120-volt AC circuit, or is my Xantrex Freedom 25 power converter going bad? Are they repairable? I've read that these chargers are no longer available.

**Alex Razkovic | via email**

**A** I suggest you first measure the voltage coming into the coach to verify it's at or near 120 volts AC. Then measure the output voltage from the charger at the battery terminals. You can refer to the owner's manual, which is available online: [www.xantrex.com/documents/Discontinued-Products/Freedom\\_combie\\_Owner\\_manual.pdf](http://www.xantrex.com/documents/Discontinued-Products/Freedom_combie_Owner_manual.pdf). Float voltage should be about 13.1 volts in warm weather and 13.5 volts in cool weather. Electrolyte starts to "boil" when in a float stage above around 13.8 volts. If you are unsure how to test it, consult a qualified RV center. These units are discontinued, so it might be time to update and upgrade.

### Towables

**Q** I am looking to buy a new vehicle to tow behind my motorhome. I have a tow dolly. Does MotorHome

have a list of vehicles, or are all front-wheel drive vehicles towable?

**Clifford Ver Hey | via email**

**A** MotorHome has published annual dinghy towing guides for many years. These guides list all vehicles approved by their manufacturers for flat towing. They are available for free at [www.motorhome.com/download-dinghy-guides](http://www.motorhome.com/download-dinghy-guides). Although a considerable number of front-wheel drive models with manual transmissions are dinghy towable, no assumptions should be made. Having a tow dolly allows you to tow many front-wheel-drive models that aren't approved for dinghy towing. Make sure to review the owner's manual and verify that the vehicle can be towed on a dolly before purchasing.

### Subaru Towing

While reading June's edition, I noticed a letter on charging lines and also one on towing a Subaru. First is the "Charging Line" letter; you didn't mention that there are several kits out there that are easy to hook up to maintain your toad. I use a TOAD-CHARGE, and it was easy to hook up and I had no issues at all. Actually I have two units, one for my 2006 TJ Jeep Wrangler and one for my 2016 Subaru Forester.

In your response to "Towing a 4WD Subaru," you said, "these Subarus are not factory-approved for towing." Well that's not true at all. I flat tow my 2016 Forester all the time; it's a standard shift. I just put it in neutral and off I go. I'm looking forward to seeing the correction in a future magazine! I checked with Subaru and it still uses manual transmissions for some of its vehicles, but they can't be flat towed.

**Dave Telenko | via email**

Thank you for writing and sharing your experience with TOAD-CHARGE. I have mentioned aftermarket dinghy-charging kits many times in the past, but did not feel it necessary in the response you reference. Regarding Subaru towing, the last time Subaru officially approved (continued on page 90)





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## COACH & POWERTRAIN

(continued from page 84)

*dinghy towing of any of its current vehicle models was 2014. Although some brands have models that are, in fact, towable (most notably many older Hondas), if they are not factory-approved for towing, MotorHome does not include them in the annual Guide to Dinghy Towing.*

## Gas Filler Solution

I've read several letters in this column about motorhomes refusing to take on fuel. I had a 2006 Fleetwood Tioga Class C with that problem. I ran a camera scope down the filler and found a stuck spring-loaded valve. I pushed it open with the camera and solved the problem. If it happened again, I was going to remove the valve.

**Jan Bechtel | Fresno, California**

*This is one I haven't heard of. That's an innovative way to use those little camera scopes, which are widely available now at low cost. Thanks for writing; it may help some readers.*

## Engine Choice in F-53 Chassis

**Q** As an owner of a motorhome on the F-53 chassis, I am well aware of the chassis' shortcomings. Without regard to the ride and handling, I wonder why Ford doesn't offer an option to swap out the V-10 with one of its powerful Power Stroke diesel engines. I realize that it is probably not that simple, but looking at available horsepower and torque numbers, it seems like a much stronger engine. Despite transmission issues to deal with, I still think it would be a viable option to make a front-engine diesel F-53, with only a reasonable price increase passed onto the consumer.

