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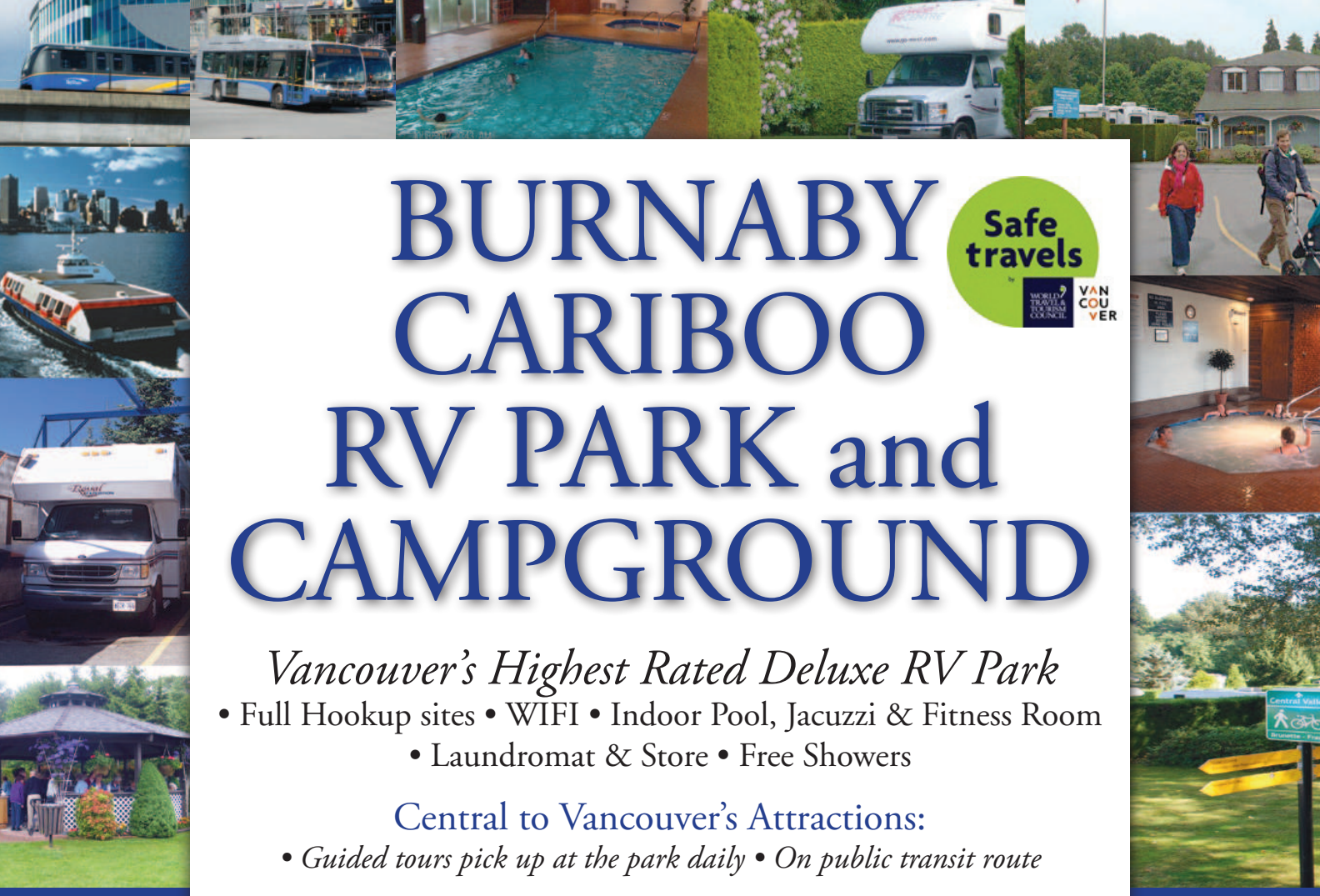

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SNOWBIRDS & RV Travelers

Stay Alert at the Wheel

We can never report enough about the importance of highway safety. With all of the technology and conveniences available to Canadian drivers - RVers included - serious auto accidents are still making devastating headlines throughout the year. As we are amidst the snowbird season with many enthusiasts planning a winter destination, practicing highway safety should always be a top priority.

In addition to the many highway traffic laws to abide by while on the road, staying alert at the wheel and/or taking measures to avoid driver fatigue - especially while running a fully loaded RV - is pertinent for everyone's safety on the highways and byways.

It's common to travel long distances in an RV, yet it often leads to driving during dark morning hours, at dusk, and well after night falls, and may cause road weariness to set in, which is just one more common cause of accidents and even fatalities on Canadian roadways.

But preventative measures can be taken. Sharing the drive with partners and/or family members, limiting the duration of time behind the wheel, pulling over at rest stops every few hours, getting a good night's sleep, and taking plenty of time to get to a destination can all be effective to prevent driver fatigue.

By practicing a variety of other effective ways to stay alert at the wheel, taking on long-distance trips this snowbird season will not only be more enjoyable but safer as well - no matter where the road leads.

PUBLISHER
Jason Tansem
EDITOR-in-CHIEF
Perry Mack
MANAGING EDITOR
Steve Fennell
ADVERTISING CONSULTANT
Lisa Di Marco
CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Cassandra Redding
ADMINISTRATION
Cindy Mack
DIGITAL SPECIALIST
Megan Campagnolo
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Callie Tansem
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Dennis Begin, Jason Betzing, Nora Burba Trulsson, Holly Foord, Steve Fennell, Jennifer Leigh Hill, Jessica Rider, Rick Stedman, Kathleen Walls
COVER PHOTOGRAPH
Ralph Daniel, Explore Georgia.org

SnowbirdsRVTravelers
rvsnowbirdsmagazine
@snowbirdsrv
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editor@suncruisermedia.com

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Snowbirds & RV Travelers is on the road every issue finding you "Great Stays".
To have your park or resort featured call 1-866-609-2383
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Woodlands Fishin Resort

(250) 481-0011 • Chilanko Forks, BC
woodlandsfishinresort.com

Woodlands Fishin Resort is on Puntzi Lake's shores in the Cariboo Chilcotin of BC. The resort is surrounded by a beautiful natural setting, which you will no doubt take delight in when you visit. Enjoy spectacular lakeside views. Their three new cabins include all modern amenities while still keeping a "rustic feel." The 12-site campground offers freshwater, power, sani, a shower house and a fish cleaning station. Wifi, laundry, boat rentals, docks, and a boat launch is also available. They feature five RV sites with partial hookups along the lake, seven full hookup sites and soft, flat grass tenting sites. You will enjoy spectacular sunrises, hiking trails, fishing, and an abundance of wildlife. Their on-site restaurant and bakery is a local attraction. Everyone is always welcome!

Burnaby Cariboo RV Park

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www.bcrv.com

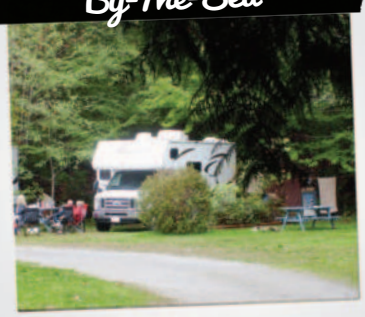
VANCOUVER'S HIGHEST RATED PARK.
This is a deluxe RV Park for discovering the Vancouver, BC area. The campground has full hookup accommodation. Sites are paved and beautifully landscaped with privacy hedges. Cablevision and WiFi. Separate tent camping area. Indoor pool, jacuzzi, fitness room, games room, internet access, playground, store, and large laundromat. Coin-operated RV wash as well as a free RV washing area. On transit route, minutes from the Skytrain (monorail) to Vancouver's attractions. West Coast Tours shuttles daily. Guided city tours. From Hwy 1 (East or West) take Exit 37. Turn right at the first light, left at the next light, the next right turn is the access road. Open all year.

Claybanks RV Park

(250) 378-6441 • Merritt, BC
www.claybanksrv.ca

Claybanks RV Park is a tree-filled park situated next to the beautiful Coldwater River and within close proximity to downtown Merritt. The park is open all year with heated showers/washrooms, electrical hook-ups for all sites and free WiFi. Claybanks has 44 large fully-serviced sites (more fully-serviced sites coming soon) eight fully-winterized sites (winter RV storage space available) and multiple tenting sites. Handicap facilities are also offered. A recreation building is available for use, which includes a washroom, sink with hot and cold water, electrical outlets, tables and chairs. Pets are welcome but they must be on a leash when in the park.

SunLund By-The-Sea



(604) 483-9220 • Lund, BC
www.sunlund.ca

SunLund By-The-Sea is a full-service RV park located in Lund, BC. All sites are grassy and have electricity, drinking water and a sewer drain. SunLund offers:
· Clean showers, washrooms, and laundromat
· Free WiFi
· Sunny and shady sites
· Footpath access to the ocean
· Senior's and Auto Club discounts
SunLund is within an easy walk to a grocery store, marina, restaurants, water taxi, bakery, kayak rentals, boat tours, a hotel and artisan gallery. Open May 1 to September 30. Reservations recommended in July and August.

Wood Lake RV Park & Marina

(855-766-1881) • Lake Country, BC
www.woodlakerv.com

Wood Lake RV Park and Marina is situated on 12 parkland acres providing 180 full service RV sites. The park is open April – October for recreational camping and from October – April for winter camping. Park amenities include 30- and 50-amp sites, a 67-slip marina, shower and washroom facilities, coin laundry, Kid'z Zone playground, dog park, park store, clubhouse, "the back yard" for bocce ball and horseshoes and winter storage.

GREAT STAYS by Snowbirds & RV Travelers

Willingdon Beach

(604) 485-2242 • Powell River, BC
www.willingdonbeach.ca

Open year-round, Willingdon Beach has 81 RV sites, which include full and partial hookups, tenting sites, plus a spray park, two playgrounds, covered BBQ and picnic area, coin-operated showers, laundry facilities, and caretaker on site. Spectacular sunsets, watersports, beach volleyball, gorgeous sandy beaches, and special events can be enjoyed throughout the year. Come explore nature trails where old-growth trees stand tall, clear water runs through creeks, and the forest floor is carpeted in ferns. Local shops and restaurants are just steps away. Reserve now.

Campbell Valley Camping Experience

woodcraftforming@telus.net

This is a destination location. Bring your RV and enjoy the country while only 10 minutes from beautiful White Rock, BC and only five minutes from the U.S. border. With seven golf courses, eight wineries, beautiful Campbell Valley trails for cycling, walking or horseback riding, and Hazelmere tennis courts nearby, everyone will find something fun to do. Set on a private property with five RV sites water/electrical. There is one site full with septic, and one site with deluxe 5th wheel RV rental for $110 nightly. They also have a two bedroom fully self-contained mobile nestled in the trees for $175 nightly. Sites are $45 nightly and $60 with septic.

Alder Bay RV Park & Marina

(250) 956-4117 • Port McNeill, BC
www.alderbay.com

Alder Bay RV Park and Marina is located on Northern Vancouver Island on the Johnstone Strait. The front row view of British Columbia's wild west coast is the perfect setting for a weekend excursion or a longer term home away from home. Whether you're interested in whale watching or bear viewing tours, fishing charter adventure, or just some time to watch the sunset, Alder Bay is the ultimate RV destination. Now featuring newly renovated shower rooms, plus a convenience store, with fishing tackle and bait for purchase. While here be sure to take a night off from cooking, and enjoy a meal at Roxy's, the on-site restaurant, now with a liquor licence. Roxy's features a delicious menu of favourites as well as locally caught fish n' chips. Come and get hooked on Alder Bay!

Surfside RV Resort

(866) 642-2001 • Parksville, BC
www.surfsiderv.ca

Seaside… Poolside… Surfside…
Surfside RV Resort is a beautiful 55-acre oceanfront property. The highest rated RV resort on Vancouver Island. Enjoy a large clubhouse with an outdoor pool and hot tub, all overlooking the Salish Sea. There are three clean and tidy service buildings with showers and laundry. Recreation includes tennis courts, volleyball, billiards, shuffleboard, and horseshoes. Take pleasure in the security and privacy of a gated RV community on the beach and estuary, next to picturesque City Park and Wildlife Management Area. Located in downtown Parksville with shopping and restaurants close by. Open all year for full hook-up RVs. Memberships are available and reservations are always recommended.

Salish Seaside RV Haven

(250) 590-5995 • Victoria, BC
www.victoriarv.com

Salish Seaside RV Haven is Western Canada's premier motorhome park, located on a private peninsula right in the heart of Victoria's harbour. Proudly owned and operated by the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, this award-winning park is completely new, with all-new services, utilities, and concrete pads. It was designed to accommodate the largest of motorhomes. A majority of the sites are right on the water, commanding spectacular views in all directions. Big rig-friendly, 30- and 50-amp power, complimentary WiFi, and a brand new amenities building featuring modern washrooms, showers, laundry room, and a spectacular clubhouse with decks and a fireplace.

Gated open lots are one option to store your RV for the winter or summer when not in use.

FORT RUCKER

BY JESSICA RIDER

DETERMINING *RV STORAGE OPTIONS*

From open lots to enclosed storage facilities, it's worth the research to see where you can store your RV when not in use, regardless of the season.

A lot of new Canadian RVers who plan to buy a motorhome or trailer often overlook where they are going to store it when they are not travelling in the summer or during the off-season.

Yes, it's true. Aside from baby boomers, snowbirds, and full-timers who spend a lot (if not most) of their time on the road, there'll be certain months of the year when your RV will sit idle - whether it's during the summer or over the winter. Panic may also strike in the event RV storage options are limited in your immediate area or it's expensive and inconvenient.

There are many options to consider when deciding where and how to store your RV and there are some factors that are often beyond your control. But often the first question is: can I keep the RV in my driveway?

For us, we have the convenience of parking our fifth wheel alongside our house all year. When we bought our first model, we decided to relocate the air conditioning unit to accommodate it. This also gave us an additional outlet to plug in the trailer when it wasn't in use. Having the convenience of the RV at home allows us to use it as we please and we can also keep a close eye on it over the winter.

If storing an RV in the driveway (or elsewhere on your property) is not an option, consider these points when choosing a location.

