

# RV

MAGAZINE

5 FULLY EQUIPPED  
**TRUCK CAMPERS** WITH  
ALL THE COMFORTS OF A  
TRAILER OR MOTORHOME

Pg. 20

# Travel Healthy

RV LIVING OFFERS THE PERFECT BALANCE OF MIND, BODY, AND SOUL

Take control of your diet by filtering campground water and preparing your own delicious meals.

## RV MAKEOVER

Simple DIY tips on how to brighten up and modernize the interior of your RV

## GOTCHA COVERED

A high-quality cover is the best way to protect your RV while it's in storage



# QUALITY IS STANDARD EQUIPMENT



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# Contents

SEPTEMBER 2022

14



26



30

## Cover Me

A quality cover offers needed protection during the off-season to ensure your RV is ready to roll for spring. See page 30.



## FEATURES

### 14 RV ROAD TRIP: DULUTH, MINNESOTA

Located on Lake Superior, this port city of natural and man-made wonders offers endless shoreline fun and adventure, the impressive 1905 Aerial Lift Bridge, and is the gateway to an All-American Road traversing numerous state parks.

### 20 PICKUP ARTISTS

Want to keep on truckin' after the pavement ends? Take a look at these five slide-in truck campers with high-end amenities on par with those in travel trailers and motorhomes.

### 26 BRIGHT IDEAS

Sprucing up your RV's interior to make it lighter and more inviting can be as simple as adding colorful rugs and throw pillows or opening up a can of paint and creating your own palette.

### 30 UNDER WRAPS

Covering your RV is the best way to protect your investment while it's in storage.



**ON THE COVER:** The Fit RVers James and Stefany prepare a healthy meal while camped among soaring sandstone in Snow Canyon State Park, Utah.



# Contents

SEPTEMBER 2022

## DEPARTMENTS

### 9 MESSAGE FROM MARCUS

A Healthy Appreciation

### 10 THE BUZZ

Here's what our readers are saying.

## Foodie

### 12 LOCAL FLAVORS

This hearty fish chowder swimming in a creamy broth is sure to wow seafood lovers after a day well spent on and around the water in Cape Ann, Massachusetts.

## In the Know

### 32 BONELLI BLUFFS RV RESORT AND CAMPGROUND

Located central to many of Southern California's top attractions, this 504-site park has scenic biking and pet-friendly trails.

### 34 TEAM SPIRIT

Retired NFL lineman Keith Sims is having a ball exploring the country with his family in their RV and coaching football.

# 52



## Rigs + Gear

### 39 THE RIGHT DIRECTION

East to West's Ahara fifth-wheel offers all the luxuries of an upscale home in an easy-towing footprint.

### 40 TECH Q&A

You've got questions, and our RV expert has answers.

### 48 DRINK UP!

How to make the water from your RV's tank safe, clean, and delicious to drink.

## Life on the Road

### 52 MOUNTAIN ADVENTURE

Natural beauty prevails around the Adirondacks in upstate New York.

### 54 NEW LEASE ON LIFE

How travel and pets help a full-timing RVer cope with depression.

### 56 HEALTHY CHOICES

Tips to build nutritious and tasty eating habits while RVing.

### 57 FUN + GAMES

You'll need to perform at your highest level to crack this month's brain buster.

### 58 SNAPSHOTS

So, where to next?







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|-------|-------|

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**RV**  
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## A HEALTHY APPRECIATION

When it comes to a healthy lifestyle, RVers have a leg up on most. After all, our favorite pastime is rooted in the Great Outdoors, where adventure and excitement meet awe and tranquility on a daily basis. We choose to travel with our RVs because we love fresh air, we love to see the sights, and we love an invigorating hike or bicycle ride along a heavily wooded trail. What better backdrop to get your heart pumping, your legs moving, and your senses firing all at once?

It starts with how you'll arrive at your destination ... the perfect RV for your healthy lifestyle. Any RV can do that, but one of the truck campers in the "Pickup Artists" roundup on page 20 should more than do the trick in style.

Once you've set up camp, changing your overall mindset to incorporate healthy habits is a surefire way to live your best life. And two of our closest friends, Stefany and James Adinaro—collectively known as the The Fit RV—are perfect for getting you started on the right track, whether it's fueling your body with better foods (page 56) or transforming water (the ultimate healthy drink) from your RV site into its safest, tastiest form (page 48). You'll also want to check out Rachael Johnson's "New Lease on Life" on page 54 to learn how RV living can help your mental well-being—especially with your family and four-legged best friends at your side.

And speaking of besties, every year we celebrate you, dear friends, as part of Good Sam's Member Appreciation Month. And for just a small token of

how much you mean to us, visit [goodsam.com](https://goodsam.com) for discounts on all your favorite RV gear, along with unbelievable savings on Good Sam offerings like TravelAssist, Roadside Assistance, Tire & Wheel Protection, Insurance, and Extended Service Plans. This event is for a limited time only, so act now. Because when all is said and done, we have a healthy appreciation not only for our own well-being, but for all RVers, Good Sam members, and Good Sam Campgrounds who have chosen to take their journey with us. ■

Nothing makes us happier than seeing smiles on the faces of our RVing friends and customers. Whether you're exploring the desert, biking in the mountains, or simply hanging out at your campsite, we couldn't do this without you!

**Marcus Lemonis**  
Publisher  
@marcuslemonis



## TV, OR NO TV?

Just finished the “Starry Nights” article about RVs with exterior entertainment systems in the June issue. I was disappointed the article did not mention RV etiquette and adhering to park quiet hours.

We love state and national parks, and one of the most enjoyable aspects of a semi-nomadic lifestyle, along with wildlife viewing, is the peace and quiet.

Unfortunately, we have had to retreat into our rig several times due to boisterous, opinionated TV/movie-watching neighbors. Turns out, we don't all enjoy the same news, sporting events, and music.

However, our Class A Fleetwood Flair 29M (which we love!) has a 50-plus-inch exterior TV, and one of us is a self-proclaimed “news junkie.” We have frequent discussions regarding the volume of what we are watching because we don't want to be “those people.”

This is a tough one; being outside and enjoying the rig's technology and amenities or being a good neighbor? It's a tricky balance.

**Ann, Blue Ridge, Georgia (Currently at the Grand Canyon)**

### FROM TWITTER

**Use this thread to give tips to first-time RVers.**

**@jwood4Weevils**  
Never be in a hurry. Slow and steady = Safe.

**@Kit\_R\_C\_Realty**  
Practice pulling a rig or driving an RV before taking your trip. Remember, you're longer than anyone out there, so merging takes longer. There's really no turning around, it's go around the block and try again. Also always remember to check your stabilizers and sway bar.

• • •

### CONNECT WITH US

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**Editor's Note:** *You can certainly do both. As we've discussed in issues past, we always urge RVers to adhere to quiet hours ... and to consider your neighbors before cranking up the TV ... or leaving bright lights on all night ... or allowing pets off their leashes, etc. Campground etiquette is a must while RVing. Let's keep it fun for everyone!*

### KEEPING THE STREAK ALIVE

I enjoyed reading the “Forming Healthy Habits on the Road” article in the July issue. However, I fail to see why things have to change when you're on the road.

I'm not a fitness expert. However, since retirement 22 years ago I also exercise every day, usually for around two hours. I have an exercise room at home, and I walk/jog/run or

ride a bike on several different routes near my home. I've had streaks of 2,519 days and 3,107 days without missing, logging in several thousand miles on trails or roads around different towns. I only missed days when I was extremely sick or injured. A portion of these streaks occur while I'm traveling in my motorhome. I won't let traveling in my motorhome break a streak of continuous days exercising on trails or roads.

I don't find it difficult at all to maintain my exercise routine while traveling. In fact, I find it more enjoyable because I'm running/jogging/biking on different trails or roads in different towns rather than using the same routes at home.

I'm 82 years old and I currently have a streak of 1,625 days out on the trails/roads in several different locations with no intentions of stopping or missing a day anytime soon.

**Gary J. Shilling**  
Orting, Washington

### SLIDEOUTS, REVISITED

Here's an item that I felt should have been mentioned in the “Slideouts 101” article in the June issue: If the motorhome's engine is running, the slideout will not retract and/or extend. I'm not sure it works like this on all models but that is the case on my Coachmen Freelander. I learned it the hard way after I spent quite some time trying to get the slideout retracted.

**Wesley Hawkins**  
Spring Hill, Florida

*Wesley, that's a safety feature to avoid having a slideout acci-*

*dentally deploy while driving, although it can definitely be perplexing when you're trying to hit the road and the slideouts don't seem to work. If you're dry camped and the house batteries are low and need to be recharged somewhat to operate the slideouts you may need to leave the engine or generator running a while to boost the house battery voltage, but otherwise, the engine needs to be shut off.*

—**Jeff Johnston**  
Consulting Tech Editor



### GREAT TIMING!

A year before the pandemic, we bought a used Class C motorhome. We found that we wanted to go smaller to be able to travel to more places that may not be as open to a large motorhome. We looked at vans and other Class B types, but then we saw a truck camper driving down the road. These seem to have a lot of what we might be looking for. There isn't a great deal of info about them. Can you have a feature where you present different types, brands, etc.? Also, if you could highlight what to look for in a truck [for campers] I think it would be enlightening.

**Kellie Jones-Monahan**  
Charleston, Illinois

**Editor's Note:** *Kellie, we have just the thing for you: “Pickup Artists,” beginning on page 20. ■*

### JOIN THE CONVERSATION

**Heading out for some fantastic fall fun? From leaf-peeping to festivals to pumpkin patches, send us your photos, along with any details on how you discovered your own hidden gems.**





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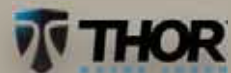


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## LOCAL FLAVORS

## CAPE ANN, MASSACHUSETTS

by TERRI PETERSON SMITH

► **It doesn't get** more captivating than New England in fall, especially on Cape Ann, about an hour north of Boston. Massachusetts' "other cape" encompasses the towns of Gloucester, Essex, Ipswich, Manchester-by-the-Sea, and Rockport, each more historic and picturesque than the next. No wonder the area has served as the location for films

including the recent Best Picture Oscar-winner, *CODA*.

In Gloucester, as in the movie, the seafaring life still plays a role. The first settlers arrived there in 1623, making it the oldest seaport in the country. Even if you're not an "old salt," Cape Ann offers plenty to do on and around the water including kayaking, stand-up paddling, whale watching, or just

lying on the beach. Naturally, you'll find some of the country's best and freshest seafood along with local craft beer to wash it down.

Landlubbers also enjoy exploring the Cape Ann art scene or the trails, tide pools, and rocky ledges of Halibut Point State Park. Wherever you go, the ocean makes a stunning backdrop to the fun.

## On the Menu

### Classic Fish Chowder

*This hearty chowder features chunks of cod or any firm, white fish, often called scrod in New England. It "swims" in a creamy broth with the added spark of lemon and Old Bay Seasoning.*

## YOU'LL NEED

- 1–1½ lbs cod fillet cut into ¾-inch pieces (fresh is best but frozen is okay)
- 1 cup diced onion
- 1 cup diced carrot
- 1 cup diced celery
- 2 cups chopped russet potatoes
- 1 quart fish stock (or chicken stock)
- 1 cup heavy cream, whole milk, or half and half
- ½ cup butter
- ½ cup flour
- 1 tsp thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tbsp Old Bay Seasoning
- Juice of half a lemon
- Salt and fresh cracked pepper
- Oyster crackers, chopped chives

## MAKE IT

- 1) Place the butter in a large pot over medium-high heat and add onions, carrots, and celery and cook until soft.
- 2) Add the flour and stir until flour and butter combine. Cook for 2–3 minutes, stirring continuously.
- 3) Add in bay leaves, thyme, fish stock, and potatoes. Stir and simmer until potatoes become fork tender and stock thickens. If too thick, add more stock or water.
- 4) Add cream, Old Bay, lemon juice, and salt and pepper and stir to combine.
- 5) Add the cod pieces and simmer until the fish is cooked through and easily flakes apart.
- 6) Serve topped with chopped chives and oyster crackers. Serves 4–6.