**Jeff Spadjinske | Tolland, Connecticut**

**A** I think there are several factors holding this back. Since Workhorse stopped production, Ford has this segment of the RV market to itself. It's not having trouble selling all the chassis it produces. Cost is a huge factor in the RV business, and a diesel engine

option would add thousands of dollars to the price. Freightliner has offered the FRED or front-engine diesel chassis for some time, but it has not been overly successful in the RV market. That said, for 2020, Ford is making a number of improvements to the F-53 chassis, including a whole new powertrain with the new 7.3-liter gasoline V-8 paired with the new 10-speed automatic transmission, in addition to a number of other drivability upgrades.

## Ford Cured!

Last year I wrote to you about my Ford motorhome that quits when it gets hot ("Ford Quits When Hot," September 2018). You mentioned some things we had already done, except the in-tank fuel pump. This turned out to be the culprit. I was reluctant to write until the hot weather got here, and I was able to test it. Now it is a real joy to drive. Thank you!

**Jim and Carole Harper | Crawfordville, Florida**

*I'm glad it worked out for you. I appreciate you letting me know; it's very satisfying to learn that a problem has been resolved.*

## Towing Tip

We have a Class C motorhome and tow a 2010 Toyota Yaris. I was concerned the auxiliary braking system might cause the vehicle's battery to go dead, so I purchased a 3-in-1 Portable Power Pack from Harbor Freight and use this to power my braking system. It has two 12-volt DC plugs. I put the car in ACC to unlock the steering and turn off any accessories. I've never had a dead battery after a full day of towing.

**Jim Field | Hodges, South Carolina**

*This is one way to provide power to an auxiliary braking system; however, it does require regular charging and if the battery does go dead, you lose the auxiliary brakes. A dedicated charging line from the motorhome eliminates this hassle and avoids the chance of a dead battery.*





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## Towing a 2019 Ford Edge ST

**Q** I love my 2019 Ford Edge ST. Before towing, the black battery cable has to be disconnected. That is, for all practical purposes, impossible because that battery cable is unreachable. My question is; could I instead connect a trickle charger to the battery while towing?

**Werner Koelln | Alamogordo, New Mexico**

**A** Only models with the 2.7-liter engine are dinghy towable, according to Ford. The 2.0-liter models are not towable, as transmission damage will result. The electric parking brake must be released on models that are towable, and I do not see instructions to disconnect the battery. To keep the battery charged, I suggest running a charging line from the motorhome. Aftermarket kits are available; you might have a professional install this. A trickle charger would not be appropriate.

## Battery Drain

**Q** Our dinghy is a manual transmission 2015 Subaru Crosstrek with a Roadmaster InvisiBrake system. Towing isn't a problem; however, in order to unlock the steering wheel, the key must be in the ACC position, which has resulted in draining the battery. I notice that when the ignition switch is in ACC that the radio remains on; or "off" but still lit. Could that small drain kill the battery over several hours? Should I pull the radio fuse while towing?

**Russ Owen | Waretown, New Jersey**

**A** There are a number of small current drains on most vehicles when the accessory position is selected. It's a nuisance to constantly have to reprogram electronic items such as the radio every time you tow. You should also have an auxiliary braking device and most of these consume a fair amount of power. Therefore, I

suggest running a charge line from the motorhome to keep the Subaru's battery fully charged. There are several aftermarket charging kits available, such as the one from Roadmaster.

## Slideout That Won't — Tip

This is in regard to "A Slideout That Won't" in the June issue. Our diesel coach had a slideout extension and retraction problem. I contacted the service manager of the slideout manufacturer and he gave me the process: After you're in the campsite and level, and ready to extend the slide, sit in the driver's seat. If the engine isn't running, start it. Now rev-up the engine to 1,000 rpm and engage the cruise control. That gives you a constant engine speed. Then get out of your seat, go to the control switch and extend the slide. I follow the same procedure to retract the slide.

**Ed Wiseman | Las Vegas, Nevada**

This may help if there isn't enough voltage getting to the slide motor, such as if the wiring supplying the slide motor is too small or the batteries are too weak. When the engine is running, the alternator will increase available voltage on the chassis side. It's worth trying. However, it won't help slides that are damaged or out of adjustment, etc. Also, most cruise controls require that the vehicle be in gear and moving over a certain road speed. For those, it may be necessary for a driver to maintain engine speed (gas engines typically require more than 1,000 rpm) and a helper to control the slide. Leave the transmission in park (gas engines) or neutral, with the parking brake engaged (diesel engines). **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 not permit individual replies.