Can you Keep your RV at Home for One Night?

If your municipal laws prohibit the storing of RVs on residential driveways, you need to determine if you can at least have it there for one night. If so, you have the convenience of easier packing and unpacking quickly before and after trips. While this may also mean enduring a temporary yet

STEVE FENNELL

EASY BUILD STRUCTURES

Enclosed shelters are another great choice.

Depending on municipal laws and length, it's worth finding out if an RV can be stored at your residence.

costly storage location when your RV is not in use, you will have some time to find a permanent location that is both convenient and affordable.

Consider the Location

As there has been an increase in RV sales in recent years, there has also been a surge in RV storage locations. After some research, you may find a new storage location close to your home. But remember, it may have high fees, especially if you live in a populated area. However, the convenience of being closer to your RV may offset the higher price. For example, there will be time and fuel savings with the shorter trips to pick up the RV and it will also be easier to prepare and pack for weekend trips.

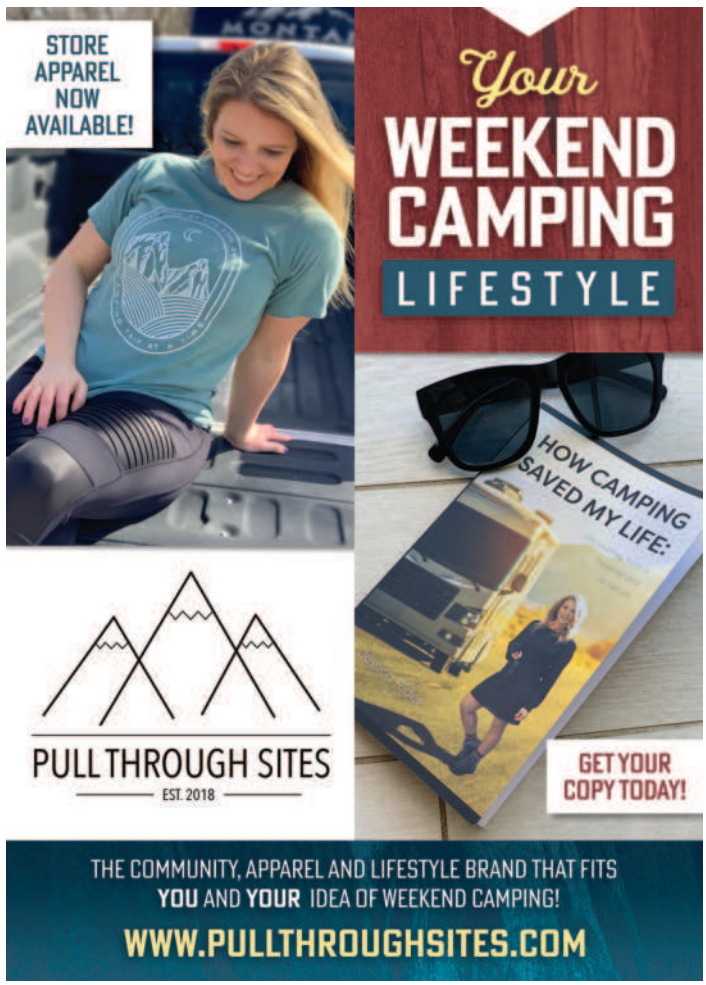
Covered or Uncovered?

When looking for a location to store your RV, there may be a choice between a covered storage facility or an open lot. On average, an open lot is much less expensive as your RV is parked in an open space (sometimes it's just a field or gravel lot). However, you may see as much as a 50 to 75 percent increase in cost for a covered lot or an enclosed facility. Nevertheless, there may be better security and your RV won't be exposed to the elements throughout the year, providing peace of mind knowing it's safe, secure and protected. Another option is to buy a high-quality cover for your RV and keep it in an open storage lot. A good cover will cost several hundred dollars (at the very least) but compare that to the fee of a covered storage facility every year. For more information on RV covers and enclosed storage solutions visit our website at www.suncruisermedia.com

Who is Responsible for Damage?

You may also want to find out whose insurance covers any damages to your RV while in a storage facility. Some places may require you to carry the insurance while others will offer some coverage for an increased fee. So, review your insurance policy and speak with the facility owner to get a clear understanding of how your RV is covered and if any additional coverage is required on your policy.

These four points can help you get started in the process of finding a good storage location. But you may want to consider a friend or family member that may be able to store your RV for you as well. However, the bottom line is storage for your RV in the summer and winter is a necessity so you have to decide where the best location is and if it offers value for the cost.



SIEG AND SUE STANDKE

BY HOLLY FOORD

MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES

Enhance your travel experiences on and off the road by joining Canada's Explorer RV Club.

THE EXPLORER RV CLUB

With travel restrictions due to COVID-19 gradually easing, many Canadians are raring to get up and go just about anywhere. RVing is an accepted and safer option to explore new areas of the country, a fact that people have realized more and more during extended lockdowns and stay-at-home orders. It's a spontaneous, adventurous pastime that's not only a great alternative to visiting your typical vacation hot spot, but promotes social distancing and adherence to additional pandemic guidelines.

Longtime Explorer RV Club members Sieg and Sue Standke discovered these benefits when they first started their 'journey of a lifetime' with a pop-up camper in 1977. This first step into RVing gave them the confidence to eventually upgrade to larger units and travel coast to coast and into the U.S. The couple also began taking longer trips down south to many popular and iconic destinations like The Blue Ridge Mountains and Route 66.

Wherever your sights are set, whether it's Canada, the U.S. or Mexico, part of RVing is enhancing time on the road, sharing experiences, and enjoying the camaraderie of fellow enthusiasts. Many RV clubs exist, but few have worked as hard for so long to keep building and providing value for its members as the Explorer RV Club.

With many benefits, one of the most highly recommended programs available through the club is its optional Emergency Roadside Service plan, which provides assistance every kilometre of your journey 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. The program is designed to get you and your RV back on the road as soon as possible in the event of a breakdown, an accident, or other mishap on the road. This is the kind of plan you need when you're in a pinch and simply offers peace of mind at an affordable cost.

More Explorer RV Club Benefits

Now in its 25th year, the Explorer RV Club is Canada's largest national club of its kind and as a member, you're joining a community of all those who share a passion for the RV lifestyle - it's a membership where you can gain an endless wealth of RV resources to enhance your experiences on the road. By understanding the unique RVing experiences that Canada offers, the Explorer RV Club helps shape those experiences to make every trip more memorable and keep the good times rolling - wherever your travels may lead you.

Community and camaraderie go hand in hand and some of the Standkes' fondest RV memories are attending the club's annual national rallies. Sieg chuckles as he reminisces about events and can recall them as if they were held just yesterday.

But what is the Standkes' favourite part of belonging to the Explorer RV Club? "The social experience," says Sieg without hesitation, and Sue is quick to agree. They make a great point of stating the equally important, intangible benefits of the experience. This is just one of the added benefits of belonging to the Explorer RV Club.

"It's all about the community and the people you meet at the club's rallies," says Sieg. "You get together with other RVers, there's fantastic food and people come from everywhere. You also get to check out other RVer's units, hear about their travels, and share ideas. So, you're always getting firsthand knowledge of where to go and recommendations of what to do when you get there."

There is nothing like finding yourself in a group that shares your passion and enthusiasm for RVing. With two-plus decades of experience and a reputation for excellent service, the Explorer RV Club is more than a program, it's a community and a family that shares a collective lifetime of memories, stories, and experiences from the road.

Are you someone who craves the thrill of adventure while still wanting all the comforts of home? If you are, there's no doubt you will find your place in the RV-loving ranks of the Explorer RV Club like Sieg and Sue have. You'll be joining another journey of a lifetime, which is what being an 'Explorer' is truly all about.

EXPLORER RV CLUB

In our family, rewards are just the beginning.

For over 25 years, Explorer RV Club has been Canada's largest national RV club.

We're a family of adventure-loving enthusiasts, and just like you, we love exploring the unique RV experience only Canada can provide.

Explorer RV Club members automatically receive exclusive benefits and discounts across Canada:

- ✓ Access to MemberPerks with deals at your favourite stores, brands, restaurants and more!
- ✓ RV dealer and campground discounts
- ✓ Fuel savings with Petro-Canada
- ✓ Low-cost emergency road service
- ✓ Free one year subscription to Snowbirds & RV Travelers magazine
- ✓ And so much more!

Join the club or renew your membership today!

www.explorerrvclub.com/srt

or call (800) 999-0819 and quote this ad

EXPLORER RV CLUB

JANE SMITH

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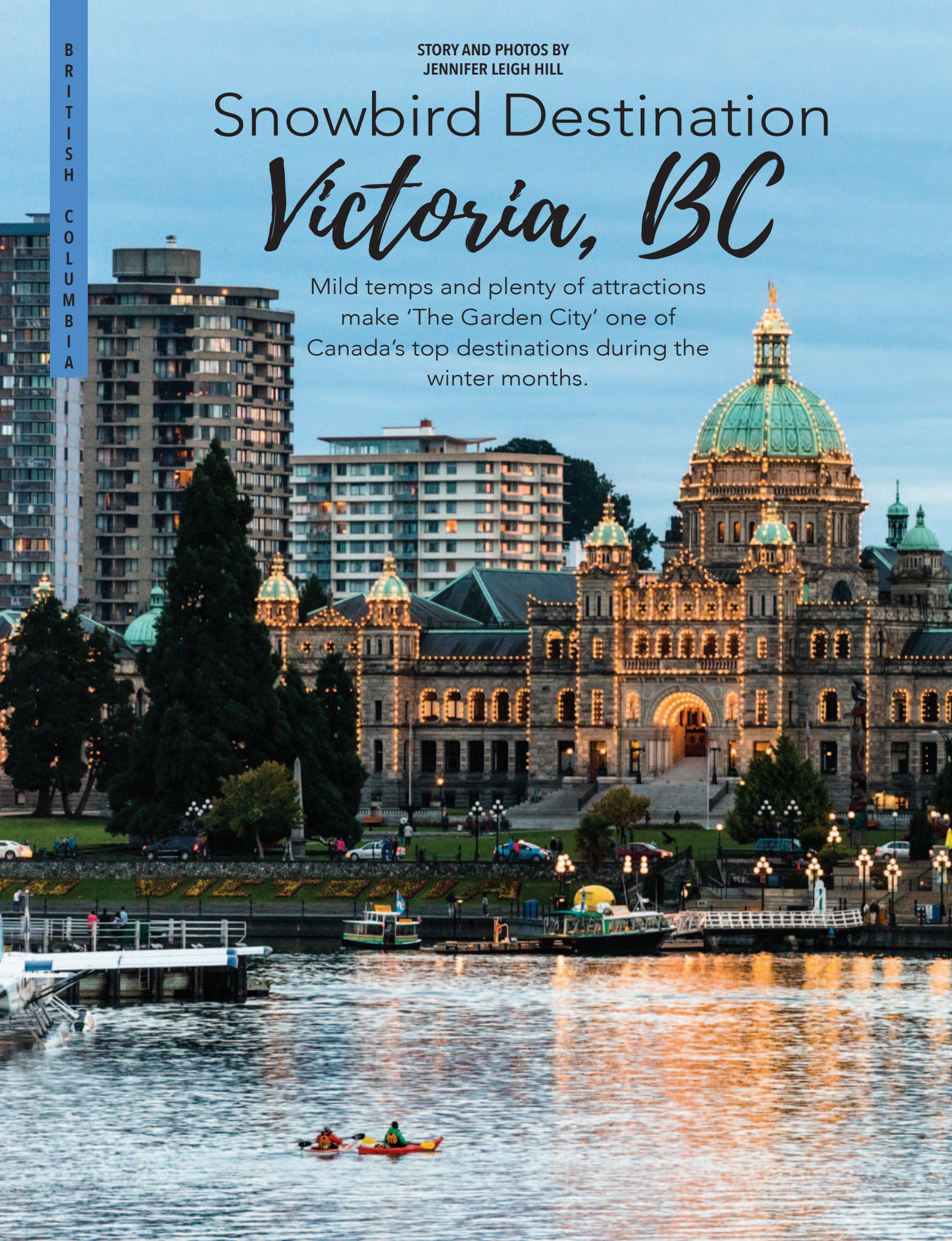
STORY AND PHOTOS BY
JENNIFER LEIGH HILL

Snowbird Destination *Victoria, BC*

Mild temps and plenty of attractions make 'The Garden City' one of Canada's top destinations during the winter months.



Most Canadian snowbirds think 'south' and 'hot' when planning winter RV destinations. Yet, in recent years 'west' and 'temperate' have become the new buzz words when considering an extended destination in the colder months north of the border.

More specifically, Victoria, which is currently my home base, is an ideal place to visit during the winter, especially given its mild temperatures and the uncertainty about travelling in what will be, hopefully, our first full snowbird season with travel restrictions fully lifted.

WEATHER

Victoria, the capital of BC, is in what is known as a 'Sub-Mediterranean Weather Zone.' According to www.worldatlas.com, January is the coldest month, however, the average low is only 5° C (41° F) and by April, the norm rises to a balmy 9.6° C (49° F).

While winters can be 'gloomy,' there are, on average, only approximately eight rainfall days in December and January (the two wettest months), so it may not be as 'glum' as perceived by many. Yes, it can snow, but the average is only two to three days of snowfall in February and

DESTINATION BC/REUBEN KRABBE

accumulation typically only amounts to 5.3 cm (2.09 in) or less. On a brighter note, 308 days out of 365 in Victoria are sunny. Although in January there's only an average of nine hours of sunlight and by April it increases to 13.7 hours.

Travel Costs

Depending on where you live, travel costs may be less than heading south. However, to get to Victoria one must factor in the additional ferry costs from the mainland (see www.bcferries.com for routes, fares and schedules).

RV resorts in BC are typically reasonably priced (especially for extended stays) and of course, there isn't a costly U.S. currency exchange rate. A downtown RV park, right beside the ocean, can be as little as $1,350 CAD per month, but if you want to head up the island a few kilometres, the cost on Malahat Mountain is a mere $680 CAD per month.