PHOTOS: TERRI PETERSON SMITH, MAUDIE/GETTY IMAGES



## 2023 Newmar Dutch Star

Linger in luxury in an all-new-for-2023 Newmar Dutch Star while visiting this Massachusetts seaside retreat. Built on a premium custom chassis, the Dutch Star Class A diesel is available in 12 floorplans ranging from 37–43 feet, including a bunkhouse model with 1½ baths. Standard are a 19.7-cubic-foot residential-style fridge, retractable 50-inch 4K LED TV, and Bose soundbar. New flooring, decor, and furniture styling, plus advanced tech features, top off this high-end coach. [newmarcorp.com](http://newmarcorp.com)

## WHY WE LIKE IT

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## FINE PAIRINGS

These two white wines stand up to the creamy, slightly tangy chowder.

**Chateau du Jaunay Muscadet Sèvre & Maine sur Lie 2020** hails from France's Loire Valley where the Sèvre and Maine rivers flow through the vineyards. This crisp, medium-bodied wine has a citrusy, flowery aroma and also tastes great with shellfish. \$15.

Amici Cellars in Sonoma County, California, creates its **Olema Chardonnay Reserve 2020** by combining a portion aged in barrels for a rich, creamy texture, and a portion in stainless steel. This results in a juicy, medium- to full-bodied wine with a slightly spicy richness. \$20. ■



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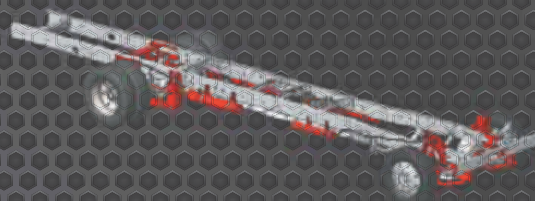
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# RV Road Trip\* DULUTH, MINNESOTA

## BEACHES AND BRIDGES AND BEACONS, OH MY!

BY JULIE PERRY NELSON  
@TRAVEL\_FERRET

**L**ake Superior's crystal-clear water lines miles of shore, delighting beachgoers and sightseers alike. The sparkling water reflects impressive bridges, lighthouses, historic homes, and plentiful forests. Say hello to Duluth, Minnesota's not-so-well-kept secret.

Straddling the border between Minnesota and Wisconsin, Duluth is an unexpected playground of natural and man-made wonders. The impressive Aerial Lift Bridge dominates the horizon. The span rises and lowers smoothly, welcoming watercraft ranging from sailboats to huge cargo ships into the safe confines of St. Louis Bay.

Duluth is renowned as the gateway to the North Shore Scenic Drive, a spectacular 150-mile traverse along the shores of the largest of the Great Lakes. This "All-American Road" travels through numerous state parks and charming towns on its way to the Canadian border.

My family and I made the mistake a few years ago of staying only one night in Duluth. We were amazed that what we anticipated as a waypoint on our journey should have instead been our destination. Avoid making the same error we did and take your time while sampling all the wonderful attractions Duluth has to offer.

## WEEKEND WARRIORS

### MUST-DO

Gorgeous North Shore Scenic Drive ([nsbfoundation.com](http://nsbfoundation.com)) travels along Lake Superior for 150 miles. Eight state parks, multiple beaches, cascading waterfalls, and precariously perched lighthouses highlight the drive. Spectacular Gooseberry Falls and Split Rock Lighthouse are must-stops along the way.

### STAY HERE

Indian Point Campground ([duluthindianpointcampground.com](http://duluthindianpointcampground.com)) is minutes away from the Aerial Lift Bridge and other local attractions. Nestled under maple, pine, and elm trees, the campground offers access to St. Louis Bay as well as hiking and biking trails.



### ▲ OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Pack a lunch and enjoy a picnic at Enger Tower and Gardens ([duluthmn.gov](http://duluthmn.gov)). Climb up the 80-foot-high stone observation tower for an incredible view of Duluth and the surrounding area.



### ▲ ON THE MENU

Bring your four-legged friends to Canal Park Brewing Company ([canalparkbrewery.com](http://canalparkbrewery.com)) and relax on their patio overlooking Lake Superior. Play yard games while enjoying the signature Fish Tacos or the Northcoaster Burger.



## RETIRED RVERS



*The Duluth Zephyr takes visitors on a scenic tour that includes a stretch of the shore of Lake Superior.*

### MUST-DO

Why drive when you can ride? Sit back and relax on the North Shore Scenic Railroad ([duluthtrains.com](http://duluthtrains.com)). Choose from an informative tour around town (The Duluth Zephyr), a fun evening tour (The Music & Pizza Train), or a full-day journey along the entire length of the railroad (Two Harbors Turn).



### ◀ OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Bring your camp chairs and binoculars to Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory ([hawkridge.org](http://hawkridge.org)) and stay awhile. Peak migration viewing is September–October, with thousands of hawks flying overhead. Volunteers are available to answer questions.



### ◀ ON THE MENU

Sample Duluth Grill's ([duluthgrill.com](http://duluthgrill.com)) delicious Reuben sandwich, Chicken and Whaaaaat? (pancake laced with bacon and corn), or their luscious Bourbon Banana Walnut French Toast. The grill offers a wide variety of comfort foods with fresh ingredients to satisfy every palate.



### ◀ STAY HERE

The campground at Jay Cooke State Park ([dnr.state.mn.us](http://dnr.state.mn.us)) offers a relaxing atmosphere in their tree-lined campsites, perfect for enjoying fall colors. The campground is close to the visitor center and the cool Swinging Bridge. Rigs up to 60 feet in length can be accommodated at the site.

## Product Spotlight

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[www.Venture-RV.com](http://www.Venture-RV.com)

## FAMILY RVERS



### ◀ OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Just north of Duluth is Tom's Historic Logging Camp ([tomsloggingcamp.com](http://tomsloggingcamp.com)). See where loggers worked and lived in the thick forest at the re-created blacksmith shop, bunkhouse, cook shanty, and horse barn. Kids (and adults) can feed llamas and pygmy goats and ring the dinner bell.



### ◀ ON THE MENU

Dine on the roof of Grandma's Saloon & Grill ([grandmasrestaurants.com](http://grandmasrestaurants.com)) for a spectacular view of the Aerial Lift Bridge. Or stay inside and enjoy the fun, old-time ambience. Order their famous onion rings to go with an overstuffed sandwich or burger.



### MUST-DO

Enjoy a self-guided tour on the *William A. Irvin* ([decc.org](http://decc.org)), a retired ore and coal ship. Many of the museum's knowledgeable volunteers worked on Great Lakes' ships, allowing visitors a chance to listen to firsthand accounts of ship life. Kids enjoy going up and down the many steep steps, but your knees may not!

### STAY HERE

Stay and play at Mont du Lac RV Resort ([mdlrvresort.com](http://mdlrvresort.com)). Just over the border in Wisconsin, this Good Sam Park offers two disc-golf courses, a lengthy bike-trail system, and beautiful views of the St. Louis River. If the weather is warm enough, spend time conquering the floating waterpark's obstacle course.



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### ◀ OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Built in 1908, the impressive Glensheen Mansion ([glensheen.org](http://glensheen.org)) contains most of the original furnishings from the Congdon family, known for donating money to protect North Shore Drive (also known as Congdon Boulevard) from development.



### ◀ STAY HERE

Gooseberry Falls State Park Campground ([dnr.state.mn.us](http://dnr.state.mn.us)) offers more than 70 wooded campsites for RVs up to 40 feet in length. Once you get settled, visit the spectacular multilevel namesake cascading falls.



*The view of this delicious salmon dish served on homemade pappardelle pasta rivals the one of Lake Superior from Va Bene.*

### ▲ ON THE MENU

The Italian restaurant Va Bene ([vabenecaffe.com](http://vabenecaffe.com)) has one of the best views of Lake Superior in town, but don't just go there to sightsee. Try their slow-roasted Bolognese meat sauce with spaghetti or the "Avant Garden Salmon," Alaskan salmon with pasta and alfredo sauce. Yum! ■

### MUST-DO

Duluth's 135-foot-high Aerial Lift Bridge ([canalpark.com](http://canalpark.com)) towers over the canal entrance to St. Louis Bay. Research ship times beforehand to marvel as the elevator bridge rises for incoming and exiting boats. The bridge is lifted up to 5,000 times per year, so odds of seeing it in action are high!



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**PROGRESSIVE**

# PICKUP ARTISTS

TOP CHOICES IN SLIDE-IN CAMPERS FOR ADVENTURERS WHO WANT TO KEEP ON TRUCKIN' EVEN WHEN THE PAVEMENT ENDS.

BY BRUCE W. SMITH

**Free-spirited pickup owners** who don't want to be encumbered towing a travel trailer, yet want similar living conveniences, frequently turn to slide-in campers as their RV of choice. Slide-in pickup campers also offer the opportunity to make camp in more remote areas or unimproved campgrounds, and tow (weight permitting) a boat, ATVs, motorcycles, snowmobiles, or other "toys" to pursue individual recreational passions.

There are nearly three dozen manufacturers of pickup campers spread across North America. These manufacturers offer a wide variety of designs and sizes to fit pickups from the midsize like the Chevy Colorado, Toyota Tacoma, and Ford Ranger to the big boys such as a dually Dodge Ram, Chevy/GMC, and Ford Super Duty diesels. There are custom camper man-

ufacturers building rigs for pickups with flatbeds and cab-chassis design, and some camper manufacturers are now offering campers for flatbed trucks as regular production items.

To give you a taste of the variety of choices available in slide-in campers for full-size pickups we've highlighted a quintet of new models guaranteed to make outdoor adventures enjoyable for years to come.

*With an overall length of 19 feet, an 11-foot, 4-inch floor, and interior height of 6 feet, 7 inches, the Arctic Fox 1150 is one of the largest pickup campers on the market. Electric jacks, a standard feature on the 1150, provide the opportunity to easily slide the camper out of the pickup and use both individually at the campsite.*



## NORTHWOOD ARCTIC FOX 1150

The welded-aluminum-framed Arctic Fox 1150 is the largest of six pickup campers in the Arctic Fox line from Oregon-based Northwood Manufacturing. This 3,358-pound, 19-foot camper is a favorite model for those who enjoy extended outings and camping during all four seasons of the year. It features one-piece fiberglass walls, thick foam-block insulation,

a 20,000-Btu furnace, stainless-steel appliances with a residential-size microwave, a full-wall slide for the dinette, a cathedral-arched ceiling, large heated-and-enclosed holding tanks, frameless windows, electric jacks, a 7-cubic-foot fridge, and hardwood cabinet doors. You can also select either a dry-bath (separate shower) or wet-bath configuration, the



PHOTOS: COURTESY THE MANUFACTURERS





*The Arctic Fox 1150's curbside slideout moves the dinette, stainless fridge, and wardrobe outward, adding to usable interior floor space.*

latter of which lengthens the galley counter space. Options abound including items such as rooftop solar panels, an A/C system, a propane generator, a slideout topper, and a 10-foot side box awning. MSRP: \$45,533. [northwoodmfg.com](http://northwoodmfg.com)



## NORTHERN LITE 8-11EX LIMITED EDITION DRY BATH

A six-year structural warranty speaks volumes about the build quality of the true four-season Northern Lite 8-11 EXLEDB, a luxurious non-slideout camper built in Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada, for shortbed three-quarter-ton and one-ton pickups. Northern Lite's fiberglass, molded two-piece exterior is built like a boat with only one seam between the bottom half and top half, which means no leaks. It's also all fiberglass—no framework to come apart—and it's nearly 25% lighter than more traditional campers of the same size. Another cool design

of the 2,800-pound 8-11EX is that the electric jacks are mounted to aluminum brackets that support the camper across the bottom, not the sides and corners. This camper's 9-foot floorplan comes standard with a large curbside galley, lots of storage, leatherette upholstery, side and rear power awnings, 10,000-Btu air conditioner and 18,000-Btu furnace, a 400-watt solar setup with a 45-amp converter/charger, a comfortable dry bath, upscale queen bed, skylights, and beautiful interior woodwork. MSRP: \$62,630.