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## Walking The Planks

Make the most out of Indian summer at these three classic Southern California boardwalks

By Alan Rider

It was on a ridiculously gorgeous fall afternoon that I found myself strolling the wooden planks of Santa Monica Pier, located just 15 miles west of Los Angeles. Everything was as I remembered it from previous visits: The distinctive smell of treated wood baking in the sun, set off by occasional hints of coconut-scented suntan lotion. The calls of gulls squabbling over spilled popcorn and the cool breeze off the intensely blue Pacific Ocean only heightened the sensory experience.

All in all, a pretty typical boardwalk scene. Except something was noticeably missing. The crowds.

Such is the beauty of off-season travel. Even visits to such downright touristy destinations have a relaxed quality that helps make the most of this month's typically warm Indian summer days and cool autumn nights.

In fact, this is about the only time of year I'll even attempt going to some popular vacation hot spots like any of the country's best boardwalks. Simply put, I don't do crowds. No matter how much I appreciate the seaside scene.

And what a scene Santa Monica Pier (310-260-8744, <https://santamonicapier.org>) is. From the world's only solar-powered Ferris Wheel (see it after dark to experience the dazzling lightshow from 174,000 LED lights) to the refurbished 1922 carousel with its 44 unique hard-carved wooden horses (complete with calliope soundtrack), this historic fun factory is so much more than the name implies. Think of it as one long family playground that just happens to be stretched out

above the Pacific's rolling waves. Go on a weekday during the month of September and enjoy its many varied pleasures sans the masses that can invade the place on weekends.

As long as you're in the neighborhood, the Venice Beach Boardwalk (310-396-6764, [www.laparks.org/venice](http://www.laparks.org/venice)), a little more than a mile to the south, is a people-watching show that's not to be missed. While it's more PG-13 than the G-rated Santa Monica Pier, Venice is the kind of, ahem, freak show (and I mean that in the most endearing way possible) that people like my folks are thinking of when they roll their eyes at the mere mention of Southern California. Just the same, to my way of thinking it's worth the free price of admission just to gawk at the wide variety of humanity — from talented local artists to quirky street

performers — assembled along its 2-mile length.

Once you've had your fill of those respective Disney-esque and Frank Zappa-flavored boardwalk scenes, head farther south to San Diego's Mission Beach (619-239-0512, [www.sandiego.org/explore/things-to-do/beaches-bays/mission-beach](http://www.sandiego.org/explore/things-to-do/beaches-bays/mission-beach)), where you'll find a taste of the Southern California that The Beach Boys sang about. Rent a laid-back beach cruiser bicycle or a pair of in-line skates (858-488-7297, [www.rays-rentals.com](http://www.rays-rentals.com)) and explore the concrete path they call the Mission Beach Boardwalk. From the rock jetty to the Crystal Pier is about 3 miles, along which you'll find the Belmont Park amusement complex (thrill-seekers will want to ride the 1925 Giant Dipper wooden roller coaster), plus plenty of eateries and funky boutiques. You can even try your hand at catching some waves with lessons from the San Diego Surf School ([www.sandigosurfschool.com](http://www.sandigosurfschool.com)).

Whichever boardwalk you set out to explore, keep this caveat in mind: these are not places to venture in your 40-foot diesel pusher with dinghy in tow. Narrow streets and limited parking mean you'll want to leave your rig at an area campground and tool about the beach in your dinghy.

Ultimately, here's hoping you'll enjoy walking the planks of some of the best boardwalks I've found along The Road Ahead. **M**

“This is about the only time of year I'll even attempt going to some popular vacation hot spots like any of the country's best boardwalks. Simply put, I don't do crowds. No matter how much I appreciate the seaside scene.”

### Good Vibrations ☺

Autumn is one of the best times to visit coastal Southern California; the weather is mild and it's less crowded. Two of the area's most notable amusement parks are Belmont Park (right) and the Santa Monica Pier (far right).







View of the Superstition Mountains



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