In addition, travel insurance costs are far less in Canada. From my experience, I am able to winter in Victoria relatively inexpensively as there are so many activities that I can do that are not excessively costly such as walking the waterfront and chowing down at the world-famous Barb's Fish & Chips (www.barbsfishandchips.com).

Things to See/Do

There's a plethora of information about 'what's going on' in Victoria at www.victoria.ca and www.tourismvictoria.com. Travel and Leisure Magazine listed Victoria as the fourth-best city in Canada in 2020 and described the area as having "century-old architecture, windswept views, boutique shopping, and good-natured locals".

Some popular attractions include the Royal BC Museum located in the downtown district and Butchart Gardens, which is less than 20 km (12.3 mi) from downtown. In the winter the gardens are a 'gem', and not to be missed, and a whale watching tour should be another priority. Tours run daily from the inner harbour. One company I recommend is Eagle Wing Tours (www.eaglewingtours.ca). Although they don't offer guaranteed sightings, they do report an exceptionally good chance of seeing whales even in the winter (i.e., in December there's a 100 percent chance, January 67 percent, February 33 percent, March 77 percent and April 83 percent).

The grounds and waterfront location of Oceanside RV Resort.

Getting Around

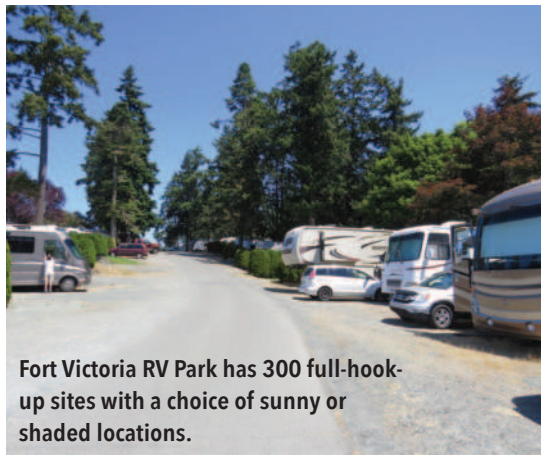
While the city has an excellent public transit system with easy connections to the attractions, it should be noted that Victoria is known for having more cycling routes than any other Canadian city and bicycle rentals are widely available.

Snowbirding in Victoria

There are a variety of RV resorts that are open all year in the Victoria vicinity. Only those with full services are included in the following list even though there are a few with no services open over the winter. It should be noted that all BC Provincial Parks, including those in the Victoria vicinity, such as Goldstream Provincial Park (www.goldstreampark.com) and Bamberton Provincial Park (https://bcparks.ca/explore/parkpgs/bamberton), are limited to stays of 14 days per calendar year).

The following campgrounds all have special rates over the winter and are listed from nearest to downtown to the farthest:

1. Salish Seaside RV Haven is only 3.4 km (2.1 mi) from City Hall. Described as "Western Canada's Premier RV Motorhome Park," it definitely lives up to its description. Most of the 36 sites are right on the waterfront and a majority are large enough to fit the largest of Class A rigs. Sites have 30/50-amp power, complimentary Wi-Fi and the amenities building has spacious laundry rooms and modern washrooms with some of the best showers I have ever experienced in an RV park. The clubhouse has a magnificent meeting area on its second floor complete with a fireplace and deck overlooking the harbour. (www.salishseasidervhaven.com)



Fort Victoria RV Park has 300 full-hookup sites with a choice of sunny or shaded locations.

2. Fort Victoria RV Park is only 8.4 km (5.2 mi) from the centre of Victoria. This park has been in operation since 1961 and has 300 full-hookup sites (including both long-term and seasonal) with a choice of sunny or shaded locations. There's 30/50 amp power, Wi-Fi and cable included plus easy access to public transit, which links the park with the downtown core. The park also has an RV supply store and a small gift shop. (www.fortvictoria.ca)

3. Oceanside RV Resort is 21.2 km (13.2 mi) from downtown Victoria. However, it's only 8.8 km (5.5 mi) from the seaside town of Sidney, which has all the services of a full-size city (e.g., grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants, etc.), including a first-rate hospital, which is only 2.7 km (1.7 mi) from the resort. Aside from three laundromats and three washrooms (all

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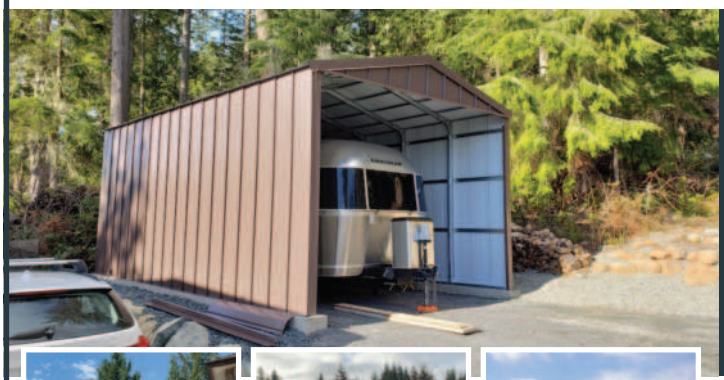

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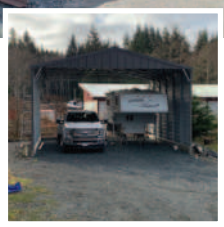

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with coin-operated showers), there are really no other facilities. Given that the shopping is so close and there is public transit nearby, there's no need for an on-site store. There are more than 100 seasonal and 69 overnight sites, which are wide with beautiful landscaping and the gardens throughout the complex make this resort one of the most beautiful on the island. As I have spent five months at Oceanside after returning to Canada at the height of the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020 as well as four months this past summer while travel restrictions were still in effect, I can certainly attest that Oceanside is a very comfortable place for extended stays. (www.parkbridge.com/en-ca/rv-cottages/oceanside-resort/oceanside)

4. Weir's Beach RV Resort is 25.4 km (15.8 mi) from Victoria but only 4.1 km (2.5 mi) from the community of Metchosin, which has an excellent grocery store (www.metchosinstore.com) and an award-winning café, My-Chosen Café and Pizzeria (https://www.mychosencafe.com). This RV resort is right on the ocean with an incredible beach that is a real attraction in the summer for a variety of water sports (as well as sandcastle building). In the winter, storm watching is the 'sport' as the area is known for dramatic displays of nature. There are 60 fully-serviced sites, 20 of which face the ocean. There is a laundromat as well as restrooms with coin-operated showers. Each site has a small brick patio with a picnic table however there aren't any hedges between sites, which means privacy is minimal. (www.weirsbeachrvresort.bc.ca)

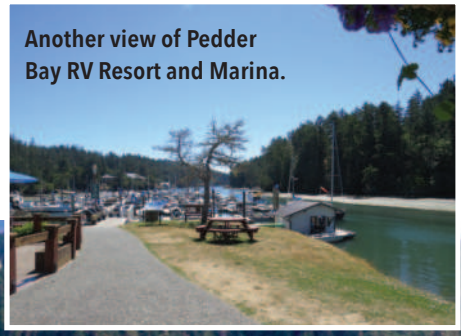
5. Pedder Bay RV Resort and Marina is 28.2 km (17.5 mi) from Victoria, located right on the water and surrounded by dense forest. The only resort close to Victoria with marina facilities, it offers boat and kayak rentals (with or without fishing gear) and 78 fully serviced sites with monthly cable and Wi-Fi fees included. The resort also has a small store that sells limited groceries as well as fishing gear. There's even a coffee house and licensed snack bar. With all of the park amenities, being further from Victoria was not a real hindrance in my opinion and it was a joy to be away from the hustle and bustle of the city. (www.pedderbay.com)

The spacious sites at Oceanside - lots of room for my rig, my 'kitchen', a tent and picnic table.

Other Options: There are a couple of campsites close to Victoria up Malahat Drive, which is a windy road that extends from Victoria to Malahat Mountain and Mill Bay. Both are more primitive but they do offer long-term stays. Malahat Mountain Meadows RV Resort (www.victoriacampgrounds.com) and Tunnel Hill Campground (www.tunnelhillcamp.com) are open during the winter. It's important to note that snow is possible so winter tires are required.

If you're looking for a Canadian snowbirding destination, I can personally recommend these resorts. All are relatively close to downtown Victoria so you'll have lots of chances to explore the area with access to services. Without a doubt, you'll quickly realize that the 'City of Gardens' certainly lives up to its name. *www.tourismvictoria.com*

Another view of Pedder Bay RV Resort and Marina.



A bird's eye view of Pedder Bay Resort and Marina.

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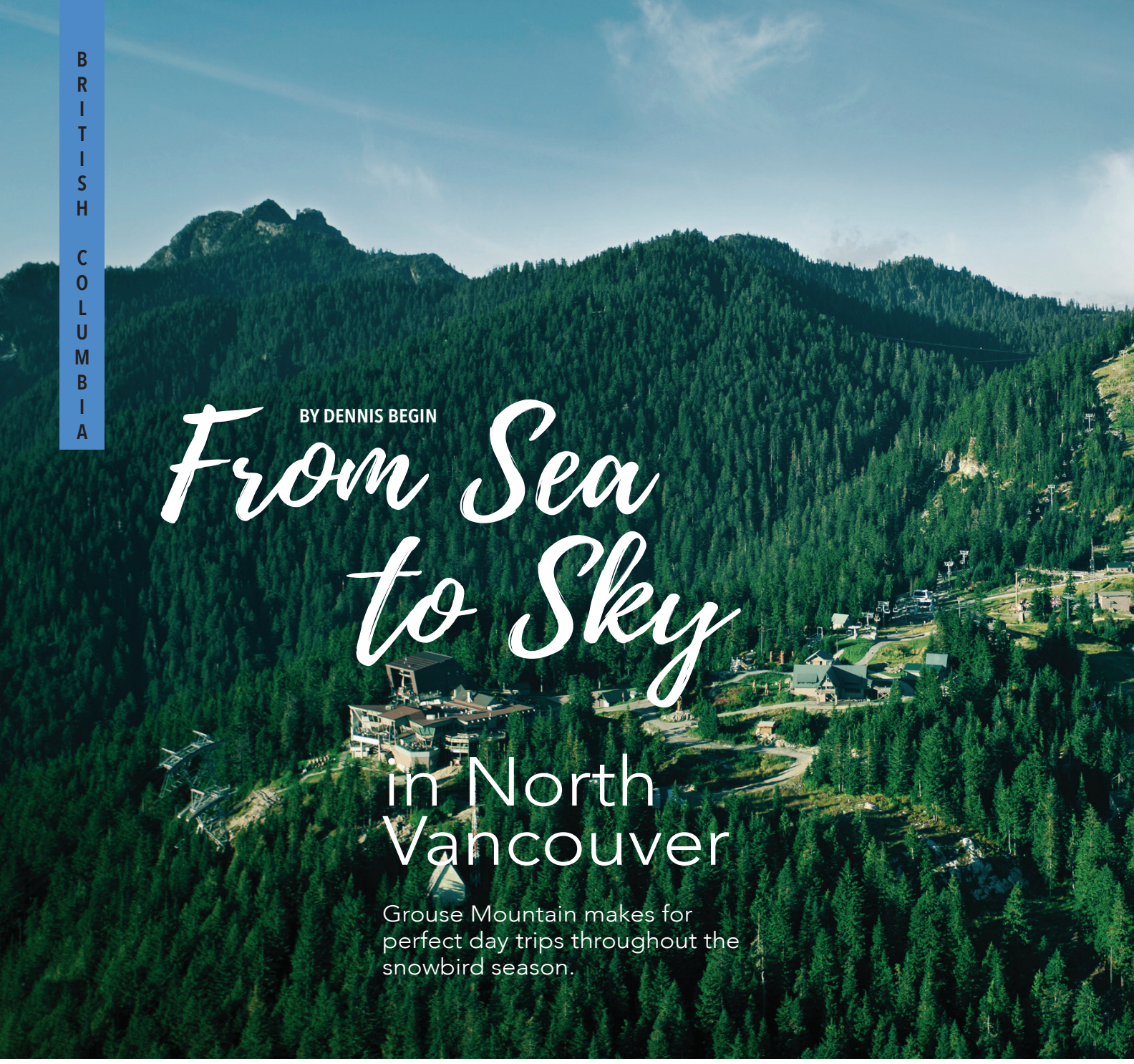


BY DENNIS BEGIN

From Sea to Sky in North Vancouver

Grouse Mountain makes for perfect day trips throughout the snowbird season.

One of the appealing attractions of Canada's West Coast is it's one of the few regions where Canadian snowbirds can visit in the winter and enjoy comfortable hikes or mountain bike trails one day and then downhill ski or admire panoramic views the next.

Of the many attractions around Vancouver is Grouse Mountain in the north part of the city. It's within 30 minutes of a variety of RV parks and offers activities throughout the winter (as well as early spring, summer and fall). Great for day trips that provide a nice change of scenery, the fun starts as soon as you board the Skyride, an aerial tramway system that leads up to the heart of this 'North Van' attraction.

Early History

On October 12, 1894, three men reached the summit of an unnamed mountain that overlooked English Bay and the fledgling City of Vancouver. After shooting a blue grouse for a meal, they honoured the bird by naming the area Grouse Mountain.

Sometime during the 1920s, a decision was made to build a ski resort on Grouse Mountain but the problem was how to attract enough skiers up the mountain to make it profitable. Two proposed train routes and a toll road never materialized. The only solution was a road, the Grouse Mountain Highway, but that even fell into bankruptcy.

Super Red Skyride

The eventual key to the development of Grouse Mountain was not a road but technology among its grounds. During the 1930s, a rope tow was used followed by a wooden double chairlift in 1949. In 1966, the first Super Red Skyride or tramway was

Most associate Grouse Mountain with skiing but the resort has a variety of activities and excellent panoramic views.

TOURISM VANCOUVER

Reservations for parking, the Skyride and admission are found at www.grousemountain.com

DESTINATION BC HUBERT KANG

built that could carry 45 skiers. Following the purchase of the resort by the McLaughlin Family in 1974, a second tramway was built with a capacity of 100 passengers.