[northern-lite.com](http://northern-lite.com)



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## TRUCK CAMPERS



## HOST CAMPERS MAMMOTH 11.5

Host Campers named their largest pickup camper the Mammoth, and rightly so. This aluminum-and-fiberglass, 11½-foot camper is a spacious, beautifully appointed triple-slide with an 8-foot-wide main floor that provides plenty of room to stretch out and relax. Its appointments—such as a 6-foot sofa with high/low table, washer-dryer combo with both overhead and underneath cabinets, and dual-entry bathroom—ooze comfort and style on a level rare in the pickup-camper market. It comes standard with a queen bed, well-equipped kitchen featuring a double-door 8-cubic-foot fridge, large three-burner range, solid-surface countertops, and a load of storage compartments and cabinets inside and out. Features that make the Mammoth ideal for remote camp stays include a 25,000-Btu furnace, 42-cubic-foot basement storage, and large tank

*If room to stretch out or entertain is a primary goal in your camper selection, the Host Mammoth should be at the top of your list with its 8-foot-wide floor and upscale furnishings.*

capacities: 65-gallon freshwater, 51-gallon gray, and 32-gallon black. Host offers three different Off Grid Battery/Solar Option Packages for this model, along with a long, long list of other options. The Mammoth's overall length is 19 feet, 3 inches, and it has a base dry weight of 3,955 pounds, which requires a mammoth pickup to carry the load. MSRP: \$67,638.

[hostcampers.com](http://hostcampers.com)



## WEIGHT WATCHERS

It's all too easy to overload a pickup with a slide-in camper. Doing so negatively affects the truck's handling and overall stability. Be wary of any large camper the manufacturer promotes as being suitable for a three-quarter-ton pickup because many, if not most, of these rigs will easily overload a three-quarter-ton truck once fully loaded. Like all RVs, slide-ins always weigh several hundred pounds more when loaded than the dry weight listed on their specifications, which makes it easy to exceed the pickup manufacturer's maximum cargo (payload) capacity. That rating is listed on the driver's door jamb tag. (Filling the freshwater tank alone can add several hundred pounds.) Before buying a camper, make sure the pickup has sufficient 1) payload capacity, 2) gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR), and 3) gross combined weight rating (GCWR) to handle the load. An overloaded pickup/camper combo can make the driving portion of your trip far more tedious—and potentially more dangerous—than enjoyable.





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# Product Spotlight

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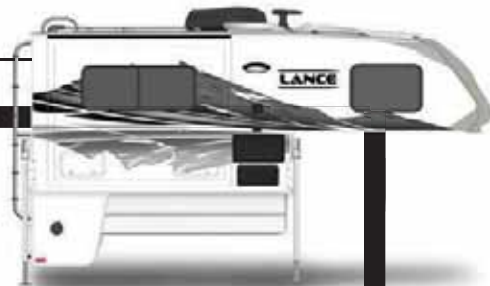
Why yell over the vibrations just to chat with your family or friends? Why fight the road when you can enjoy the journey?

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Visit us at  
[www.LiquidSpring.com](http://www.LiquidSpring.com)  
to learn more.

## TRUCK CAMPERS



### LANCE CAMPER 855S

The 855S pickup camper from Lance Camper is a shining example of excellent build quality combined with a roomy single-slide layout designed for full-size, shortbed three-quarter-ton pickups. The slideout allows for a facing bench dinette that accommodates four people and converts into a bed. The 855S shares all the features of its bigger brothers, including a standard aerodynamic nose cap, electric jacks, tinted thermal-pane acrylic windows, an exterior wash station, and propane connection. Tank capacities are 30 gallons fresh, 20 gray, and 25 black. The Four Seasons Comfort Technology package, solid-surface countertop, and EuroPly cabinet construction ensure a luxury experience.



The 855S sports an 8-foot, 11-inch floor with an overall length of 18 feet. It has a dry weight of 3,064 pounds and a wet weight close to 3,400 pounds with the standard equipment. MSRP: \$60,382. [lancecamper.com](http://lancecamper.com)

*The Lance 855S's dinette is located in the curbside slide, which provides precious elbow room and comfortable seating, as well as another sleeping space.*



### KINGSTAR CAMINO 88

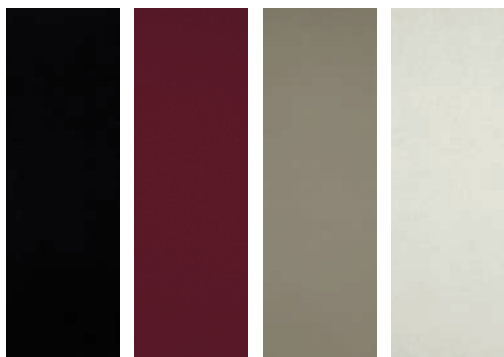
Hand-built in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Kingstar's 2,655-pound Camino 88 Lounger edition campers are available in 6.5- and 8-foot bed lengths with either the standard north-south bed layout or an optional east-west version. Both models come standard with a roomy sofa with triple drawers beneath that faces the streetside galley. The Lounger is a wood-framed unit with 2-inch closed-cell spray foam insulation behind the Filon/Azdel exterior walls, thermal-pane windows, and a sturdy stainless-steel/aluminum roof architecture. It also sports a unique wet bath built from 22-gauge stainless steel. The Camino 88 has built-in floor storage compartments to go along with overhead cabinets. Like many of today's larger campers, the option list is extensive with a microwave, a Communications Package, Entertainment Package, and a 3,000-watt inverter system with triple 100 Ah lithium batteries. MSRP: \$45,960. [kingstar.net](http://kingstar.net)



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# BRIGHT IDEAS

**PROVEN HACKS TO SPRUCE UP YOUR RV'S INTERIOR TO MAKE IT FEEL MORE LIKE HOME.**

## It's no shocker

when I say RV interiors can be a little ... dull. And, while the RV industry really is stepping up its RV game, there are still many RVs out there that could use a little brightening up. So, what is an RV owner to do when the interior leaves a lot to be desired?

Studies have shown that your home environment has big impacts on your mental health and overall well-being. That means that a drab home space can cause a drab mental space, and no one wants that. Your home space can influence your mood and impact behavior and mental motivation. Studies

also reveal that rooms with bright light—both natural or artificial—can improve depression and anxiety. A bright interior home space can also help reduce stress, give you mental clarity, and has been shown to promote longevity.

And a clean space is mentally motivating to keep a clean space.

Your home's interior can also encourage or discourage interactions with others. When your space feels inviting, others want to come in and spend time in that space with you.

So regardless as to whether you're living in your RV full time, part time, or only for vacations there's a lot that can be done to brighten up the interior.

**BY LINDSAY LANE  
@LANESLESSTRAVELED**

Brightening your RV's interior doesn't have to be a difficult undertaking. Here, the space has been transformed by simply changing the curtains and adding a rug, throw pillows, and other decorative items to help pull the look together. And, it's easy to swap things like freestanding tables for a refreshed look.



**BIGGEST  
CHANGES  
YOU CAN  
MAKE TO  
BRIGHTEN  
YOUR RV  
SPACE:**

1. Window coverings
2. Walls/Wall colors
3. Decor items like rugs, throw pillows, and wall art
4. Adding personal touches like family pictures and special souvenirs from your travels

The windows, furniture, walls, decor, and lighting play a huge part in visual appeal inside your rig. And determining if any of those areas can be modified for a more pleasant environment is a great starting point to brightening up your space!

## MAKING CHANGES

Once you've made your evaluation, decide which change will be most impactful to you. For many, the first—and probably the most simple—change you can make is to remove the stock window covering frames.

With a drill, and a little bit of time, the first big change inside your rig can be made. Besides the visual appeal that removing the stock window covering frames will provide, more light will filter in through the windows. And remember that natural light is not only a simple way to brighten up your space but it also has been shown to relieve depression and anxiety.

Once the stock window frames have been removed, decide if you want to keep the stock roller shades or blinds. Replacing those items will likely be a costlier improvement, but if you decide to make that investment it will help transform your RV into a more aesthetically pleasing space and is definitely a worthwhile investment. A less expensive option would be hanging curtains to complement the stock blinds/roller shades and decor changes you make.



## FIRST THINGS FIRST

Step into your home on wheels, take a look around, and evaluate what you can change to make the overall feeling of the interior brighter. Is there anything that makes you feel down? Is the space filled with dark colors instead of light ones?

Up until the past couple of years, RVs have been notorious for their dark interiors. While those dark colors may be camouflaging some of the dirt that comes along with RV life it could also be contributing to a visually displeasing atmosphere. And which one is worse?

Another huge improvement is to change the color of the walls. I can almost hear the audible gasp made by some at the thought of painting the walls in your RV. But let me reassure you that it makes such a huge difference in your space that it's absolutely worth it. Plus, it can be a relatively cheaper option than some other interior changes. Be sure to purchase a high-quality wall paint with paint and primer in one.

If you don't want to take on the task of painting the interior walls, consider choosing a wall or two to hang wallpaper. There are a ton of removable wallpaper options on the market and this is a simple yet effective way to add your personal touches.

Even if you decide not to make changes to the interior wall

Subtle touches like adding curtains to window treatments and switching out the stock light fixtures for residential fixtures that better represent your own style can make a big impact on brightening an RV's interior space without busting the budget.

color or to remove the stock window coverings, there are other personal touches you can add. Area rugs, wall art, and toss pillows are pretty cost-effective ways to make big visual changes in your home on wheels.

Start by finding a rug in your favorite color palette you can use to tie in various other design elements. Pulling in colors from the rug through pillows and blankets add more personal touches to the space and that translates to a rig that feels like home.

Adding family pictures or landscape art to the walls is another way to brighten up your rig. Take a look around to determine if there is blank wall space that can be filled with wall decor that brings joy to your space.



Utilize open space, like these shelves, to add personal touches like picture frames or favorite books. Adding in design elements like baskets provides a great way to maximize storage space.

## SHEDDING SOME LIGHT

Now what about the lighting in your rig? Do the slideouts have the stock ceiling pucks? Does the main room's light fixture feel cold and drab? Switching out stock light fixtures is another huge improvement in making your space feel more like home. Swapping out lights for LEDs or installing a new light fixture over the dinette will instantly transform the space.

As you make changes in the main living area of your rig don't forget they can be done throughout your home on wheels to brighten up the entire space. You don't have to take on the entire project all at once, but little touches over time will provide a huge payoff in brightening your RV's interior. ■

## SIMPLE STEPS TO GET STARTED

Take *inventory* of your space. Is there anything that brings you joy? Then keep it! Is there anything that you wish would go? Make note of that and formulate a plan to get rid of it.

Do you have a *budget* in mind? This will help you determine the changes you can make to stay within that spending limit. Decide what is most important to you and start with those changes.

Give yourself a *realistic time line*. Do you have a specific date in mind to get your space feeling more aesthetically pleasing? Keep that in mind when deciding the changes to make. Don't bite off more than you can chew within your time frame. And remember, most projects usually take longer than expected.

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# Under Wraps

**Protect your RV during the off-season with a durable, high-quality cover.**

BY KRISTOPHER BUNKER

With winter weather just around the corner, there comes a time each year when RV owners need to make a difficult decision. Do we brave the elements and hit the road, knowing that freezing rain, sleet, and snow is in the cards, or do we put our trusty RV to bed for the season? Many factors go into this decision, including employment, health, location, and family circumstances; there really is no correct answer. But, if your particular situation calls for RV storage, the only correct answer is to protect it from the elements. And, absent a suitable climate-controlled garage or RV storage facility, the first line of defense is to cover your RV.

And, we're not talking about a blue tarp that doubles as a ground cover for your

portable pool. Those tarps can actually cause more harm than good, as they can block airflow and trap moisture, not to mention the damage they can inflict while flapping against the RV in high winds.

For your major investment, we recommend a high-quality RV cover, with materials designed specifically for the task, along with measurements that make securely fastening the cover to the RV a snap. And while there are many types of covers available on the market, we're confident the following covers and accessories have what it takes to ensure your RV will be ready to roll when the sun finally breaks through the clouds. All products are available at Camping World stores and online at [campingworld.com/covers](https://www.campingworld.com/covers)



*Camping World offers Camco Pro-Shield (pictured) and Ultra-Shield covers in a variety of sizes for the perfect fit on your specific application. Top-quality construction and the ability to access the inside of the RV with the cover in place help the Camco covers stand out from the crowd.*



## COVER ACCESSORIES

*Looking for enhanced protection from the elements? These essentials are a great way to extend the life of some vital components while you're on the road, in camp, or simply between adventures.*



The Elements Double Tire Cover helps protect wheels and tires from damaging UV rays and weather conditions. Made with durable double-stitching and overlapping seams, the covers come with elastic edging and a bungee cord for a secure fit.