At the time it was the largest aerial tramway in North America. It starts in the Valley Station Parking Lot at 274 m (900 ft), ends at the Alpine Station by the Peak Chalet at 1,128 m (3,700 ft) and consists of an eight- to ten-minute ride with service every 15 minutes. A second tramway called Blue Skyride is used for transporting goods.

Winter Wonderland

The ski and snowboarding season is from mid-November to early May, and the available 'Discover Your Winter Adventure' brochure lists the various Terrain Parks for skiing. Grouse Mountain is a good family ski hill and suitable for all abilities. There are two high-speed quad chairs and two regular quads, which service 33 runs.

To reach the very apex of the mountain, the Peak Chairlift climbs to 1,250 m (4,100 ft). Like most ski hills, there's a combination of runs including easy, intermediate and difficult. All the details of the runs, such as the degree of difficulty and length, can be found in the available trail guide. Keep in mind, accessibility is only via the Red Skyride as there's not a typical ski-out to the parking lot. A helicopter pad is also on-site.

Day trips for RVers can be further enhanced in the winter (as well as the summer) with designated RV parking available on a first-come, first-served basis, allowing the opportunity to have a 'home base' before and after a day at the higher elevations.

However, RVers are reminded that lift tickets are valid for one uphill and downhill ride on the Skyride on the same day and overnight parking/camping is not permitted.

In addition to skiing and snowboarding, winter activities include ice skating, ziplining, snowshoeing, and sleighing. Strolls around the Blue Grouse Lake and night skiing (on 15 runs) are also popular. Need to improve your skiing skills? Lessons and the Tyee Ski Club are available as are rentals at the Outpost Shack.

Summer Wonderland

The summer season for RVers starts on the May long weekend, and in 1990, a decision was made to spend $25 million for the development of a four-season resort. The project resulted in an average of 1.3 million visitors a year.

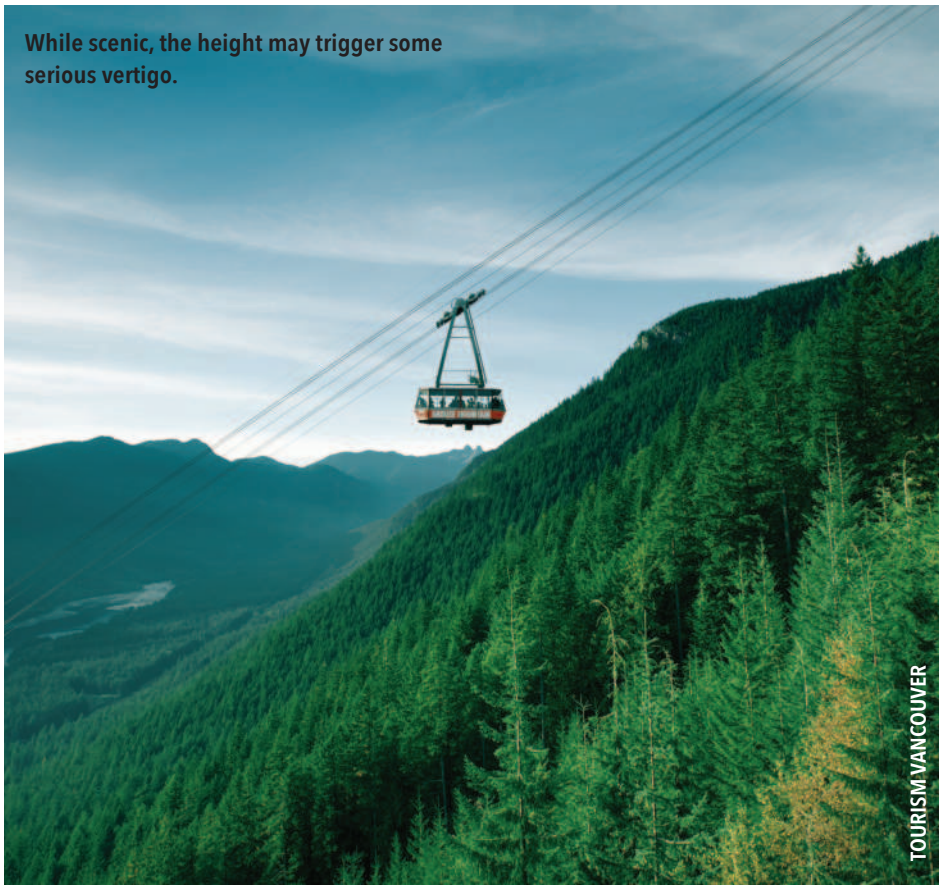
As part of the transformation, high-speed quads helped to open up the mountain and offer additional activities. Spring and summer events include a Lumberjack Show, ziplines, disc golf, hiking, paragliding, and an aerial rope course. The Theatre in the Sky is an HD cinema featuring films on outdoor themes.

However, it's the two resident grizzly bears - Grinder and Coola - who often steal the show. Both are 20-year-old male bears who inhabit the 2.2 ha (5.5 ac) wilderness sanctuary. Grinder, the smaller of the two, is the dominant male.

Eye of the Wind

To operate a resort requires a great deal of power. The solution at Grouse Mountain is a wind turbine that stands 65 m (215 ft) and spins three 37 m (121 ft) blades. Developed in partnership with BC Hydro, the turbine was completed in 2010 and produces 20 percent of the resort's electrical needs, which is equivalent to powering 260 homes. It was also constructed with a commitment to sustainability and to maintain a green environment. RVers can visit (for a fee) what is called The View Pod, which holds 36 people and provides picturesque views of Vancouver.

(**Ed Note: At the time of publication, the attraction Eye of the Wind was not open. Before visiting be sure to check out www.grousemountain.com for revised hours of operation as not all activities, restaurants and services are currently accessible).*



While scenic, the height may trigger some serious vertigo.

TOURISM VANCOUVER

Education

Most people are surprised to learn that Grouse Mountain is an open-air educational centre, from elementary to university level. Some of the field trip programs include Eco-Walks, Birds in Motion [Owls Interpretive Sessions], Wildlife Refuge and Grizzly Bear Viewing. Rangers are on hand to educate visitors.

Grouse Grind

The first hiking trail up Grouse Mountain was used to haul building materials but it's still accessible today to challenge even the most physically fit. Even though it's only 2.9 km (1.8 mi) (or 2,830 steps), the trail is a gruelling, steep climb over mountain terrain averaging 38 degrees with an elevation gain of 853 m (2,800 ft). Up for the challenge? Be sure to grab a 'Grind Timer Card' to record your time.

The fastest record for a single ascent was by Sebastian Salas, who completed the trail in 25.01 minutes in 2010, and Madison Sands after clocking 30.02 minutes in 2018. The average person completes the climb in 90 minutes. Every year 150,000 people pride themselves in completing 'The Grind'. Some famous participants include Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Kelly Ripa, Ryan Reynolds and Matt Damon.

Apres Skiing

At the end of the day, social activities extend to night skiing and the variety of dining options in the Peak Chalet. The Observatory is known for its five-star fine dining while the Altitudes Bistro and Lupins Café are more casual and self-serve. Additional restaurants are open during the popular summer months. After dining, check out the Spirit Gallery Gift Shop.

Most people associate Grouse Mountain with skiing but the resort has a variety of activities and regardless of the season the panoramic view - day or night - of Lions Peaks, Strait of George, English Bay, Stanley Park, Burrard Inlet and the City of Vancouver is memorable.

Be sure to go online and make reservations for parking, the Skyride and admission. Grouse Mountain stresses "Know Before You Go." ***www.grousemountain.com***

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The Red Rock Scenic Byway, known as State Route 179 (Arizona Highway 179).

KEN LUND

BY NORA BURBA TRULSSON/VISITARIZONA.COM

Quick Trips and Scenic Drives *in Arizona*

These side-routes in the Grand Canyon State will enhance your southwestern destination with stunning natural attractions and services.

Travelling through this southwestern state can be a little overwhelming, but in a good way. There are plenty of natural attractions to discover during day trips or while travelling from point A to point Z. Some of the most exciting points of interest, however, are along the state's beautiful byways that will make an Arizona destination even better.

Red Rock Scenic Byway

Officially known as Arizona Highway 179, the Red Rock Scenic Byway is located approximately 177 km (110 mi) north of Phoenix. Although it's only 23 km (14.5 mi), days could be spent exploring the spectacular red rock formations, as well as the local shops and galleries along the way.

If it's your first visit, be sure to check out the Visitor Center and Red Rock Ranger District Administrative Facility before arriving in the Village of Oak Creek. Roughly 8 km (5 mi) south of Sedona, Oak Creek has many services and is a convenient stop before exploring Bell Rock and Courthouse Butte. You'll want to make sure your smart phone is charged or your camera's memory card is empty as these two landmarks are extraordinary.

The attractions continue in Sedona with the Chapel of the Holy Cross, a meditative and powerful retreat that was inspired and commissioned by local rancher and sculptor Marguerite Brunswig Staude. At the north end of the byway is Tlaquepaque, an architecturally authentic Spanish Colonial village that houses galleries, retailers and restaurants.

Trip tip: A Red Rock Pass ($5/day) is required for vehicles parked on National Forest land around Sedona and Oak Creek Canyon. If you want to stay in the area for a night or two, Rancho Sedona RV Park and Chavez Crossing Group Campground are good bets. Reservations are recommended. (www.ranchosedona.com; www.fs.usda.gov)

Swift Trail

Located on SR 366 near Safford in Southeastern Arizona and about two hours from Tucson, the Swift Trail leads 56 km (35 mi) up one of Arizona's famous Sky Islands, Mount Graham in the Coronado National Forest's Pinaleño Mountains that rises up to more than 2,133 m (7,000 ft).

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Swift Trail can be accessed just outside of Safford, north of I-10. Traverse mountainous grades through cacti and ocotillos at lower elevations, which are followed by oaks, sycamores and pines at higher elevations. Keep an eye out for Heliograph Peak, where the army sent mirrored signals during the Apache Wars. When following the trail, you'll come across some great locations for picnics or hikes.

After approximately 35 km (22 mi), the pavement ends and a well-graded dirt road begins, leading to a small lake and the final stop of the trail. While the drive is steep with tight turns, it is fairly manageable yet many opt to set up camp at the nearby Roper Lake State Park and then explore the trail with a tow vehicle or toad. www.azstateparks.com

Trip tip: The last stretch of the Swift Trail is only open from mid-April to mid-November, weather permitting.

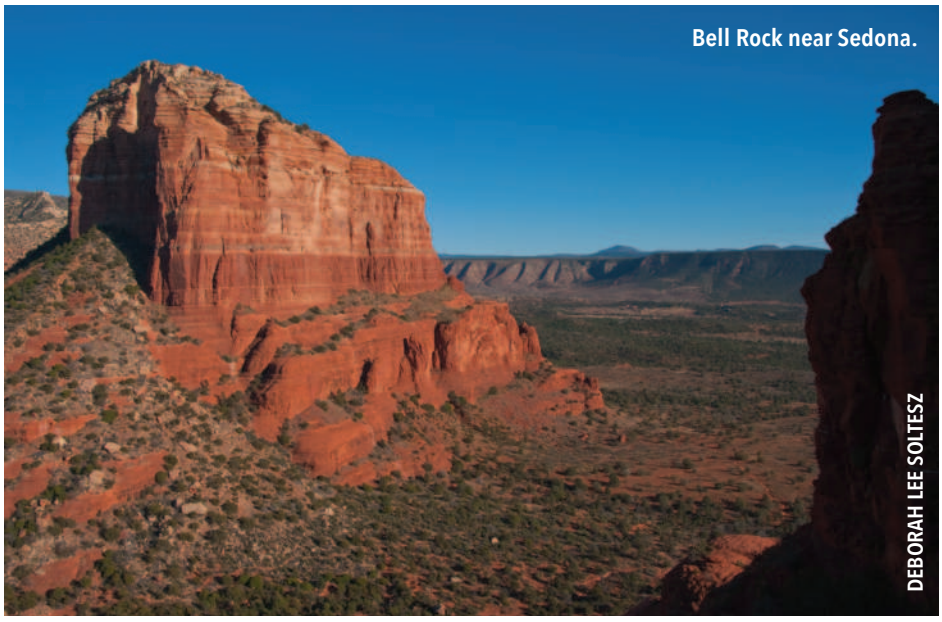
Sonoita to Patagonia

Starting near Vail, AZ, on I-10, you can pick up this 84 km (52 mi) drive south on SR 83 through the Santa Cruz River Basin of Southeastern Arizona. In Sonoita, be sure to visit the nearby wineries of the state's burgeoning wine country. A popular dining option is The Cafe, which is known for its creative local cuisine. Afterwards, connect with SR 82 and while heading south, you'll see the landscape evolve from scenic rolling grasslands to cottonwood stands and juniper forests.

In Patagonia, stroll among the town's commercial district that encompasses charming coffee shops and retailers or enjoy more of the outdoors at the Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve. This is one of the most popular birding spots in the United States and is home to more than 300 species. Be sure to bring the binoculars.

A popular destination in this region is Patagonia Lake State Park, located on the lake of the same name. This man-made reservoir spans 105 ha (260 ac) and is perfect for boating, fishing and swimming. There are even boat-in campsites (accessibe by boat only) each featuring a picnic table and fire-ring. On land in the park are 105 developed sites with parking for two vehicles as well as 20/30- and 50-amp electrical. The sites can also accommodate most lengths of RVs. www.azstateparks.com

Trip Tip: March and April are excellent months to visit when the wildflowers are in full bloom.



Bell Rock near Sedona.

DEBORAH LEE SOLTESZ

SEDONA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & TOURISM BUREAU

Sedona has many services - not to mention natural attractions as well.

Kingman to Pearce Ferry

Along Arizona's western border, the 111 km (69 mi) Joshua Tree Parkway carves through the Hualapai Valley where hundreds of Joshua Trees stand and stretch out their twisty, spiky arms.

You can start this journey in Kingman by taking Stockton Hill Road, which eventually connects with Pierce Ferry Road. As you head north, you'll see the craggy Cerbat Mountains to the west and the Grand Wash Cliffs to the east. You'll want to take your time to admire the majestic sights of the roaming wild horses.

Pierce Ferry Road is unpaved but smooth and leads to Pearce Ferry , the boundary between Lake Mead and the Grand Canyon. This is where you can settle in at a primitive lakeside campsite. If more amenities are required, Meadview RV Park is approximately a 30-minute drive, making it ideal to enjoy day trips throughout the area.

Trip tip: Rain can put a damper on your visit as the main route crosses several washes that can become easily flooded during a heavy rainstorm. Be sure to monitor the weather forecast before your departure.

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STORY AND PHOTOS BY JASON BETZING

AFTERMARKET UPGRADES *that are Worth Every Cent*

JIM WELLINGTON

Modifications to a trailer or motorhome don't have to be difficult to enhance your time on the road.

When I was assigned to write about what my wife and I thought were the top five upgrades we've done to our fifth wheel to make our RV experiences more convenient, I quickly jotted down a long list. Being full-timers and not big fans of roughing it, our style of RVing could be considered in the "Glamper" category. But after looking at the lengthy list, I cut it down to five that we are glad we did and would add to any unit that we buy in the future.

1. 90 DEGREE SHOREPOWER ADAPTER

Standard shorepower cables plug straight into the RV, but the weight of the cable (and challenges of gravity) creates a lot of strain at the connection. Within the first year of full-timing, we began to see the black cable jacket separate from the plug, exposing insulated wires (see image at the right). We kept an eye on it and the small gap became larger over time as plugging and unplugging it with the weight of the cable kept taking a toll.

The solution was a 90 degree (or 'right angle') shorepower cord adapter from Camco for around $50 USD. This simple solution relieves all the stress on the cable by allowing it to hang vertically from the

Our standard shorepower cable created a lot of strain to the point of damaging the cable jacket.

connection. The 90-degree design also allows for easier connections in tight spots and is available in 50-, 30-, and 20-amp configurations.

This adapter, along with others, is referred to as 'dog bones' due to their shape. We always carry a 50- to 30-amp adapter as well as a 50- to 20-amp adapter. Another solution would be to install a hard-wired power reel. Even though these are not cheap at around $1,000, it would be a great solution for folks with physical disabilities.

A twist on the sewage valve ensures no unpleasant surprises when attaching the sewage hose.

2. SEWAGE VALVE

When we first started full-timing, we would always get nervous connecting the sewage hose to drain the black tank, as we were always greeted with a smelly 'surprise' by the small amount of leaking wastewater. After some research, we learned that it's a common problem.

We had two options including pulling the under-belly Coroplast - the protective plastic enclosing on the underside of the RV - and replacing the valve or simply installing an outside valve at the sewage hose connection, which is much cheaper with less labour. We chose the latter and purchased the Valterra Twist-On Waste Valve from Amazon. It was simple and is as easy to install as a sewage hose. It's also adjustable, provides peace of mind and is just $27 USD.

3. AUXILIARY FUEL TANK

It took just one bad experience to realize that we needed an auxiliary fuel tank for our tow vehicle. We were once in rural Nebraska and the only signs of civilization were the paved road we were on and a rusty old windmill creaking eerily in the distance. My fuel gauge pointed directly to 'E' but we had just enough fuel to find a gas station. We then made a promise to ourselves to never get into this type of situation again.

As soon as we were stationary long enough, we ordered and installed a 340 L (90 gal) diesel aux tank and gravity drain. With our truck's standard tank, we can now carry approximately 454 L (120 gal) of fuel. As our truck gets 23.5 L/100km (10 mpg) with the RV in tow, we now have a driving range of about 1,609 km (1,000 mi). It also allows us to stock up on fuel when it's less expensive in certain areas and makes for stress-free travel in remote areas.

We chose the RDS 90 gallon Transfer Fuel Tank with a diamond plate finish. With the installation kit and parts, this upgrade cost us around $800 USD. But we regret not getting the electric pump accessory for quicker fill-ups.

We ordered it from Amazon, but this style of tank is available from a variety of suppliers and in several finishes. Our tank is lightweight at 52 kg (115 lb). But remember, the additional weight of the fuel should be considered with the towing set-up as 340 L (90 gal) of diesel tips the scales at approximately 285 kg (630 lb). Remember to also get a locking fill cap.

The auxiliary fuel tank gives us a 1609 km (1,000 mi) range. We can also stock up when fuel prices are lower.

4. RESIDENTIAL MATTRESS AND LUXURY SHEETS

Sleep is very important to recharge, feel rested and have enough energy at the end of the day to enjoy happy hour. Having our bedroom temperature set to 'meat locker' and the room as dark as possible always promises us a sound sleep. But one of the best

things we did was upgrade to a residential memory foam queen-size mattress.

We found the stock RV mattress terrible in every sense of the word. It was flat and of poor quality, which meant it wouldn't last long on a full-time basis. It was also shorter than a residential-style mattress and didn't quite fit my 188 cm (6.2 ft) frame. Due to the odd dimension, sheets need to be a special size, which limits our choices. We've tried a variety over the years and now use Hotel Style 600 thread count, 100 percent cotton sheets from Walmart - of all places. They'll only set you back $59 USD for queen size but the quality is excellent, they are comfortable, and easy to find.

5. WATER FILTRATION AND SOFTENING SYSTEM

You've probably seen the little blue water filters threaded onto other RV water hoses. They work very well and if you're an occasional RVer, they may suit your needs just fine. They are inexpensive at $17 USD (or less), last approximately three months and filter water to 20 microns.

We have used these for a couple of years. However, once we were full-time and found ourselves in many different locations with a variety of water sources, we knew we needed better, more consistent water filtration. We also noticed orange trails of rust and mineral scale around the faucet nozzles of our RV, indicating hard water.

Since these filters are not efficient with hard water, we decided to install a two-stage filtration system using a one-micron sediment filter and a carbon cartridge that we purchased from the RV Water Filter Store. To soften the water, we purchased On The Go's Double Standard water softener, which softens 2,422 to 6,056 L (640 to 1,600 gal) of water per charge.

Regeneration simply requires two boxes of table salt with the option to add Iron OUT for extremely hard water. We were able to utilize our storage area adjacent to the water hookup and plumbed everything in with PEX tubing. I included several isolation valves for system maintenance. A regeneration lasts us about two months, and we change the carbon filter every four months.

The water softener cost us $273 USD and the two-stage filter was $100 USD. This was a great addition since we know there won't be an accumulation of mineral deposits and rust within our water system. The water tastes great and we know it's safe to drink. It can also be set up outside your RV using garden hoses and many do. We just enjoy having only one water hose to connect to. If you opt for a water softener in your RV, you'll want to use magnesium instead of aluminum if your water heater has anodes.

For us, a great sleep starts with a residential memory foam mattress and high thread-count sheets.

We hard-piped a water softener with a two-stage filter. We now always have good water.

We did these improvements over three years. Some other great upgrades include Club Chairs from Camping World, a keyless entry, as well as a dishwasher, washer/dryer, and slow-close toilet seat.

The aftermarket products we chose to improve our RV are highly personal but hopefully, they'll provide some inspiration to improve function and convenience in your trailer or motorhome.

Jason Betzing and his wife sold it all in Michigan to live their Full-Time RV dream. He retired at age 40 when they decided winter is a drag and world travel is more fun than shovelling snow. He loves helping people by sharing authentic, first-hand experiences. Connect on Instagram @FullTimeFire, Facebook @Jason Betzing, or on his blog at www.MilesTwoGo.com

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BY JEFF CRIDER

RVing on the Rise IN THE SUNSHINE STATE

With the highest levels of new park development in the U.S., Florida is experiencing a boom among seasonal RVers.

Torrey Trails RV and Golf Resort in Bowling Green. The first 158 RV sites of this luxury resort opened this year with plans to add another 210 sites in 2022.

TORREY TRAILS RV AND GOLF RESORT

The Waves RV Resort in Naples. The resort completed construction of a 416, 395 L (110,000 gal), zero-entry resort-style swimming pool in 2020.

Following reports from Florida park operators about a busier than expected summer with higher volumes of early winter bookings compared to recent years, there will now be more choices this snowbird season with the development of new RV parks and/or upgrades to existing ones. As a result, Florida is now considered to have more new parks and resorts under construction than any other U.S. State.

"We're almost 85 percent sold out for January, February and March at our Canopy Oaks location in Lake Wales," said Tristan Farrell, president of Sunlight Resorts. "We're taking an enormous amount of reservations and our summer numbers were also better than expected."

The Resort at Canopy Oaks is the largest new RV resort in Florida and opened in December 2020, offering 411 sites with room to expand to 1,000. Park amenities include several lakes, a tiki bar, deli, coffee shop and ice cream parlor as well as a country store, hair salon and spa.

"We also do a variety of special events," added Farrell. "The park organized an Easter egg hunt, and nearly sold out Mother's Day and Father's Day. We had face painting and candybar bingo for the kids. Plus, live music is held every Friday and Saturday and we also host large fireworks shows. We try to create attractions that make people want to visit us."

The featured pool and expansive grounds of the Resort at Canopy Oaks

This winter, the park will also cater to snowbirds with, hopefully, RVers from Canada.

Other park operators across Florida are seeing unprecedented demand and earlier-than-normal winter bookings as well, including Breezy Oaks RV Park in Bushnell.

"We're almost completely sold out for the winter," says Mike Wood of Breezy Oaks RV Park. "Our occupancy has never been this high this far out and it will be the best year since I've been involved with the park."

To meet the demand, many are developing new properties throughout

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Many activities can be enjoyed on and off site at the variety of RV parks.

Florida including RV Sunlight Resorts with four locations (that are expected to open next year) including:

Champions Run RV Resort, Ocala

Scheduled to open in April 2022 with 492 sites, Champions Run will have a variety of amenities including a full-service tiki bar, large swimming pool, hot tub, fully-equipped fitness centre and pickleball courts.
www.sunlight-resorts.com/resorts/champions-run

Palm Breeze RV Resort, Punta Gorda

This 439-site RV resort is expected to open in winter 2022. Similar to Champions Run, it will have a large swimming pool and hot tub, full-service tiki bar, fitness centre and pickleball courts.
www.sunlight-resorts.com

Rum Runner RV Resort, Sebring

About 90 minutes southeast of Tampa, Rum Runner RV Resort is currently under construction and will consist of 147 sites with an opening date of August 2022.
www.sunlight-resorts.com/resorts/rum-runner-luxury-rv-resort

Sebring Square RV Resort, Sebring

Expected to open in early 2022, Sebring Square RV Resort will consist of 215 sites along with a full-service tiki bar, large swimming pool, hot tub, fully-equipped fitness centre and pickleball courts.
www.sunlight-resorts.com/resorts/sebring-square/

"We estimate that more than 7,000 new RV sites will come online in Florida this year and next," says Bobby Cornwell, executive director and CEO of the Florida RV Park and Campground Association.

According to Cornwell, the 7,000-site figure will include approximately 5,000 RV sites at 21 new Florida RV park/resort locations, which have opened since December 2019, as well as nearly 1,500 new sites at more than 20 existing locations. Cornwell also explained that RV parks and resorts that have not been officially announced by developers will offer an additional combined total of over 1,000 new sites.

ADDITIONAL NEW RV PARKS AND RESORTS TO CONSIDER THIS WINTER (OR ANYTIME) IN FLORIDA

There's no doubt that RV parks and resorts are on the rise in the Sunshine State. To provide you with the best choices for this coming snowbird season (and for next year), we've compiled a comprehensive list with descriptions of new parks; those that are making significant improvements; and parks that have come online since December 2019.

Cabana Club RV Resort, Auburndale

A family-owned resort located between Tampa and Orlando, the Cabana Club RV Resort consists of 155 sites and 60 park model rentals. Amenities include a zero-entry heated swimming pool, nine-hole artificial turf putting course, tiki hut/bar, and splash pad. Activities for all ages are basketball, corn hole and yoga. Separate dog parks for large and small pets plus a dog wash station are also on site. Plans are in the works for an additional 125 RV sites, 65 park model locations, as well as six covered/shaded pickleball courts and multi-use sports courts. ***www.cabanaclubresort.com***

Coconut Cay RV Park and Marina, Marathon

Located in the scenic Florida Keys, this RV park opened in June 2020 with 25 sites. Features include a swimming pool, bath/shower house, an exchange library, as well as bicycle and kayak rentals.
www.coconutcayrv.com

Fort Pierce KOA, Fort Pierce

Construction is currently underway for this new KOA location and will have 115 sites with at least two deluxe cabins. It's expected to open by summer 2022.
www.koa.com/campgrounds/fort-pierce-west

Island Oaks RV Resort, Glen St. Mary

Reservations are now open for dates starting October 1, 2021 (at the time of publication). In addition to 385 sites, the park features waterways, plus a lake (with swimming), pool, tiki bar, fishing lake with dock, and paddle boards and kayaks. Sports courts, nature areas, and ponds are also on site.
www.islandoaksrvresort.com

Keystone Heights RV Resort, Keystone Heights

Construction crews have completed the first 193 sites, which are now open for RV business. Features include a 1,021 sq m (11,000 sq ft) clubhouse, 250 sq m (2,700 sq ft) swimming pool, spa, bathhouse, laundry facilities, and pickleball courts.
www.keystoneheightsrv.com

Madison RV & Golf Resort, Madison

This park opened in June 2020 with 95 sites. Amenities are a recently renovated nine-hole golf course with golf cart rentals, lighted pickleball courts, woodshop, and swimming pool. Catch-and-release fishing is also available on the grounds.
www.madisonrvresort.com/rv-resort/

Ponce de Leon RV Park, Ponce de Leon

Set across 60-acres, Ponce de Leon RV Park opened in July 2020 with 41 sites and construction for another 50 sites are underway this year. The many amenities include a swimming pool and a 465 sq m (5,000 sq ft) open-air pavilion with picnic tables. Laundry facilities and cornhole are also included.
www.poncedeleonrvpark.com

Quiet Rest RV Park, Paxton

Developed by Pat O'Neill and his family business (who also own Twin Lakes RV Resort in DeFuniak Springs), Quiet Rest RV Park is expected to break ground in spring 2022 and will initially offer 50 to 60 sites with an eventual buildout of 125 to 150 sites.