Show everybody you love your country while protecting your RV's spare tire with an Elements Spare Tire Cover. Available in a variety of sizes, the double-needle-stitched cover with overlapping seams shields the spare from weathering, helping you to get the most out of the tire's lifespan.



The Elements Air Conditioner Cover protects your RV's Coleman-Mach PL air-conditioner roof shroud from weather and UV while parked and with the A/C not in use. Made of heavy-duty vinyl with a drawstring closure, it also keeps dirt and debris out of the drain outlets.

## Camco Pro-Shield

Available in a variety of lengths and RV class applications, the **Pro-Shield** cover offers high-tech, triple-layer protection. The top material is made of spun-bond polypropylene that's bonded to a middle layer of micro-porous breathable film with another layer of spun-bond polypropylene underneath, resulting in a breathable cover that repels rain and snow while still allowing moisture to escape. It's also great for blocking damaging UV rays.

The Pro-Shield is secured to the RV using elastic corners, front and rear cinching straps, and an underbelly strapping system for a snug fit. Zippered entry doors allow easy access during covered storage. Integrated air vents help prevent the cover from billowing in high winds. Each cover comes with a ladder cover, patch kit, and handy storage bag, while a three-year manufacturer warranty offers peace of mind for future seasons of protection.



## Camco Ultra-Shield

All-new and available exclusively at Camping World, **Ultra-Shield** covers provide enhanced RV protection with some revolutionary construction techniques. Ultra-Shield covers use ultrasonic welding to secure seams rather than traditional stitching. Ultrasonic welding is achieved by joining two surfaces using a high-frequency acoustic vibration under pressure. The result is an RV cover that's 40% stronger and less likely to rip or tear than other covers. Then Camco tops things off by laminating two layers of spun-bond polypropylene to an outer layer of Tyvek (the same Tyvek known for

the housing industry). If that's little more than so much alphabet soup to you, let us assure you this means your RV cover is as weather-resistant as it gets. Add in elastic corners for a snug fit, covered air vents that help prevent trapped moisture, a zippered entry for easy storage access, and breathable polypropylene sides to help prevent mold and mildew, and your RV will be happy to sleep away the season beneath the Ultra-Shield. Front and rear cinching straps and an underbelly strap system hold it all together in even the most persistent windy conditions. Available in different sizes and for different RV types, Ultra-Shield covers are also backed by a three-year warranty. ■



## WINTERIZING

Before you cover up your RV for the season, you need to get it prepared for hibernation. From wash-and-wax products to dehumidifiers to antifreeze to fuel stabilizers and everything in-between, visit **Camping World** for all your RV winterizing needs.

PERFECT PARKS



## BONELLI BLUFFS RV RESORT AND CAMPGROUND

BY JOHN SULLAWAY

**Believe it or not,** RVers can find a rustic, well-appointed camping getaway near a lake just 29 miles east of downtown Los Angeles, California. Welcome to Bonelli Bluffs RV Resort and Campground in San Dimas, which overlooks 250-acre Puddingstone Lake and is close to some of Southern California's top attractions. With 504 spacious paved sites, all with full hookups and room to stretch out and enjoy the outdoors, RVers can enjoy roomy sites

in a friendly environment.

Guests can choose from lake-view sites to group sites with lush tree-shaded spaces that can accommodate large gatherings. The group sites are adjacent to multiple bathrooms, showers, parking, and a fishing beach. Pull-through sites are available.

Onsite, you'll find scenic biking and pet-friendly walking trails; a fully stocked store with RV supplies, ice-cold soft drinks, beer, wine, firewood, and ice cream; laundry facilities; 24-hour security to keep you safe and secure; and a fun social community. There are two pools: One for all ages and one just for the adults.

At nearby Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park, you can relax on the sandy beach, take a dip in Puddingstone Lake, drop a fishing line from one of the piers, or rent a pedal boat or kayak and explore the water. [bonellibluffsrv.com](http://bonellibluffsrv.com)

### 3 Reasons You'll Want to Stay!

*In the heart of San Dimas, Bonelli Bluffs puts guests close to the bright lights of the big city, along with hiking and biking trails, a big lake, and plenty of activities.*

**9.5/8.5\*/9**

Bonelli Bluffs RV Resort and Campground gets high marks from the *Good Sam Guide Series* for the facility, overall cleanliness, and visual appeal.

#### THRILLS AND CHILLS

Top SoCal Attractions, including Raging Waters, Disneyland, Griffith Observatory, Angeles National Forest, and Dodger Stadium, are all less than an hour's drive away.

#### CATCH THE BIG ONE

Cast a line into Puddingstone Lake from a boat or one of the piers to catch largemouth bass and rainbow trout. ■

About an hour from the glitz and glamour of Hollywood, Bonelli Bluffs offers more than 500 sites (329 with full-hookups) that allow visitors to relax and unwind. Spend the day on the shores of Puddingstone Lake, where you can swim and soak in some of those famous SoCal sunrises. You can also wet a line from a boat or a pier, or even captain a pedal boat or kayak on the water. Sites are spacious and include a fire ring and a table.



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# TEAM SPIRIT

Former NFL lineman Keith Sims is an RVer and family man who tackles life head-on with joy and a can-do attitude.

BY DONYA CARLSON

**F**rom battling in the trenches of the NFL to home-schooling three boys from an RV, former lineman Keith Sims says he is thankful for a blessed life. Keith credits his wife, Tia, and “five outstanding kids who are perfect for our family.” The middle child of five, Keith is also very close with his siblings and parents who live nearby his Georgia home. That’s not to say that everything is sunshine and touchdowns—he lives in constant pain from 11 years playing offense from 1990–2000, eight seasons with the Miami Dolphins and three with the Washington Redskins. But his determination and positive outlook drives him every day.

## Three-Time Pro Bowler

“In a dream come true,” Keith Sims was elected to three Pro Bowls: 1993, 1994, and 1995. He said he came into the league with a bit of a chip on his shoulder, wanting to be a first-round pick but winding up a second-round pick. He ended up as a starter as a rookie. “My head coach [hall-of-famer] Don Shula always challenged us: ‘Be the best player you can be ... and do that every single day.’ The day I signed my rookie contract he asked me, ‘What kind of player do you want to be?’ And I said I want to be a Pro Bowler, and he said ‘I’m going to hold you to that standard every day.’ And he rode me, and he drove me for three seasons. And when Shula was reading off the names for the Pro Bowl, he said, ‘I’m really happy for this guy; Keith, you’re a Pro Bowler ... go call your mom.’ I was so excited I jumped up and ran to call my mom!”

When you get to that level in football, he

explained, it truly is a job. “There’s nobody you spend more time with than your teammates and coaches. Your body is your job, and if your body isn’t working right, you can’t do it.” All players have a weight assigned, and weigh-in was on Thursday mornings. “If you are overweight, you are fined \$1,000 per pound per day! And then you have to come back Friday morning and get weighed in again. Luckily I never had to pay a fine—not that there weren’t many Wednesday nights when I was struggling not to eat.”

When he retired from the NFL, Keith bought some Dunkin’ Donuts franchises. There were a couple of early downs and lots of tremendous successes during the almost 10 years he owned them. In 2009 he sold the franchises, and about that time the Dolphins contacted him with an opportunity to join their broadcasting team. “I was ready to get back into football at that point,” he said. “And the Dolphins always treated me great. When I stepped into Dolphin

Keith and wife, Tia, along with their three boys, enjoy a family day at Lake Lanier in Georgia. Since their oldest will be off to college in about five years, they maximize their time together and plan RV trips and experiences each of them will cherish.



LIFE'S  
PRECIOUS  
MOMENTS:  
CREATING  
QUALITY  
FAMILY  
TIME



broadcasting, it was so much fun being back around the guys, the game again, being involved."

## Home on Wheels

Tia had been dragging her husband to RV shows for years, and "it's absolutely her fault we got into RVing!" At that time, he weighed 300 pounds: "I'm 6-foot-3, I need a big bed, a big shower, and the thought of squeezing into an RV with my wife and three little kids just didn't sound fun." But Tia had a "pretty compelling argument"—rather than stay in hotels when flying between home and sideline reporting in Florida, plus detouring to Minnesota to watch his oldest son play football, she suggested getting an RV they could park in Fort Lauderdale. "It's your place," she said, "and then when the season is over, we can use it to travel and explore the stuff we're teaching our kids at homeschool."

Because of Keith's size, they gravitated toward a Class A. As newbies, their first foray "was a mess." They bought a used Class A and headed to New Jersey from Georgia.

***Elected to three Pro Bowls, Sims played in the NFL for 11 seasons. He also played at Iowa State University, and was named to the Iowa State Hall of Fame in 2006.***



## HAVING A BALL

Keith took a two-week RV inspector course so he could learn about the inner workings of their Newmar Dutch Star to do minor fixes and how to tow a dinghy vehicle. "If you need to block a linebacker, I'm your guy. But for major RV projects, I leave that to the experts," he said.

***"I love sports because it teaches you so many life lessons—how to work hard, how to self-sacrifice ... how to deal with different people from different backgrounds and races and colors and all come together for a common goal."***

On the way up, the first A/C broke ("It was a warm drive") and it had water leaks. On the way back, the second A/C broke, the windshield started to pop out, and the awning over the door got stuck out the last 200 miles. The chagrined dealer gave them back every penny, plus a huge discount off a new coach. They bought a Newmar, and "my wife was thrilled with the Comfort Drive." They had that for about a year, and then at the Atlanta RV Show they got a great deal on a Newmar Dutch Star that they've been in ever since.

## Life Lessons

Recently retired from sideline reporting, Keith now coaches football at a new high school in Georgia. "I love sports because it teaches you so many life lessons—how to work hard, how to self-sacrifice ... how to deal with different people from different backgrounds and races and colors and all come together for a common goal," Keith said. "When I was growing up, I was a

multi-sport athlete; I went from varsity football to wrestling to running track. These kids tend to be focused on one particular sport—their bodies don't mature as athletes. They become pretty good one-sport-focused athletes but the moment their body is asked to go outside the realm of that sport, it breaks down because there's no muscle memory. Your body will become a better football player by doing other sports."

## Making Memories

Keith is thankful that he's able to share new places with his kids. "RVing has really brought our family together and we love every minute of it. And it's those memories we'll cherish forever." Their boys are very much into math, science, and technology, and are thrilled to visit various science museums during their travels.

"I love to bond with my boys and do trips with them and give my wife a break. We love hiking, s'mores, fires. I've taken



them tubing, hiking up to Helen [Blue Ridge Mountains]—Georgia has some tremendous state parks—and we’ve

been to the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville [Alabama].”

They are annual passholders to Disney

World and have spent many birthdays and New Year’s Eves celebrating at Epcot. Keith enjoys cooking for his family, and when RVing they mimic their home menus so they can eat healthy. You can find some of Keith’s recipes on *blog.campingworld.com*, as well as see him in action in “The Great American Cookoff.” Their rescued pup, Ebony, is an RVing fan as well.

The Sims family likes to see movies on opening day. “The beauty of home-schooling is that we can go to a matinee, which saves a lot of money, and we’ve had the theater to ourselves multiple times during the last two years.” Keith has been a movie buff since he stumbled in to see *Star Wars* when he was 10 years old. “I’m not a crazy *Star Wars* collector,” he chuckles, “but I do have some pretty fun pieces—a 7-foot-tall Darth Vader, a 6-foot-tall Stormtrooper, three different Yodas, Han Solo. I’ve got all the original movies on VHS, laser disc, and an entire DVD collection. An original *Empire Strikes Back* movie poster is on my wall.”

The former lineman who has struggled with weight for most of his life is now happy with his weight. He works out regularly at his home gym but rather than heavy weight lifting, it’s more about repetition, for muscle tone “to protect what I have.” He continues, “My first surgery in my life was when I tore my meniscus my rookie year, and two years ago I had my 16th surgery because of football. My left knee is up next.”