Ridge Manor Campground, Reddick

According to Bradley Winteroff, owner/manager, adjacent property from the campground was purchased with plans for a new RV park to open by late 2022. Winteroff explained it will consist of 65 sites with 15 reserved for rental cabins or park models.

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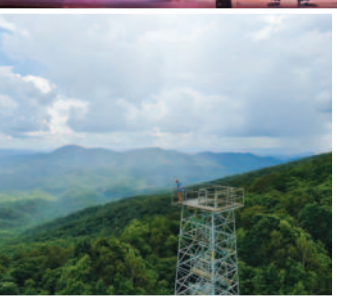

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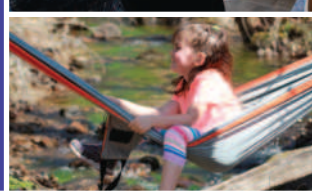

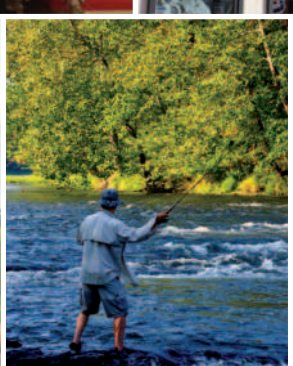

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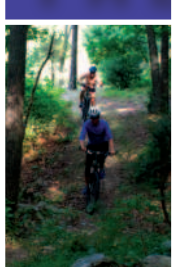

EXITS

The Tides in Palmetto is another new luxury RV Resort, which opened in January 2020.

THE TIDES RV RESORT

Santa Fe Palms RV Resort, Gainesville

Expected to open November 1, 2021, this Gainesville RV resort will consist of 115 sites and feature a swimming pool, nature walking trails, pickleball courts and cornhole.
www.santafepalmsrvresort.com

Southern Leisure RV Resort, Ocala

Developer Alan Wallace explained construction is underway for the 185 sites at this gated resort, which is expected to open this fall. A 650 sq m (7,000 sq ft) clubhouse, an Olympic-size swimming pool, a spa, bocce ball, pickleball and shuffleboard courts are just some of the activities that will be available. ***www.sunrvresorts.com***

RV Resort and Water Park, East Milton

This 62-acre, $20 million resort and water park is currently under construction but will initially feature approximately 351 sites, 34 to 40 park model cottages, and six furnished Conestoga wagons, according to Marcus Lauren, the park's general manager. It's expected to open this spring. Some highlights among the grounds include two swimming pools, waterslides, a lazy river, as well as bocce ball, pickleball and basketball courts. The latest updates are posted on the park's Facebook page at ***or at www.splashrvresort.com.***

Sunkissed Village RV Resort, Summerfield

A 267-site luxury resort that opened in December 2019, Sunkissed Village offers spacious RV sites with water, sewer and 50/100 amp electrical. Some amenities you'll enjoy include a large heated salt water swimming pool with a paver deck, tiki bar, grill area, an outdoor gas fire pit, plus pickleball, bocce ball and shuffleboard courts. Winter activity programs, and a spacious, modern clubhouse with a commercial kitchen and fitness centre are additional niceties. Other amenities you'll find are a dog park and dog washing station - with hot water.
www.sunkissedvillage.com

The Surf RV Resort, Palmetto

Zeman RV Resorts is developing this 449-site park on 40 ha (100 ac) and is expected to open in the winter 2022. Along with a variety of amenities, there will be a clubhouse, fitness centre, swimming pool and sports courts to enjoy.

The Tides RV Resort, Palmetto

Also operated by Zeman RV Resorts, The Tides is another new luxury RV Resort and opened in January 2020. It has 389 sites and its grounds encompass a fully-stocked, catch-and- release fishing lake, heated resort-style swimming pools, and a 1,394 sq m (15,000 sq ft) clubhouse with kitchen facilities and a fitness centre. Scheduled activities and special events are also hosted. ***www.thetidesrvresort.com***

Torrey Trails RV and Golf Resort, Bowling Green

According to developers Amir Harpaz, Alan Wallace and Bill Harvey, the first 158 RV sites of this luxury resort opened this year and there are plans to add another 210 sites in 2022. Built on an existing golf course, there's a nine-hole course with disc golf capabilities, an indoor/outdoor fitness centre, tennis and pickleball courts, plus a dog park and dog splash pool.
www.torreytrailsrv.com

EXPANDING RV PARKS AND RESORTS TO ALSO CONSIDER

Bay Bayou RV Resort, Tampa

Evanston, Illinois-based Jennings Realty expanded this resort by 53 RV sites in 2017 and there are plans to add another eight this year on an adjacent property, according to Darla Sinnard, the park's manager. A fire pit with seating and a fitness centre are also new this season. ***www.rvparkflorida.com***

Breezy Oaks RV Park, Bushnell

Park owner Mike Wood is expanding this park with 53 new RV sites, which are expected to be open this spring.
www.breezyoaksrvpark.com

Fiesta Key RV Resort and Marina, Long Key

A redevelopment of 70 sites on the resort's west side was completed in early 2020. There has also been extensive renovations to 17 rental units that are now open.
www.rvonthego.com/florida/fiesta-key-rv-resort/

Fisherman's Cove RV Resort, Palmetto

More than $1.5 million in improvements have recently been made to this active lifestyle resort on Terra Ceia Bay. New updates are streets throughout the resort, eight paved RV sites with an asphalt storage area, plus water and electrical hookups. The clubhouse now has a large game room plus a remodeled kitchen. Another addition is a new pickleball court. You'll also enjoy the waterfront heated pool, spa, fitness centre, and expansive dog park. A newly built vacation rental is even on site and can be rented on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.
www.myfishermanscove.com

Hidden River RV Resort, Riverview

This park is adding another 85 RV sites. While 51 are already completed, the remaining 34, which are located along the river, will be completed in the spring. The resort is also expected to add pickleball courts and a fitness facility (once the existing upgrades are completed).
www.sunrvresorts.com/resorts/south/florida/hidden-river

Holiday Travel Park, Holiday

Expect enjoyment throughout the season at Holiday Travel Park with many upgrades such as a renovated clubhouse, an outdoor kitchen area, and pool with new patio furniture. Shuffleboard courts

(that have been resurfaced), new pool tables, and horseshoe pits are other highlights. ***www.rvonthego.com/florida/holiday-travel-park***

North Beach Camp Resort, St. Augustine
North Beach Camp Resort has 150 sites and recently embarked on a 70-site expansion. According to park co-owner Ken Usina, the first of these sites are expected to be ready by next winter.
www.northbeachcamp.com

Ocala North RV Resort, Reddick
This 260-site park is planning to add 141 sites, mostly for RVs, trailers and fifth wheels. ***www.ocalanorthrvresort.com***

Pecan Park RV Resort, Jacksonville
Pecan Park doubled its occupancy to 341 sites plus 158 concrete sites in 2020. The resort's new sites have concrete driveways, parking and patio areas, as well as full hookups and complimentary WiFi. Other improvements include the addition of seven vacation rentals, an ADA home, and six loft-style park model rentals that sleep six. The park is also currently building a new amenity centre (that's expected to be completed as early as May) where visitors can enjoy basketball, horseshoes, pickleball, tennis and bocce ball. It will even have a pavilion to host live performances.
www.pecanparkrvresort.com

Picture your RV here. The spacious sites at the Sunkissed Village RV Resort in Summerfield.

Southern Leisure RV Resort, Chiefland
Following an expansion with 218 sites in January 2019, park owner Alan Wallace explained another 279 sites were added and opened in November 2020, doubling its occupancy. Many upscale amenities include a 929 sq m (10,000 sq ft) clubhouse with excellent acoustics and a stage to host live entertainment, a heated Olympic-size swimming pool, bathhouse, fitness centre, and dedicated rooms for sewing, quilting, billiards and playing cards. The resort also offers a jam-packed activities program, a variety of social events, even a post office, dog grooming and salon services.
www.southernleisurervresort.com

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Space Coast RV Resort, Rockledge
A 50-amp electrical upgrade project was recently completed that allows for 74 sites to receive higher amp service.
www.rvonthego.com/florida/space-coast-rv-resort/

Stage Stop Campground, Winter Park
A variety of upgrades at this family-owned RV park include resurfaced roads, an upgraded swimming pool, and 70 percent of its sites now have 50-amp service. The park's WiFi system has also been improved and many of the park's buildings have been updated with new roofs.
www.stagestoprvcampground.com/desktop.

Sunlake RV Resort, Ruskin
Recent improvements at this resort include repaved roads, remodeled restrooms, paved common area pathways, new laundry facilities, a renovated clubhouse and a heated pool.
www.sunlakervresort.com

Sunseekers RV Resort, Fort Myers
Among the many upgrades that were part of a two-year plan included 50-amp electrical service to more than 240 of its sites, plus improvements to the swimming pool, bathhouses, and roads. It also has a new pickleball court.
www.sunseekersrvpark.com

Sunshine Village, Webster
This active lifestyle resort completed a $2 million expansion in 2018 and 2019 with the addition of 50 super-sites, which are located on a newly purchased 4 ha (9.5 ac) site. The super-sites span 25 x 13 m (83 x 43 ft) and include 22 x 6 m (72 x 20 ft) concrete pads.
www.sunshinevillageflorida.com

The Waves RV Resort, Naples
Approximately $2 million in improvements are being made at this 383-site resort. The latest upgrades are renovations to its 650 sq m (7,000 sq ft) clubhouse, new landscaping and a gated entrance. In winter 2020, the resort completed construction of a 416, 395 L (110,000 gal), zero-entry resort-style swimming pool, and the addition of four pickleball courts, several bocce ball courts, a putting green, obstacles in the dog park, fire pits and a tiki hut.
www.thewavesrv.com

Thousand Trails Orlando RV Resort, Clermont
In addition to completing the development of land to allow for more than 160 new RV sites, a second pool area was completed, which included new bath houses. An updated laundry facility is currently being built and is expected to be completed this year.
www.rvonthego.com/florida/orlando-rv-resort/

Upriver RV Resort, Fort Myers
With a 57-site expansion in late 2019, other improvements have included new landscaping, a bathhouse, laundry facilities and WiFi system. ***www.upriver.com***

Wildwood RV Village, Wildwood
This pet-friendly park opened 210 new sites in early 2020. According to owner Mike Wood, the park began adding another 159 RV sites last spring. Park amenities include a heated swimming pool with a sun deck, shaded dog park, picnic area, and big-rig friendly sites with free cable TV and WiFi.
www.wildwoodrvvillage.com

Winter Garden RV Resort, Winter Garden
Winter Garden is currently completing a 50-amp electrical upgrade to more than 40 sites, following the installation of a new transformer.
www.rvonthego.com/florida/winter-garden-rv-resort/

Upgrades have also taken place at a variety of other parks including Pioneer Village RV Resort in North Fort Myers and Winter Quarters Pasco in Lutz. According to Randy Berman, a spokesman for Chicago-based Equity LifeStyle Properties, which owns and operates Pioneer Village and Winter Quarters, other enhancements include new concrete pads and picnic tables. Berman also explained that Breezy Hill RV Resort in Pompano Beach, Vacation Village RV Resort in Largo and Peace River RV and Camping Resort in Wauchula have been upgraded with new and/or refurbished pickleball courts.

For more information and to review all Florida RV parks and resorts visit www.campflorida.com. Also be sure to contact park operators and/or staff for updates and new developments.

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Don't overlook these tasks before backing your RV into storage for the winter.

WINTERIZING RV TIPS *You May Not Know*

BY STEVE FENNELL

Properly preparing your RV for winter storage takes some effort but it's essential not to overlook these important DIY steps.

Winterizing your RV is just one of the mandatory annual tasks that comes with ownership. Even though you may follow a thorough step-by-step checklist, it's often the missed minor details that can cause the most damage in some of the most unsuspecting areas of your trailer or motorhome.

From invading pests to unexpected leaks, moisture and mildew, the following points are just some of the added precautions to take when winterizing your RV. While some tasks may already be included on your checklist, it never hurts to double check or reinforce your efforts to ensure continued reliability of your rig for next season.

Plumbing, Wires and Mice (or Other Pests)

Just like your home and the adjoining garage, basement, shed, and attic, RVs are very vulnerable to mice and once they get in, these furry little pests will like your RV even more than you do.

Harmless to humans yet annoying, mice can go to town on wires, rubber lines, upholstery, or almost anything they can sink their little teeth into, thus causing serious and costly damage. If you own a travel trailer or fifth wheel, be sure to inspect the underside of the unit, storage areas and other compartments for any cracks, holes or existing cutouts that run lines, piping or electrical wires. The smaller the opening that you find to fill, the better. No hole or gap is too small for a curious mouse. In fact, with their fairly flexible rib cage they can squeeze through the tightest of spaces, as tiny as 6 to 7 mm.

Regardless of what style of unit you own, try to locate any possible entry points behind drawers, in larger basement storage units, as well as behind cupboards, appliances, furniture, and around slideouts. It's best to do this on sunny days when it's easier to locate light streaming through holes, cracks or gaps that shouldn't exist.

But, it's not impossible to stop these relentless pests from setting up a nice home in your RV. A sure-fire way to plug these

Pests, such as mice, can fit in the tiniest of spaces as well chew away at electrical wiring.

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gaps is by using spray foam, which is widely available at Home Depot, Wal-Mart or RV service centres at little cost. It's easy to use and a little goes a long way. Caulking for smaller gaps is also effective as is plugging areas with steel wool, just as you would do at home.

Further prevention is the use of mice repellents (or other repellents for pests like squirrels or chipmunks) and there's a wide variety of solutions available. Another preventative effort is storing your RV on a hard surface rather than in areas with tall grass or other environments where mice and pests may inhabit in the fall before the snow flies.

It's also wise to check your RV throughout the winter as you can use these preventative measures immediately if you see any signs of mice or other intrusive creatures to reduce the risk of any damage. Above all, every RV stored for the winter should be free of food, drinks, crumbs, even spills. Neatness always counts. Don't provide a reason for mice or pests to enter in the first place.

Check for ANY Leaks

Water can be the number one culprit to damage in any RV and while you have the calking gun out, remember those small cracks can also cause water to leak in throughout the winter, potentially causing major damage. Water leaks can occur in a variety of areas so be sure to double check

Be sure to check for damage that can cause water intrusion in concealed spaces throughout the interior.

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all seals around windows, doors, slide-outs, seams of the top corners where the walls and ceiling meet, cutouts for systems on the roof and roof seams at the front and rear of the unit. Also be sure to use an appropriate sealant for the material you are sealing or reach out to your local RV dealer to address any concerns.

At the same time, look for any discoloration or soft spots in these areas as they are sure signs of water intrusion. Fix them immediately. Also inspect all designated storage compartments as well as the interior and exterior areas where the water heater, furnace, exterior shower, potable water fill and city water inlet are located.

Add Stabilizer to the Fuel Tank

Any automotive engine - including the one in your winterized motorhome - that sits for prolonged periods needs to be treated with a fuel stabilizer since gas will start to oxidize and deteriorate after about a month or so in storage (diesel fuel takes a little longer). Fuel stabilizers like STABiL or Biobor JF (available for both gas or diesel engines) provide a protective layer for the fuel to prevent evaporation during extended periods and stubborn resin deposits from forming, which can damage the carburetor or other fuel components over time.

To use, start with an empty tank of fuel (or nearly empty), add in the appropriate amount of stabilizer as per the manufacturer guidelines, and then top up the tank with fresh fuel. This will disperse the stabilizer and ensure the tank is minimally exposed to air or water. Next, simply start the engine and let it run for approximately five to ten minutes to allow the stabilizer to reach the entire fuel system.

Mould and Mildew Build Up in Unforeseen Spaces

If you've ever forgotten to roll up the RV awning after driving away from a campsite, there may be a chance you'll forget about the importance of cleaning and ensuring it's dry before winter storage.

Being out of sight when it's not open, an awning is easy to overlook and should always be completely dry before winter storage to prevent mould, stains, and a stubborn odor that will develop over the winter. If it's on your checklist, double check it just to be sure. But if it's still moist from the rainfall from that one last trip, simply roll it out for an afternoon to dry and then roll it back in just before storage. The same should apply to pop-up campers or other commonly exposed fabrics.

Other ways of preventing mould and mildew include using a high quality breathable RV cover (if your RV is stored outdoors) that can vent water vapour from forming, running a dehumidifier a few times during storage, and of course, checking for leaks to prevent water intrusion.

Preparing your RV for winter storage is not difficult but it does take some time, effort, and knowledge of your systems to ensure they will work and function as they should next season.

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STORY AND PHOTOS BY KATHLEEN WALLS

Florida's *Unforgettable* FORGOTTEN COAST

An area of the Sunshine State's Panhandle that's ready to serve Canadian snowbirds.

It's called 'The Forgotten Coast' but once you visit, chances are you won't forget it, and it just may become part of your scheduled snowbird adventures throughout the winter.

Located in Franklin County and Northern Florida's Big Bend region, the Forgotten Coast is appropriately named as it's one of the last preserved Gulf Coast beaches that haven't been overdeveloped. But what makes this area of The Panhandle so significant is that all of the communities (including Carrabelle, Eastpoint, Apalachicola, and St George Island with a number of rural towns in between), share 322 km (200 mi) of uncrowded, white sand beaches, welcoming RV parks, and little traffic and congestion, which combine to provide a relaxing and undisturbed destination vacation.

While cooler than other regions in Florida, snow or frigid temps are rarely seen as are touristy theme parks, grandiose wildlife attractions, and beaches lined with high-rise condos. A drive along U.S. Route 98, which is known as the Big Bend Scenic Byway, will reveal 'an entirely different Florida' compared to the more commercial hot spots to the south.

What's more, historical and natural attractions abound throughout The Forgotten Coast and regardless of which community you visit, chances are likely you'll return to at least a few of them as each caters to a variety of activities and interests throughout the year.

Carrabelle

A popular attraction in this community is the Carrabelle Riverwalk and Wharf/Marine Street. Pavilion that has the authenticity of a true Florida waterfront.

The Ralph G. Kendrick Dwarf Cypress Boardwalk.

A popular nightspot is Harry's Bar with its Key West-style atmosphere.

This is where you can relax with a quick lunch under the pier's pavilion or enjoy recreational fishing and boating. The boardwalk is handicap-accessible and there are concrete boat launches that can accommodate a variety of models and sizes.

Across from the scenic riverwalk, you can discover some history of the area at the Carrabelle History Museum. Located in the original Marvin Justiss-built City Hall, memorabilia and local artifacts reveal stories about Carrabelle's First People, its days as a fishing port, the hurricanes that struck the community over the years, and more.

Nearby is 'The World's Smallest Police Station,' a popular tourist attraction that's becoming a great location for selfies (followed by the inevitable social media post). It has been featured on television series including Real People, Ripley's Believe It or Not, and even The Today Show. The idea of using a telephone booth as a police station in the late 1960s came about since the local police force had to use a public phone to field calls. The areas' finest were tired of getting drenched when it rained and people were also sneaking long-distance calls. The phone booth helped with the rainy weather calls but still didn't stop the illegal calling.

West of town, the Crooked River Lighthouse, which was built in 1895, is hard to miss and stands guard over Carrabelle Beach, one of Florida's most pristine beaches. During its construction, the lighthouse

The 23 m (72 ft) Cape St. George Light.

was built with steel beams rather than the conventional round masonry and inside the keeper's house are a museum and gift shop. Climbs to the top are also permitted for more adventurous visitors during ideal weather conditions.

Located in the shadow of the lighthouse at Carrabelle Beach, you'll also want to visit the Camp Gordon Johnston Museum, which retells the story of the amphibious assault forces during World War II. Created to honour the heritage of the approximate 250,000 men and women who trained here, the museum showcases photographs, memorabilia, uniforms and equipment of the era.

While motoring along U.S. Route 98, you can't miss signs to Tate's Hell State Forest, a pristine nature preserve between Carrabelle and the Apalachicola National Forest, which consists of 58,480 ha (144,508 ac) of untamed woodland and wetlands that's inhabited by wildlife such as the Florida back bear, deer, wild turkey, snakes, and a variety of birds. There are hiking trails but perhaps paddle some of the 56 km (35 mi) of rivers, streams and creeks, which are great for fishing and observing wildlife. Primitive camping is also available.

Of special note, Tate's Hell and the Apalachicola National Forest are a haven for birders. If you're lucky, you may spot a bald eagle or Red-Cockaded Woodpecker. Approximately 16 km (about 10 mi) to the west is one other natural attraction, the Ralph G. Kendrick Dwarf Cypress Boardwalk where you can observe an unusual stand of dwarf bald cypress trees that are centuries-old.

Should you decide to stay for a while, a variety of RV parks are located in and around Carrabelle. To start with, there's the amenity-rich Carrabelle Beach RV Resort, located just across the highway from Carrabelle Beach. This is a big-rig-friendly park and each site features full hook-ups, 30/50 amp power, and WiFi/cable. Oceanview beach lofts, resort cottages, and cabins are also available to rent.

Closer to Carrabelle, about .6 km (1 mi) from the beach, is Sunset Isle RV & Yacht, which also has full hook-ups, 30/50 amp electric (30-amp requires an adapter) plus boat slips (only available with a reserved site), fishing docks, a screened-in 'cooking shack' and more. East of Carrabelle is Ho-Hum RV Park located right on the water and ocean-front sites are available.

Of course, these parks are nearby to a variety of dining options for every preference and budget. Carrabelle Junction is a popular go-to spot for breakfast or a light lunch. If waterfront dining is preferred, try the rustic and casual Fathoms Steam & Raw Bar. It has a wide choice of seafood dishes ranging from clams, mussels and scallops to grouper and Ahi Tuna. Following dinner, a popular nightspot to check out is Harry's Bar with its casual Key West-style atmosphere.

Or try the Crooked River Grill at the St. James Bay Golf Resort. It has a fine dining atmosphere and is a good choice with its excellent menu consisting of freshly caught seafood, steaks, and other great dishes.

Eastpoint

Driving west on U.S. Route 98, the next popular stop is Eastpoint. Kids and adults alike will appreciate the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve Nature Center that lends insight about the ecology of Apalachicola Bay. The aquarium showcases exhibits about the habitats in the reserve, river, bay and Gulf.

For lunch or dinner, stop at The Red Pirate Family Grill and Oyster Bar with its excellent menu and/or to play mini-golf. Be sure to try the local oysters as Apalachicola Oysters are considered to be some of the best in the world.

To stop for the night or even spend a few days, Coastline RV Resort is located on U.S. Route 98 and is pet-friendly with spacious sites that can accommodate RVs up to 14 m (45 ft). All sites feature brick and paver patios, picnic tables, grills, 20/30/50 amp service, and Wi-Fi/cable. All sites also have great views of the bay.

Apalachicola

A large part of downtown Apalachicola is a historic district and among the stately Victorian and Antebellum homes are museums that depict the area's history. An insightful attraction is the Raney House Museum, which was built in 1838 by David G. Raney who became prosperous in the cotton trade and served two terms as mayor. It's operated by the Apalachicola Area Historical Society and currently exhibits period furniture, as well as documents and artifacts of the 19th century before the Civil War. Admission is free, but donations are always welcome.

Expansive Carrabelle Beach.

Another attraction is the Orman House Museum, located on the Apalachicola River. This is a state park, has a $2 admission fee and its founder, Thomas Orman, was also a cotton merchant. The grounds include Chapman Botanical Gardens with a beautiful butterfly garden and a bronze replica of the Vietnam memorial statue in Washington, D.C., 'Three Soldiers Detail.'

There's also John Gorrie Museum State Park. In efforts to keep rooms of his patients with yellow fever cool in the 1800s, Dr. John Gorrie invented a mechanism to produce ice and in 1851, patented the first method of refrigeration in the U.S., which is known today as air conditioning. (*Ed note: at the time of publication the grounds of the park were open, but the museum was closed. Be sure to check hours before visiting.)

Apalachicola offers more than just historical sites. Its downtown district has upscale shopping and dining with many boutiques and well-known restaurants. For example, the elegant Gibson Inn, which was built by James Fulton Buck in 1907, will provide a nice retreat from the campgrounds with its newly renovated rooms and upscale restaurant - The Franklin Café - that serves fusion cuisine with a southern flair and of course, fresh oysters.

St. George Island

You'll want to take a detour from the U.S. Route 98 to visit this barrier island. Standing dominantly at its centre is the 23 m (72 ft) Cape St. George Light. Weathered by many hurricanes and coastal storms, the lighthouse has been restored and there's access to the top via 92 wooden spiral stairs and an eight-rung metal ladder.

Most of the island consists of St. George Island State Park. The undeveloped beach is popular and transforms many visitors into avid shell collectors. On the gulf side of the island are kilometres of sugary white sand beaches and it's common to see dolphins slipping above and below the water's surface. On the bay side are marshes filled with wading birds while inland are nature trails winding through scrubs and pine forests. This is also a bird-watcher's haven where you can spot snowy plovers, least terns, black skimmers, willets, pelicans, gulls, red-cockaded woodpeckers and bald eagles.

The park even has many picnic shelters, two boat ramps, and 60 campsites with power and water that can accommodate RVs up to 13 m (43 ft). Other amenities include hot showers, a playground, and dump station.

While there's more to explore in this area if you continue on U.S. Route 98 between The Forgotten Coast and Pensacola (and beyond), the region will not only provide a great extended destination, but it's the perfect home base to see everything this area of the Sunshine State has to offer.
www.floridasforgottencoast.com

Due to Covid-19 restrictions and precautions be sure to check with local businesses, RV parks, and the Franklin County Tourist Development Council about closures and/or modified operational hours before your visit.

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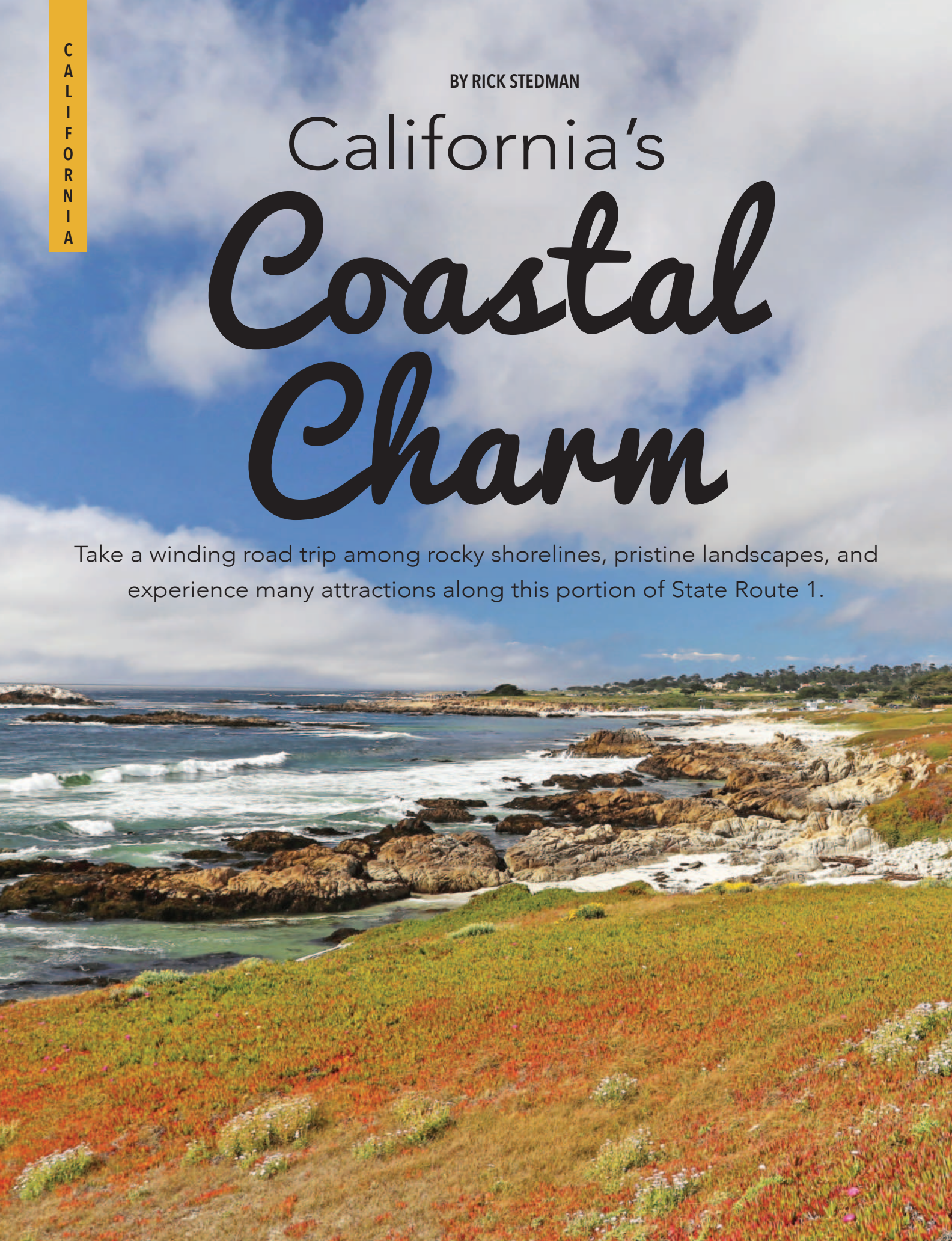
BY RICK STEDMAN

California's Coastal Charm

Take a winding road trip among rocky shorelines, pristine landscapes, and experience many attractions along this portion of State Route 1.