“I have a lot to be thankful for,” he declares. “Football has been a blessing to me—well it’s been a blessing and a curse—but I try to err on the positive side about the great things it’s brought to my life. I don’t think I would have achieved nearly what I’ve achieved in my life at this point if it hadn’t been for some of the great coaches, the great mentors, the teammates I’m still friends with to this day, and experiences because of the game.” And with his family by his side experiencing the joys of RV travel, life doesn’t get any better. ■

*You can follow the Sims family on Instagram and Twitter @soulfulrvfamily. In addition to working with Camping World, the Sims’ are a spokes family for gorving.com.*

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COLEMAN, CIRCLE 116 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# Campground Spotlight

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# Rigs + Gear



## The Right Direction

by KRISTOPHER BUNKER

PREVIEW



EAST TO WEST  
AHARA 325RL

BASE MSRP  
\$89,610

**DIMENSIONS**  
Ext Length: 34' 9"  
Ext Width: 8' 5"  
Ext Height: 13' 5"

**CAPACITIES**  
Freshwater: 63 gal  
Black-water: 45 gal  
Gray-water: 90 gal  
Propane: 15 gal

**WEIGHTS**  
Dry Weight: 11,759 lbs  
Hitch Weight: 2,185 lbs  
GVWR: 15,500 lbs

CIRCLE 150 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Many of us break into RVing with a more compact pop-up or travel trailer to make for an easier towing learning curve. But what if there were a fifth-wheel that contained all the luxuries of an upscale home but in an easy-towing footprint that still allows you to enjoy the tighter confines of state and national park campgrounds? At less than 35 feet long and weighing under 12,000 pounds dry, the East to West Ahara 325RL is just that, and so much more.

The Ahara lineup is available in three floorplans with a beautiful Barrington maple decor, all of which are built to last, with 5/8-inch tongue-and-groove plywood decking, high-gloss laminated side walls, Azdel composite panels, heavy-duty axles and springs, and Nev-R-Adjust brakes. Plus, the 101-inch-wide chassis includes a sizable

drop-frame pass-through storage area.

The 325RL features 6½ feet of headroom in the bedroom and bathroom, plus a spacious seamless shower, large sofa, a double-door pantry and coat closet, and a king bed with nightstand shelves. The amidships dual-entry bathroom features sliding-door access, and the porcelain toilet is positioned for increased elbow room. The living area includes a TV above an electric fireplace, and the island configuration in the kitchen maximizes prep space. Much appreciated are the 16-cubic-foot residential fridge, high-efficiency triple A/C system, second powered awning, stackable washer/dryer prep, and heated holding tanks for four-season capabilities.

[easttowestrv.com](http://easttowestrv.com)

**Tow Tappin'** The standard Ahara Towing Package includes an aerodynamic fiberglass front cap with LED lights; upgraded suspension, axles, and brakes; and rear-view camera prep.

**Need More?** Opt for the Solar Package (320-watt solar panel, inverter, and MPPT controller) and the Super Duty Towing Package (MORryde rubber pinbox and Dexter hydraulic disc brakes).

[1] Wall-hugger theater seats with power recliners and USB ports provide a perfect view of the entertainment center. [2] The kitchen island also features a stainless-steel farmhouse sink and a high-rise faucet. [3] The 50-inch LED TV on a telescoping mount is enhanced with a Bluetooth-enabled soundbar.

# TECH Q&A

**A faulty-light fix, a foul-smelling black tank, removing rust stains, and long-distance trailer plug-in.**

by **KEN FREUND**

## Overhead Lights Inoperative

**Q** We recently purchased a 2012 Airstream Interstate Class B motorhome and are having a problem with the overhead lights. We have checked and changed the fuse, checked the switch and lights, and cannot find any problem. The lights are LEDs. I do not know what else to do.

Jim Singleton, via email

**A** I assume the problem you are having with them is that they don't work at all, not intermittently, for example. LEDs usually last a long time, and it's highly unlikely they all failed at once. Therefore, I would start with the fuse panel. You mentioned that you checked and changed "the" fuse. However, I have found that on some RVs, the fuses are incorrectly marked or the names are confusing. I suggest checking

the other fuse locations carefully, as sometimes it's very difficult to see the tiny breaks in the internal fuse wire. If all are OK, I'd measure voltage at the switch. If that is good, I'd measure voltage coming out of the switch, and then at the light fixtures. However, I suspect the problem is at the fuse panel or switch.

## Black-Water-Tank Odor

**Q** We have a Cougar 26RBS travel trailer and continually have a problem with sewer-gas odor. We have flushed the tank several times, added about two gallons of freshwater and chemicals, but for about two days there is the odor. We currently use bottled chemicals, but we have also tried the pods. We never had this issue with our other trailers. Any thoughts?

Debbie Tschida  
Clarksville, Tennessee

**A** There might be a buildup on the walls of the tank, and, of course, hot weather makes it far

worse. Try filling the tank about  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with hot water using a hose from your home hot-water heater. Then tow it right away to a dump station, sloshing as much as possible. Add water and strong chemicals as before. One thing you might check is your RV's toilet vent from tank to roof. Check as much of it as you can; sometimes they are damaged. Also consider adding a small vent to the top cap ([campingworld.com/cyclone-sewer-vent-black-82130.html](http://campingworld.com/cyclone-sewer-vent-black-82130.html)) or a solar vent ([ultra-fab.com/product/mini-solar-plumbing-vent](http://ultra-fab.com/product/mini-solar-plumbing-vent)).

## Toilet Rust Stains

**Q** We have gone seasonal camping for the first time and the water there is rather high in iron. This is causing rust stains in our toilet on our Mallard travel trailer. I am wondering what cleaning product you would recommend that would safely remove them?

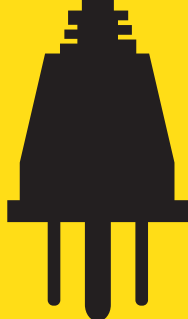
Beth McClune  
Northfield, Minnesota

# Extension Cord Quandary

**Q** I am relatively new to the travel-trailer world, though I had a pop-up trailer for years. Now I have a Sunset Trail 185RK with 30-amp electrical service. I installed a 30-amp RV plug at the back of my house to plug in the trailer. What I want to do is get a longer RV cord to run to my trailer when I park it in the front of the house (just run a longer RV-capable cord from the back around to the front). It would be 100 feet. Should it be the same gauge as what the trailer requires for normal operation of appliances? I will not be trying to jury rig anything (like using a regular extension cord with adapter and attempting to run A/C off a 15-amp circuit). Right now I am using the factory cord along with a heavy-gauge RV extension cord when it's less than 50 feet. —William Hedges, via email

**A** Whether an extension cord causes a significant voltage drop depends on the length and gauge of the wire and the appliances plugged into it. The wire gauge and type of cord needed depends entirely on how much current you plan to run through it. You'll find that 30-amp-rated RV extension cords come in lengths of 50 feet or less. If you connect two of these together, there will be more voltage drop. To avoid this, you'll have to go to a heavier (lower number) wire gauge. This will cost hundreds of dollars, and I think you will find it cost prohibitive.

What do you plan to run in your trailer at the same time? If you don't run heavy current users such as the air conditioner or electric space heater or hot-water heater, you should be able to get by fine with a heavy-duty extension cord rated for 20 amps with an adapter. This will save a lot of money. Install a plug-in voltage meter to monitor voltage; it should be above 108 volts to protect appliances. Also regularly check the surface temperature of the power cords and plugs; they should not be allowed to get hot to the touch. Without heavier appliances, use a 10-gauge or 12-gauge cord, nothing lighter. Otherwise, if you want to run the air conditioner, etc., you might consider installing a 30-amp power outlet on that side of the house.





**A** The combination of vinegar and baking soda are popular and fairly mild chemicals widely used to remove rust stains. Pour cheap white vinegar into the toilet to cover the rust stains and add a cup of baking soda. Then pour some more vinegar on top and use a toilet brush to scrub the sides and spread the cleaning solution around. Let it soak for a half hour to one hour. Scrub the inside of the toilet with the toilet brush again, and now the rust stains should be gone. If this doesn't work for stubborn rust stains, try oxalic acid, which is a commercial rust remover that will dissolve rust quickly. You will need to wear rubber gloves and eye protection. Use the acid in a well-ventilated area, and use according to the directions on the package.

## Interior Lights Flicker on Solar Power

**Q** We own a 2015 Tiffin Open Road 31 SA Class A motorhome. I recently changed out the four AGM batteries for a 300-amp lithium battery. Part of the upgrade was a new Go Power! solar controller that has a lithium setting (14.0V and 14.2V). When I pull the fuse on the solar and the motorhome is hooked up to shorepower all is well (voltage stays below 14 volts and no flickering). However, when I connect the solar and the battery charges over 14 volts, the LED lights inside the RV

flicker. Any idea why that would happen, and what I can do to correct the flickering?

Ken Schiltz, Prescott, Arizona

**A** I believe the controller you have is pulse-width modulated (PWM), which (at the risk of oversimplification) sort of chops up the incoming power from the solar panel to control and limit charging voltage. This can cause LEDs to blink or flicker rapidly, because they react very fast to

changes in power to them. Conventional tungsten or halogen bulbs don't react as fast, so you probably wouldn't notice this if you had them.

Bob at Go Power! ([gpelectric.com](http://gpelectric.com)) said the wire coming from the solar panels should not be wired to the DC distribution center, but rather wired directly to the battery. He has had customer calls regarding flickering before (cheap LEDs can experience flickering also) because of this. Basically, the battery can act as a capacitor to absorb the spikes and variations in voltage coming from the charge controller. If moving the controller output wire to the battery doesn't solve the flickering, I suggest getting a large capacitor such as is used on aftermarket high-power car stereos and connect it across the power terminals by the distribution center (positive + capacitor terminal to positive power wire, nega-

tive – capacitor terminal to negative or ground side wire). If this doesn't solve the flickering, you might have to charge to an MPPT-type controller.

## Stove Won't Light at Higher Elevations

**Q** We purchased a Renegade Valencia 35MB on a Freightliner chassis in January 2022. It came equipped with a model 31 Dometic three-burner stove top. There is no oven, just a three-burner stove top. When we used the stove on our first trip at lower elevations, it worked fine. The propane tank gauge read 71%. When we got to Yosemite Valley at an elevation of about 4,000 feet, the stove would not light. The water heater and furnace worked fine. We had a fifth-wheel before this motorhome and had no problems with the stove working in Yosemite or the Tetons. We contacted Renegade, who said to have the regulator checked out. That was done, and the regulator was said to be fine. The Renegade rep said he contacted Dometic, who told him that the stove top would not work at that elevation. He had no suggestions to correct the issue. I have read other RV reports about Dometic stoves that have the same issue. Will a different brand work better? Any suggestions on what stove to replace it with?

Mike Connally, Martinez, California

**A** Martinez, California's elevation is approximately 23 feet above sea level. If you had the propane regulator on the stove tested at a similar low elevation, where it was working fine, I would expect it to pass the test. But it needs to be done at a higher altitude. The floor of Yosemite Valley (actually 3,960 feet MSL) is way too low where anyone should have problems lighting a stove. Upon my further questioning, Mike Connally added that "at altitude I could not hear gas or smell gas at the burner. I did try to light each burner separately, and one at a time with a butane lighter. The stove top lights fine at my home."

The fact that the other gas appliances worked fine indicates that the main regulator at the tank is functioning

## TECH TIP

### DEF SENSOR WORKAROUND

A lot of owners have been left stranded or unable to take their diesel-powered RVs on the road because of Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF) sensor failures. A faulty sensor causes the engine-control software to gradually derate engine power until the vehicle can only move at 5 mph. To make things worse, there's a serious shortage of replacement sensors!

Recently the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), diesel-engine manufacturers and owners have acted upon this problem. An EPA statement says, in part, "The Engine Manufacturers Association (EMA), on behalf of its member companies, has proposed an industry-wide approach that would provide a software solution for vehicles with failed parts to enable them to operate temporarily while the industry works to produce more replacement parts. The manufacturers must still develop new software code and test it..." Cummins has developed a new engine software calibration to prevent major engine derating. Meanwhile, DEF-sensor simulator plans are being released at no cost to the public. Sensors should be replaced as soon as they are available.

A DEF sensor simulator "fools" the computer that the DEF sensor is working. This prevents engine power derating. A DEF sensor workaround website ([defsim.myervin.com](http://defsim.myervin.com)) has information for owners.

normally. I suggest borrowing a known good regulator from a friend's RV stove and trying it up at the Yosemite area. It almost has to be that component, which should be covered under warranty. Visit [dometic.com](http://dometic.com) for customer-service info.

### Dog Screen Protector

**Q** We bought a 2022 Bushwhacker Plus FD trailer and need a screen-door protector and some way of protecting



A member of the Good Sam family since 1988, **Ken Freund** has been helping readers better understand their RVs for more than 30 years. Throughout his career, he has been a service manager, technician, shop owner, an ASE Certified Master Technician, an instructor of the California Smog Check Program, and author of Haynes Repair Manuals.

*the two window screens because we have a little spoiled dog that does not like to be left at home even though we have another little dog to keep him company. We would appreciate any suggestions because we've*

*not been able to find the correct size.*  
Helen Dean, via email

**A** Camping World ([campingworld.com](http://campingworld.com)) offers a dog screen from Lippert. Also, visit [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and type "Dogs-Screen-Protector" into the search box; you'll find dozens of types of protective screens for both doors and windows.

### Sprinter Won't Sprint!

**Q** I have a 2008 motorhome on a Dodge Sprinter chassis with a 3.5-liter Mercedes-Benz gas engine with 54,000 miles on it. Recently on a long road trip, it developed a strange "no start" phenomenon. It starts well first thing in the morning and will run for hundreds of miles. But if I stop and switch off the engine, it will not turn back on and I will have to wait for hours. The engine will not crank over at all after driving a while. All dashboard lights come on as normal. A key turn will not produce any clicks; nothing. If I wait for several hours, the engine will start as though nothing was wrong. Then it's all okay for another few hundred miles to the next stop, until I eventually limp back home to Canada. It has brand-new batteries for both the coach and engine. Wires and cables are good and the terminals are clean. I had the alternator output checked, and it's said to be good. All relays are in place and not loose (six in total). A Dodge dealer in the Salt Lake City area did not have an answer, and I was to wait for weeks for an appointment! I am still on the road and hoping to make it home. AAA can only tinker around with a battery boost, and by that time it's always a few hours in and the darn thing magically starts again!

Battery voltage was measured at the terminals around 13-plus volts, and the technician in Salt Lake City also measured alternator output (good). But the technician could not find the starter for the vehicle under the hood or under

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*the engine, and this was an automotive electrical shop dealing solely with starters/alternator and electrical issues! I did not want to be stranded for hours and moved on when no help or assurances were forthcoming. I have reached Seattle so far doing a couple hundred miles at a time filling up but not switching off at the gas pumps!*

*I think it's a heat issue on the starter end, or a faulty relay that's cutting out with heat. Any suggestions?*

**Naz Keshavji, Vancouver, B.C., Canada**

**A** I later heard from Naz that he made it home safely. I strongly suspect that the starter motor assembly is getting heat soaked and not working until it cools down. I've experienced that problem with several vehicles. A quick and dirty trick I use is to spray water onto the starter from a pump spray bottle. If the starter then works immediately after cooldown, you know it's the problem. I'm shocked that a technician who works on starters would not know that starters are almost always mounted to the lower rear side of the engine just forward of the bell housing! You can listen for the sound of the starter when it is operating to locate it.

If the lights don't dim when the key is turned to operate the starter, it indicates that no power is getting to the starter solenoid and to the starter. You could try swapping the starter relay in the power center with an adjacent relay having the same number stamped on it. However, these don't get that hot. I suspect the culprit is the starter and solenoid assembly. They are usually replaced as a set but can be replaced separately. To test them when hot, first connect test leads (while the engine is cold) with alligator clips to the small (trigger) wire that activates the solenoid and also the large main terminal going to the starter solenoid. Keep these leads away from heat sources, which could melt the insulation, and away from metal to ground them. I clip them to plastic under the hood. Then when the engine won't crank, you can connect a voltmeter to the trigger lead and see if it gets about 12 volts when the key is turned to start



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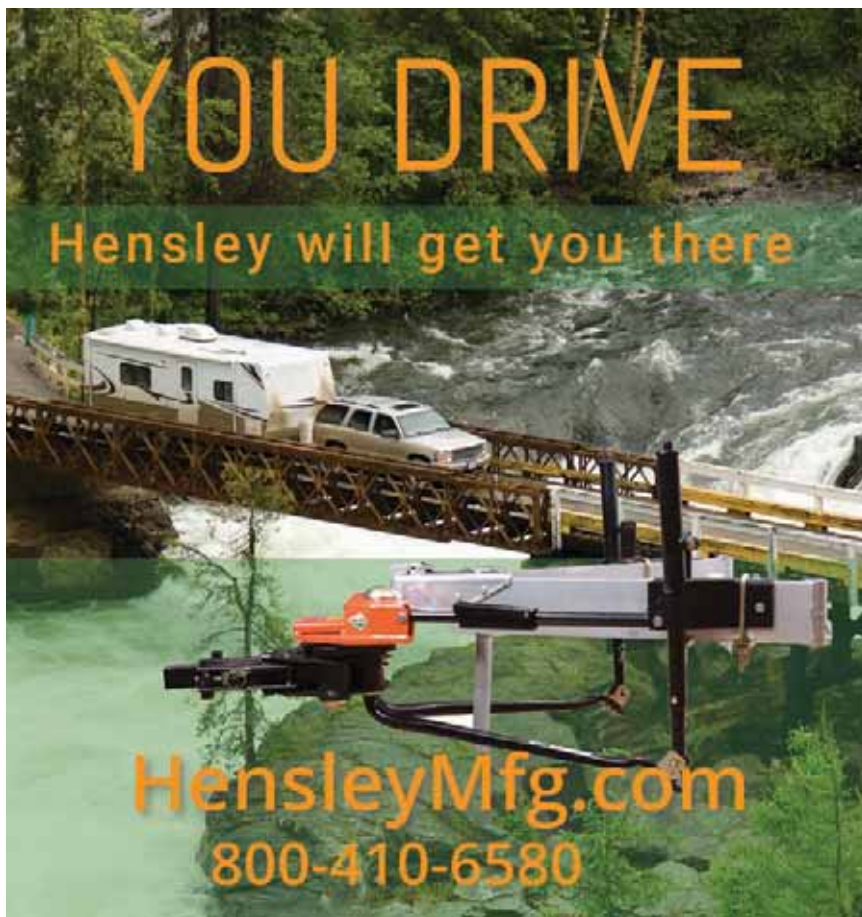
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## ■ RIGS + GEAR / tech q&a

(it should). Then check for voltage at the large terminal via the test leads both at rest and when the key is turned. If 12 volts is getting to the solenoid trigger wire, but the main starter terminal voltage isn't dropping under load, the solenoid isn't working. If the main starter terminal voltage drops (say from 12.5 down to roughly about 11 volts) it indicates current is getting through the solenoid, but the starter itself is faulty.

To protect the starter in the future, consider adding a heat shield. Here's a URL for a typical product: [amazon.com/Thermo-Tec-14150-Starter-Heat-Shield/dp/B00029KCWK](https://www.amazon.com/Thermo-Tec-14150-Starter-Heat-Shield/dp/B00029KCWK) ■

## HAVE A QUESTION?

Looking for answers on all things RV, including systems, engines, accessories, or construction? Submit it to our expert at [techqa@rv.com](mailto:techqa@rv.com) and it may be selected for publication. You must include your name, city and state, phone number (will not be published), and type and model of your RV.



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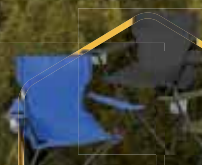
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# DRINK UP!

Water is the source of life in an RV; here's how to keep it clean, tasty, and safe.

by JAMES ADINARO

**One of the great things** about RVing is that there's seldom just one right way to do things. I'm normally a die-hard "Type A" personality, but even I can appreciate this flexibility. Ask five RVers how they handle a common task, and you might get five different answers. This is true even with something as essential as how to treat drinking water in your RV.

Years ago, as new RVers, we quickly learned that there were two basic approaches to drinking water on RV trips: Bring bottled water, or drink from your RV's plumbing. Our first RV was a camper van with little room for storing bottles. On top of that, we drink a LOT of water. The expense, the storage, and the amount of plastic waste we'd produce quickly put us into the "drink from the RV" camp.

Looking back, I'm thankful nobody got sick! We did a lot of "learn as you go" RVing, and managing our drinking water is one place where we've learned quite a bit. So here I'll boil down (Ha!) the lessons we've learned through the years, so you don't get sick, either.

## Clean, Tasty, and Safe

Let's start with what I think are the minimum requirements for drinking water, and then we'll figure out how to produce it from your RV. It all boils down to those three things: clean, tasty, and safe.

**Clean:** Nobody wants to drink water with gunk floating in it ... even if it's technically safe to drink. Dirt, rust, bugs, mold, and a whole host of other things simply don't belong in your drinking water. If you want to drink from it, those things don't belong in your RV's plumbing system either.

**Tasty:** We've all had foul-tasting water, or water that tastes like a warm plastic jug, and nobody likes it. So besides just being clean, the water from your RV needs to taste and smell good as well. Because if it doesn't taste good, you're not going to drink it.

**Safe:** Basically, you need your drinking water to not make you sick. This one is hard to quantify without special equipment because you can't see, smell, or taste it. You need to ensure that bacteria, viruses, toxic chemicals, and the like aren't in your RV's water system, and there are a few ways to accomplish this.

Fortunately, getting clean, tasty, and safe water from your RV doesn't have to be difficult. It comes down to two things: the right equipment and the right habits. Either one of them by themselves could still leave you with undrinkable water.

## HEALTHY HYDRATION

Quality drinking water from your RV's onboard plumbing comes down to three things. You want the water to be clean (so that it's appealing), tasty (so that you'll actually want to drink it), and safe (so that nobody gets sick).



PHOTOS: JAMES ADINARO AND KYLE SHEPPARD



1) When putting the water hose away, coil it from one end to the other so that water can flow out, and inspect it for damage or contamination. 2) A set of inexpensive hose end caps can keep contaminants and bugs out of the hose. These Valterra caps are ventilated to help prevent stagnation.

## The Right Equipment

The basic equipment you'll need to get and keep your RV drinking-water-friendly is readily available, and inexpensive.

RV freshwater hoses are the most obvious piece of equipment you'll need. These hoses are either white or blue in color. The entire RV universe has standardized around these colors, and we all know the rules. Don't try to defy the system by using a different color, and certainly don't try to save a few bucks by using a spare hose you have in your yard.

The main benefit of these hoses is that they'll be guaranteed not to leach any unwanted chemicals into your water supply. Personally, I only use hoses with well-made, stainless-steel fittings on the hose ends. I like them because they're less likely to leak, they stand up to abuse well, and they don't contain any lead. ("Lead-free" brass can contain up to .25% lead. Who knew?)

When you're not using the hoses, you'll want to make sure dirt and bugs don't find their way inside. I use an inexpensive set of ventilated hose end caps for that purpose. You could also simply connect the ends of the hose to keep contaminants out.

Other accessories you might need depend on the water connections and how you set up your particular RV. You may want a pressure regulator (again, I'd recommend stainless



steel), a spout with a shut-off, a funnel, or even a swiveling elbow attachment. In general, when shopping for these accessories, keep in mind that you'll be drinking from them. Skip the discount bin or the landscaping aisle, and pay attention to getting quality, drinking-water-safe accessories.

## Filters

If you're serious about drinking the water from your RV, you're going to need a water filter.

We use different filters on our incoming water, depending on the situation. When we're filling up in parts unknown, we opt for the heavy-duty filtration of our Clear-source Ultra filter.



## Keep It Clean



*Here's a partial list of things to bear in mind to help keep your RV's water setup clean and protected from contamination:*

- Keep freshwater hoses white or blue in color.
- Store water accessories in a clean, separate container.
- Keep hose caps on the ends of the hoses when in storage.
- Don't store drinking-water hoses with the sewer hose. (I really hope nobody does that.)
- Drain the water out of the hoses by coiling them up from one end to the other, allowing the water to flow out.
- Be mindful that you don't let the free end drag through the mud.
- When putting away any water accessories, take the few seconds to wipe them down and dry them off, checking for damage or contamination as you do.
- Change the water filter cartridges regularly.



But RV water filters range in price from \$20 to \$1,000! That difference in price reflects a dizzying array of capabilities and features, and there's no way to compare them all in this space. So I'll tell you what we do for our own drinking water. (Hint: We use multiple filters.)

The first thing we do is to always filter water on the way into our RV. We have two different filters we use, depending on the circumstances. If we're connecting to a well-known, municipal water supply that we'd normally

consider "safe," then we'll use a simple inline hose filter. We're currently using the Clear<sub>2</sub>O inline filter ([clear2o.com](http://clear2o.com); also available at [campingworld.com](http://campingworld.com)). It filters

down to 1 micron, which gets the water clean. It also features solid carbon block filtration,

which improves the taste by removing impurities, sulfur, chlorine, and other chemicals. There are other simple inline hose filters available, and most of them should do the job just fine.

If we have any doubts about the water source, we'll use a more comprehensive filter. We currently have the Clearsource Ultra ([clearsourcecerv.com](http://clearsourcecerv.com); also available at [campingworld.com](http://campingworld.com)), and this is the water filter we'd use if we were headed into uncharted territory. It has three filter canisters: a 5-micron prefilter to get the water "clean," a 0.5-micron carbon block second stage that gets the water "tasty," and a Virus-Guard third stage to remove bacteria and viruses and make the water "safe." Large and heavy, it's a beast of a filter, but it certainly gets the job done.

There are other options in canister filters, and you can select a filter to meet your comfort level and your intended destinations. One good thing about canister filters is that most of them are standardized around 10-inch cartridges, which means replacements are easy to get.

### Extra Step

Even though we filter all the water that gets into our RV, when it comes to water that we'll put into our bodies (versus flushing a toilet), we take things a step further. We've installed a point-of-use water filter with a separate tap that is only used for drinking water.

There are benefits to this approach.



Inline hose filters like the Clear<sub>2</sub>O offer a level of filtration that should be able to treat most municipal water supplies to remove impurities and improve the taste.



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First, while we know the water that gets into our RV is fine, there is always the chance that something could happen to the water in our RV's storage tank that we're not aware of. The point-of-use filter is a second chance to deal with any possible contamination. Another benefit is that by filtering the water again right at the place and time of use, we keep that drinking water tasting as fresh as possible (and not tasting like the hot plastic tank it was stored in).

Our point-of-use filter is made by Guzzle H2O ([guzzleh2o.com](http://guzzleh2o.com)). It uses the common 10-inch cartridges to get the water clean and tasty. To make the water "safe," it uses LED Ultraviolet-C purification to inactivate bacteria, protozoa, and viruses. There are other point-of-use filters out there that you could choose from. Just remember the criteria of clean, tasty, and safe when making your selection.

## The Right Habits

Even the best equipment won't keep your water drinkable if you don't take proper care of your RV's water system. So here are a few habits you should adopt if you want to drink the water from your RV.



Water we will drink gets an extra level of filtration beyond our general-use water. Our point-of-use water filter is a simple addition that treats the water at a single fixture in our RV, and even includes UV-C purification.

**Sanitizing:** Clean water doesn't come out of dirty pipes. Get in the habit of regularly cleaning and sanitizing your RV's freshwater system. There are numerous print and online resources to guide you here. The important thing is to sanitize once per camping season at a minimum. Twice is better!

## Keep the Fresh Tank

**Fresh:** We literally never hook up to campground water, except to fill the tanks. There are several reasons for this, but the main one is that by using the water from our RV's tank, we keep that water turning over and fresh. Stagnation is an enemy of fresh water, so even if you hook up to "City Water," pay attention to the fresh tank and don't let it stagnate.

**Practice Safe Hookups:** Be mindful of the water source and take appropriate precautions depending on the situation. I've turned down water fill-ups when I wasn't confident of the source. For example, some well water is fantastic, and some is suspect—if I don't know which it is, I take a pass.

Our RV drinking water is always dependable and consistent, and we wouldn't have it any other way. If you follow these tips, you, too, can ditch the bottled water on your next RV trip. ■



CASUAL TECH  
WITH JAMES

**James Adinara** is a former aerospace engineer who discovered a love of RVing, and especially RV modding, when he and his wife, Stefany, bought their first RV more than a decade ago. Since that time, James has tackled hundreds of complex RV modifications, usually without a net. He's chronicled his RV mod adventures—and misadventures—over on [thefitrv.com](http://thefitrv.com). Check it out to learn more.



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# Mountain Adventure

Your guide to RVing in the Adirondacks.

BY DANIELLE ISERMANN

**T**here is nothing like stepping out of your RV in the morning and taking in a breath of fresh mountain air. When most people think about RVing, they aren't necessarily thinking about places to go in the Northeast. However, there are quite a few hidden gems in the region that are breathtaking. Having traveled all over the country, I can assure you that there is no place like the Adirondack Mountains in upstate New York. Whether you like camping in state parks or luxury RV resorts, it is an avid RVer's paradise.

## OUTDOOR ACTION

The Adirondacks are a great place for a variety of outdoor activities. There are several lakes in the surrounding areas that have specific kayak/canoe launches for public use. Also, the Adirondack Park has more than 2,000 miles of marked hiking trails that allow you to really take in all the natural beauty of the mountains. If hiking isn't for you, you can always drive up Prospect Mountain to get a breathtaking view of the vast mountain ranges within the Adirondack Park.

One of the most popular attractions is Lake George, also known as the Queen of American Lakes. It is touted as one of the cleanest lakes in the country. The lake is a gem for kayaking, canoeing, fishing, and boating. After a fun day on the water, take a stroll through Lake George Village and explore the various local restaurants and shops.

## STAY + PLAY

If you want to camp close to the village, stay at Lake

George Battleground Campground ([dec.ny.gov](http://dec.ny.gov)). If you prefer connecting with nature, try Hearststone Point Campground, with its more than 200 campsites. It is located right on Lake George and has a private sandy beach and swimming area exclusively for campers. What makes this campground so unique is that it is one of the only locations in Lake George that you can camp on the water; don't miss the beautiful sunsets overlooking the lake in the summertime.

Lake George RV Park ([lakegeorgervpark.com](http://lakegeorgervpark.com)) is one of the most luxurious RV resorts in the Northeast. It has a small waterpark, a gym, two outdoor pools, an indoor pool, a stocked fishing pond, athletic fields, and spacious sites. There's even a trolley that takes you to the French Mountain Commons outlets and shops down the road. For an additional fee, the park has a trolley that takes you right into Lake

George Village. From the park, you have direct access to the mountain-biking trails that span nearly 17 miles around the lake.

A few miles away is the quaint little town of Bolton Landing, New York. Downtown is filled with antique stores and unique shops that have great souvenirs. Bolton is also situated on Lake George and has its own public beach, Rogers Memorial Park. The park is a beautiful way to spend the day relaxing on Lake George. The park has a public dock so that you can dock your boat and enjoy the restaurants and shops. Grab a bite to eat at the Algonquin Restaurant right outside of the main town of Bolton and enjoy great views.

Just when you think you have seen it all in the Adirondacks, there is always more. The adventure begins here. [visitadirondacks.com](http://visitadirondacks.com) ■

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People from all over the country visit the region to try to hike up the 46 Adirondack High Peaks. People who accomplish the mission call themselves "Adirondack 46ers."

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# New Lease on Life

How my dogs and traveling have helped me in my battle with depression.

BY RACHAEL JOHNSON  
@2TRAVELINGDOGS

**Depression has been my** constant companion for as long as I can remember. I have learned to live with depression and accept that I will always have to fight it. In our blog, I often refer to this companion of mine as the “Depression Monster.” And I truly feel that it is a monster. Sometimes it is a big monster, sometimes it is barely noticeable in the room. But it is always there.

I am not a mental-health professional, and I do not offer advice to others on how to fight the symptoms of depression. I can, however, tell my experiences, be honest and open about my battles, and be truly sympathetic to all of us who know how hard it is to cope some days.

My earliest memories of depression are ones that include thoughts of self-doubt and fitting in at school. Later in life, the pressures of growing up, leaving home, and getting married at a young age with adult responsibilities only kept me so

busy that I ignored how depressed I truly was. I had always wanted children of my own, but when that didn't work out, I felt worthless and defeated. I felt trapped in a life I had built, and yet I didn't feel fulfilled in any way.

## Unconditional Love

One day, my husband surprised me with a rescue dog from our local Humane Society of Tampa Bay named Ernie. We changed his name to Peanut Butter Brickle, and he became my focus. He needed me, and he needed exercise. I wasn't even a little prepared on how to take care of him, so I did research, increased my activity level to take him with me, and I saw immediate changes in Brickle.

**But I had no idea the amount of exercise I would get when we later adopted a dog from the same shelter named Levi.**

We changed Levi's name to Digby Pancake. And Digby was unlike any dog I had ever known. His nose was his guide, he loved the outdoors, he loved to try and escape his harness, and if we did not exercise enough, he would try to escape more! I

decided that hiking every day was a necessity. But since we were in a developed area, there were not many places to hike, and Brickle and Digby grew tired of the same places. We started planning weekend trips and small adventures. I saw their personalities grow, and I realized that I was forgetting how depressed I was. They needed me. **We all needed each other. And we all needed to travel.**

In 2015, we sold our home, bought an RV, and went full time. It was exciting to me to think that Brickle and Digby would get to travel to new places and new hiking trails every single week. But I did not

*“Seeing new places kept us all learning and active. New terrains to hike and mountains and beaches to explore kept us wanting more.”*

know that this way of life, and my calling as a dog parent, would help my depression. Seeing new places kept us all learning and active. New terrains to hike and mountains and beaches to explore kept us wanting more. **We wanted to live.** That Depression Monster was always there reminding me that I wasn't

## A NEW CHAPTER

When Digby passed away last December, I was feeling the monster's presence more than ever before. But now, our newly adopted dog Fruitycake has given me new purpose. And along with that, a new reason to show him the world through traveling.

Pets are like family members in that they need love, care, and attention. But they offer all of that—and so much more—in return.



good enough. But when I hiked with my dogs, took care of my dogs, and was simply in the company of my dogs, I was good enough. They needed me more than my depression. **I felt like a new person. A person who I didn't even know I was. I was adventurous, I was brave, I was worthy.**

### Sense of Purpose

If I told you that my dogs and traveling keeps my depression away totally, that would not be the truth. I have accepted that some days, no matter where I am, it will try and find me. And it did one day on a beautiful hike in Virginia at Natural Tunnel State Park. There I was, with Brickle and Digby on top of a beautiful mountain. I looked down below and for a moment, I thought maybe I wasn't good enough. That I was lying to myself. That no one really needed me. Yes, that monster was back. I thought maybe I couldn't be strong anymore. But then, I looked at my dogs. **Their eyes and wagging tails reminded me instantly of who I was. I was good enough for them.** And if I truly believed that they were the best things that had ever happened to me—and I did—I had to keep fighting the depression battle. And I know I always will.

For some, medication and therapy are a must. **Just as we have to feed our bodies with good food and take care of them, we have to take care of our mental health.** It is a different path for everyone. For me, my path has kept me going with my dogs and traveling.

Just last month, we found ourselves in the mountains of North Carolina at a place called Sliding Rock with a natural waterslide on Looking Glass Creek. I have been scared of everything all of my life. Scared of change, scared of getting hurt, scared of failing. But even though it was cold and I wasn't prepared, I decided to slide down that rock into the pool below. I would be brave. **I looked at my dogs and I knew they were telling me to do it. Telling me to live!** And that is what I will do. And I did it! You can, too! ■

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### READER SERVICE

#### ADVERTISERS' INDEX

| RS # | ADVERTISER                                 | PAGE # |
|------|--|--------|
| 101  | Air Lift Company .....                     | 53     |
| 103  | B&W Trailer Hitches .....                  | 43     |
| 104  | Bauer Products .....                       | 22     |
| 105  | Blue Ox .....                              | 17     |
| 112  | Brake Buddy .....                          | 29     |
| 106  | Brazel's RV Performance .....              | 36     |
| 107  | Camco, Inc. ....                           | 42     |
|      | Camping World .....                        | 47     |
| 116  | Coleman .....                              | 37     |
|      | DISH Network .....                         | 59     |
| 109  | Dometic Corporation .....                  | 25     |
| 110  | East to West - Division of Forest River .. | 18     |
| 113  | Entegra Coach .....                        | 60     |
| 102  | Gold Heat .....                            | 11     |
|      | Good Sam RV Loans .....                    | 8      |
| 111  | Hensley Manufacturing Inc. ....            | 46     |
| 114  | KZ Inc. ....                               | 45     |
| 115  | Lance Campers .....                        | 2      |
| 117  | Lippert Components .....                   | 44     |
| 118  | LiquidSpring LLC .....                     | 13     |
|      | Marketplace .....                          | 55     |
| 119  | Newmar Corporation .....                   | 6-7    |
| 120  | Northwood Mfg. ....                        | 28     |
| 121  | Park It 360 .....                          | 21     |
| 122  | Pleasure-Way Industries Ltd. ....          | 46     |
| 123  | Progressive Insurance Company .....        | 19     |
| 124  | Roadmaster, Inc. ....                      | 5      |
| 108  | RViBrake by Danko Manufacturing .....      | 33     |
| 125  | Source Engineering .....                   | 13     |
| 126  | The Kingstar Company .....                 | 36     |
| 127  | Transfer Flow Inc. ....                    | 50     |
| 130  | Venture RV .....                           | 45     |
| 128  | Winnebago Industries .....                 | 23     |
| 129  | Yamaha Motor Corporation, U.S.A. ....      | 16     |

#### EDITORIAL PRODUCT INDEX

| RS # | ADVERTISER               | PAGE # |
|------|--------------------------|--------|
| 150  | East To West Ahara ..... | 39     |

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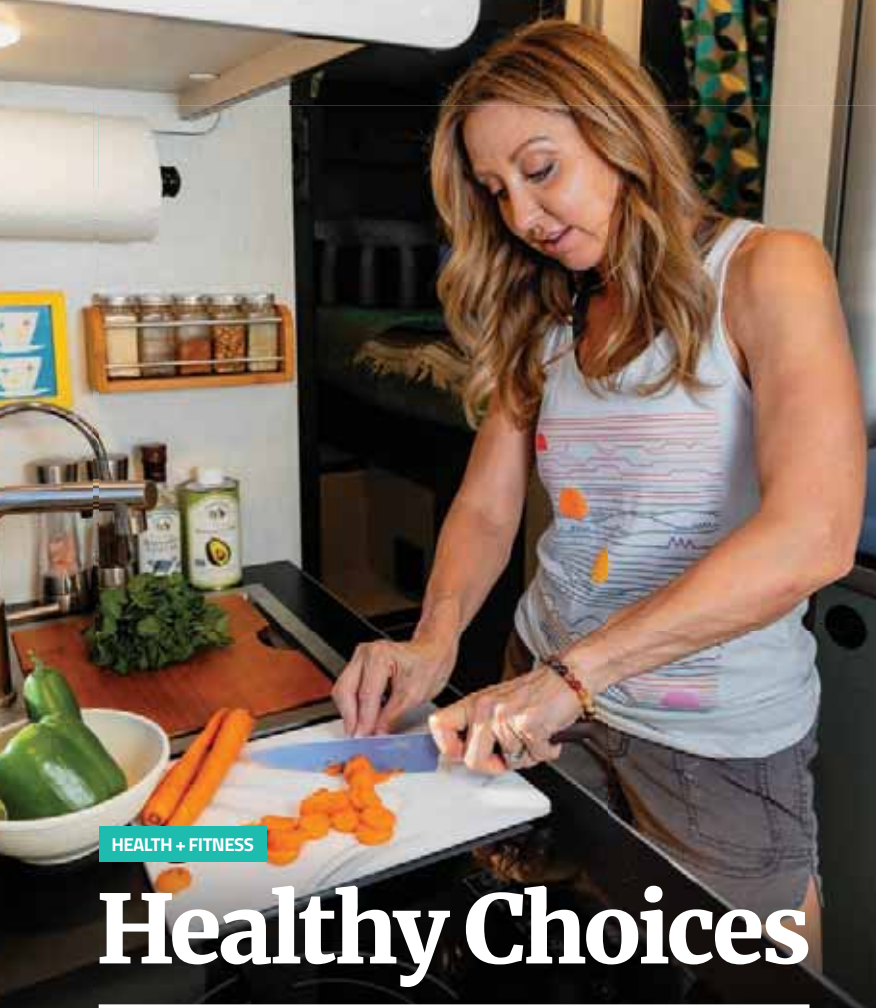
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HEALTH + FITNESS

# Healthy Choices

Fuel your RV trips with better food, without sacrificing taste.

BY STEFANY ADINARO @THEFITRV

**A**s someone who RVs a lot, I know how hard healthy eating on trips can be. It's almost an oxymoron, isn't it—the idea of eating healthfully while traveling? You're on vacation after all. Relaxing on your diet should be part of the deal! But here's the good news: It doesn't have to be one or the other. You can eat better on your RV trips AND eat deliciously. Here are some tips to help you build healthier—and still just as tasty—nutrition habits while on the road.

**Plan Meals and Stick to a List:** Many people are put off by the idea of planning trip menus ahead of time. I get it, it feels like a chore. But it doesn't need to be a daunting undertaking. You can plan literally anything, even NOT to cook. What's important is that you've created a helpful road map; one that will save you time and avoid the dreaded "What should we do for dinner?" dilemma. When you plan ahead, you're ensuring you'll have more food variety. Not only does that mean your meals will be more interesting, but it also increases the likelihood of meeting your nutrient needs. And when it's time to hit the store to gather the things needed for your plan, your list will help you ensure you won't do any impulse buying. As a bonus, sticking to a list and following a plan means you'll reduce what ends up thrown away at the end of the week.



**Choose Restaurants Wisely:** Eating out allows you to experience the area you're visiting—a vibrant and decadent part of any RV adventure. Luckily, these days it's easy to preview menus online. Between that and reading reviews, you can choose restaurants that offer healthy—and tasty—choices. Give priority to farm-to-table restaurants or any that mention they use local foods. But don't stop there; choose your meal wisely, too. Look for menu items that have lots of plant-based foods included. Choose raw where appropriate, and select steamed, baked, or grilled where you can. Don't be afraid to ask your server to help health-up your meal—perhaps swapping one of the sides for a fresh salad, or asking for dressings and sauces on the side. And here's my favorite advice to share: Slow down. The pace at which you eat dictates how much you will eat. So, slowly savor your meal, and enjoy the experience of being somewhere unique and special.

**Jazz Up Your Water:** You can easily transform a humdrum glass of RV tap water into something refreshing and appealing—something you'd look forward to drinking. I like to fill up a pitcher of water in the morning and add whatever I have on hand—usually lemons, but also cucumber slices, fruit, or herbs—and I'll stick that in the RV fridge and then continue to refill it throughout the day.

I've also noticed a trend with our RV friends who have compact RVs and small refrigerators. They don't bother bringing ice or making ice, and instead settle for drinking room-temperature water on RV trips. Traveling with ice may sound like a small thing, but it has a way of making water much more desirable, especially on hot summer days. The more appealing you can make your water, whether that be with fresh add-ins or ice, the more you'll drink. Make it tasty enough that you'll go for that instead of any sugary or unhealthy diet drinks.

PHOTOS: KYLE SHEPPARD, ALEXRATHS/GETTY IMAGES



**Swap the Chips for Popcorn:** Enter any grocery store and it's likely you'll find one aisle completely dedicated to chips. You can improve your nutrition immensely by breaking the habit of buying them. If you don't have any chips in your RV, you can't eat them. James and I gave up buying chips years ago. Instead, we travel with popcorn kernels, a microwave popcorn bowl, and various toppings. Now that we've parted ways with chips, I don't miss them at all. Popcorn is not only healthier and tastier, it allows us to get creative with making our own spice combinations.

RVing is a time to explore and have adventures, and eating well is how you fuel the journey. While you might be tempted to indulge or eat for convenience when traveling, consider finding some balance. Because when healthy eating becomes a valued part of your travels, your body will reward you with sustained health and energy, making your trip all the more spectacular. ■



## EASY MICROWAVE POPCORN

### Ingredients

- ½ cup popcorn kernels
- 1 microwave-safe popcorn container (brown paper sacks work, too)

Pour the kernels in your container and microwave 2–3 minutes. Once popped, spray your popcorn with olive oil, add your preferred seasonings, and enjoy!

### GOT SEASONING?

Let's be honest here. Popcorn is just a vessel for other flavors. That's where we can get into trouble. And that's exactly why you should try these super-easy healthied-up seasoning recipes.

#### BBQ Flavor

##### Ingredients

- 1 tbsp ranch seasoning
- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper (optional)

Mix together and place in a small spice jar. This makes enough for about 3 bowls of popcorn.

**Note:** The flavor will vary depending on which ranch powder you use. Be sure to read the labels, as not all ranch powders use natural ingredients.

#### Taco Flavor

##### Ingredients

- 2 tbsp nutritional yeast
- ½ tsp cumin
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper
- 2 tsp fine sea salt

Mix together and sprinkle as much as you'd like over your popcorn after spraying or drizzling on your healthy oil option. This makes enough for probably around 5–7 bowls of popcorn, depending on how thick you sprinkle it on!

## FUN + GAMES

### Do Your Best

Grab some veggie sticks, fill up your water bottles, and hunker down in the comfort of your RV's air conditioning for this month's wellness-themed brain buster ... it may take a healthy effort.



### ACROSS

3. The manufacturer of the luxurious 2023 Dutch Star Class A motorhome.
5. Furry travel companions who work wonders on your mind, body, and soul.
10. These types of campers make your truck a go-almost-anywhere RV tourer.
12. Pro Bowler Keith Sims played this position during his NFL career.
13. The ultimate healthy drink.
14. The shoreline of this Great Lake is but one highlight of a trip to Duluth, Minnesota.

### DOWN

1. The name of this East to West fifth-wheel is based on a Sanskrit term relating to health and happiness.
2. The "other" Cape in Massachusetts.
4. Good Sam appreciates these every day, but especially during this time of year.
5. A healthier—and tastier—alternative to potato chips.
6. An effective way to brighten up the interior walls of your RV.
7. You should do this to your RV before covering it up for the cold season.
8. The SoCal site of Bonelli Bluffs RV Resort and Campground (two words).
9. The best way to protect your RV while it's in storage.
11. The lake in the Adirondacks made famous by the 1980 Olympic Games.

Across: 3: Newmar; 5: Pets; 10: Pickup; 12: Lineman; 13: Water; 14: Superior  
Down: 1: Ahara; 2: Ann; 4: Paint; 6: Popcorn; 7: White; 8: San Dimas; 9: Cover; 11: Placid



## Voyage of Discovery

"I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I have ended up where I intended to be." These words, penned by *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* author Douglas Adams, captures the beauty and freedom of RV travel. Taking a detour to seek out a Wild West town, getting sidetracked to hike a spectacular mountain, changing plans because another RVer recommended a must-see destination, or simply being lost just adds to the adventure. *Photo by Matt Fleming*

Share your photo with us: [info-rvmagazine@rv.com](mailto:info-rvmagazine@rv.com)



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# ADVENTURE AWAITS

Whether you're a snowbird or spend your time camping in the heat, Entegra Coach's Esteem is one of the very few 30 amp coaches with the option for two A/Cs, keeping you cool however close to the equator you get. New 2023 interior design options include solid-surface countertops and theater seating. Take in the whole view with the one-piece, seamless, fiberglass front cap with automotive-bonded panoramic window and power shade. It also has the industry's largest travel-view window in an entrance door.

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- Winegard 2.0 Wi-Fi/4G antenna
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