A portion of The 17 Mile Drive, a toll road costing $10.75 (USD) per vehicle and it's worth every cent.

NESTOR FERRARO

The 17 Mile Drive is where you can stroll the boardwalk above the beach overlooking Spanish Bay, seen here.

KEN LUND

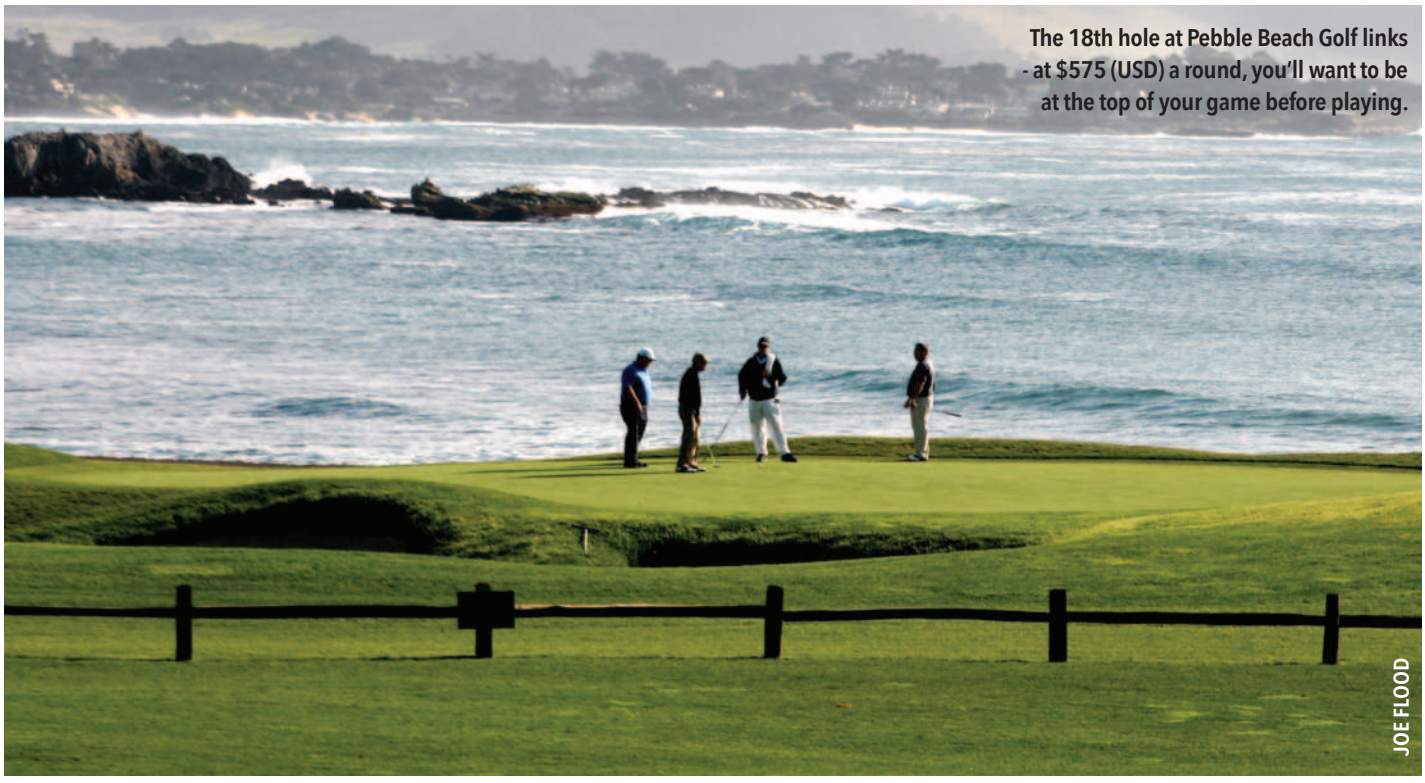
California's State Route (SR) 1 is nearly 1,062 km (660 mi) and is the longest highway in the Golden State. But just south of San Francisco, the 160 km (100 mi) stretch between Monterey and Morro Bay is perhaps the most spectacular area of the entire route.

One of the highlights is the popular 17 Mile Drive through Pebble Beach and Pacific Grove on the Monterey Peninsula, which consists of spectacular golf courses, a variety of mansions, and the solitary Lone Cypress. Whether you're a golfer or not, this is a picturesque drive with plenty to appreciate. Admission for the toll road is $10.75 (USD) per vehicle and it's worth every cent.

The 17 Mile Drive is where you can stroll the boardwalk above the beach overlooking Spanish Bay as well as visit the famous Pebble Beach Golf Links. This stunning track is open to anyone who wants to depart with $575 (USD) to play 18 holes. Nevertheless, it is a magnificent course and is scheduled to host the 2023 Women's U.S. Open and the 2027 Men's U.S. Open.

Nearby to 17 Mile Drive is the picturesque town of Pacific Grove, which has a population of roughly 15,000. It's located on the tip of the scenic Monterey Peninsula and features a rocky coastline with plenty of charm. Pacific Grove gained worldwide fame in October 1997 when singer John Denver's experimental plane careened out of control and crashed into the Pacific Ocean, killing the 53-year-old singer instantly. A small tribute sits on the shore near the site of the crash.

Since California is home to nearly half of all the wineries in the United States - more than 4,700 as of 2020 - it's not difficult to find a winery along SR 1. Just south of Monterey in Carmel-by-the-Sea are more than 15 wine tours available to explore. A free mobile app is available to guide you along the route.



The 18th hole at Pebble Beach Golf links - at $575 (USD) a round, you'll want to be at the top of your game before playing.

JOE FLOOD

Things to Do, Places to Stay

In Monterey, boondocking is available at Veteran's Memorial Park, which is about .6 km (1 mi) from its downtown district. Its convenient proximity to town and peaceful setting makes it appealing for a night or two. Another option is Carmel By The River RV Park that's 13 km (8 mi) from the ocean and is truly a nice park with a variety of amenities. It's also close to many attractions. Be sure to stroll along Carmel's Ocean Avenue and browse the many shops and boutiques. Historical Carmel Mission is also a must for history buffs.

Another popular attraction in the area is Cannery Row, made famous by John Steinbeck who wrote his bestselling novel of the same name in the mid-1940s. There's plenty of history about the author here, as well as at the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas just 32 km (20 mi) northeast of Monterey, and many historic remnants of Cannery Row worth exploring.

Approximately 48 km (30 mi) south of Monterey in scenic Big Sur are a few RV parks including Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park and Fernwood Resort. Big Sur is known for its rugged coastline and breathtaking views, so you'll want to take your time as you drive through this stretch of SR 1.

Though Big Sur is not a town, per se, it offers some of the most spectacular coastal views in the country. Photo ops are available about every 10 m (30 ft) and one of the best views is from Nepenthe restaurant. Featuring breathtaking scenery, this iconic restaurant serves its famous $20 Ambrosia Burger with a million-dollar view of the Pacific Ocean.

The magnificent Bixby Creek Bridge in Big Sur.

SERGEI GUSSAV

One of the true iconic structures you'll see in the Big Sur area is Bixby Canyon Bridge. It was built in 1932 and soars 79 m (260 ft) above Bixby Creek. It's no surprise that it has been photographed by visitors around the world.

State Parks

In addition to Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, several other Big Sur area state parks include Point Lobos State Natural Preserve, Garrapata State Park, Andrew Molera State Park (at the time of publication its campground was closed due to prior flood damage so be sure to check for updates), Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park and Limekiln State Park. With the exception of Point Lobos State Natural Preserve and Garrapata State Park, all offer camping and reservations are recommended (www.reservecalifornia.com).

Driving south from Big Sur you'll eventually see signs for Hearst Castle. Located a few kilometres north of Cambria, Hearst Castle features over-the-top opulence. Though it is a huge draw and attracts more than 850,000 visitors annually, it's temporarily closed due to severe road damage. Be sure to visit www.hearstcastle.org for updates.

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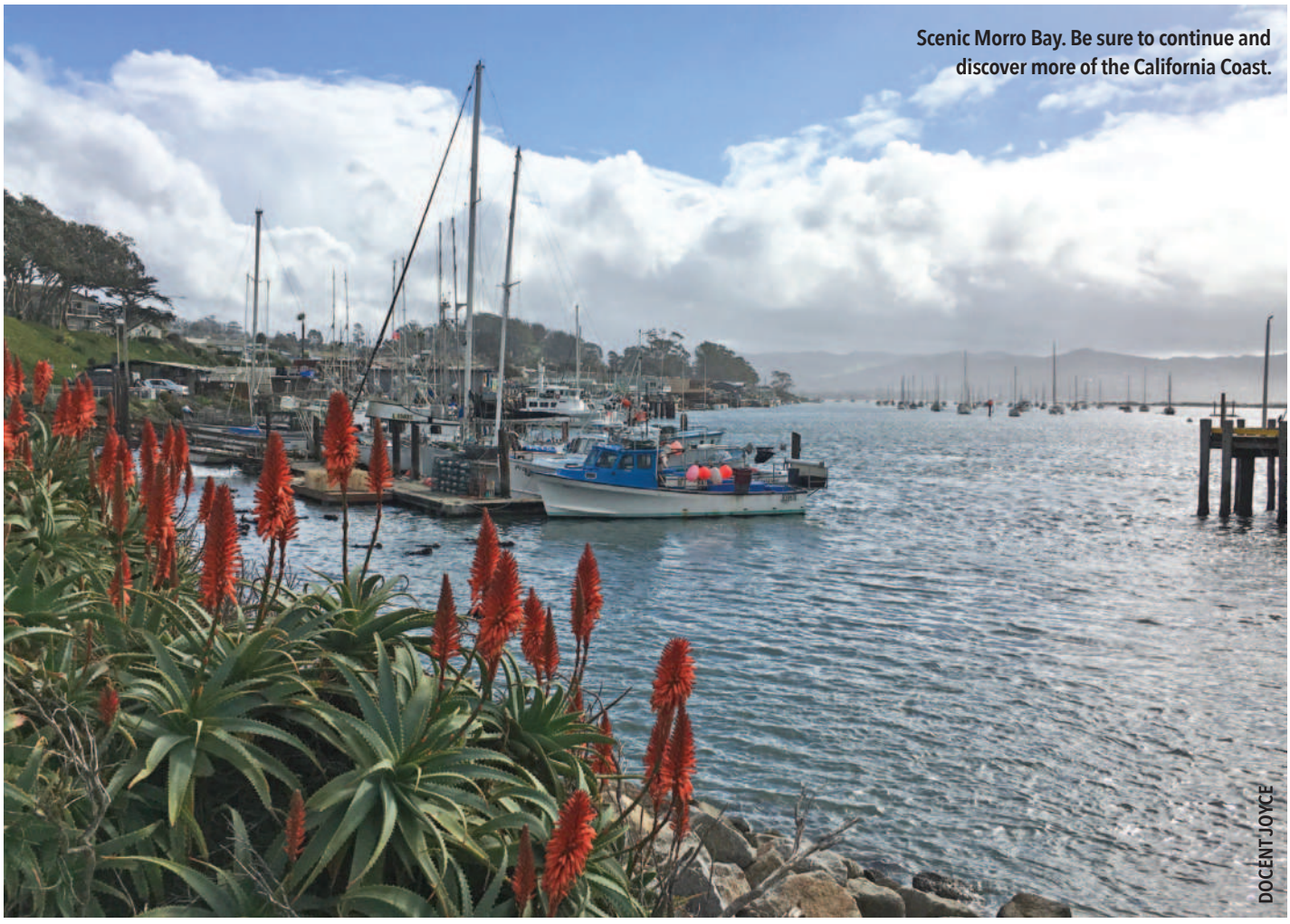

Scenic Morro Bay. Be sure to continue and discover more of the California Coast.

Overlooking San Simeon Cove is the picturesque Hearst Ranch Winery. In addition to sampling a variety of wines, you can enjoy a day at the beach, a walk through the historic village of San Simeon, or take in the beauty of the sparkling turquoise waters in the cove.

Just 3 km (2 mi) north of Cambria, you will discover Hearst San Simeon State Park. The San Simeon Creek Campground offers 115 campsites for RV and tent camping. The maximum length is 10.5 m (35 ft) and each site offers a fire ring and picnic table. There are also flush toilets, shower facilities, a dump station and firewood is for sale from the campground host.

A unique opportunity to view northern elephant seals is available at the Elephant Seal Boardwalk in the park. This vantage point provides an ideal location to view these marine mammals from a safe distance. During certain times of the year, up to 17,000 seals call this area home.

While you're here, you'll want to visit Cambria and stroll along Moonstone Beach. About 21 minutes from Cambria is Cayucos where you can take a leisurely walk on the pier or beach, and try the local famous Brown Butter Cookies.

The opulent Hearst Castle.

Cannery Row was made famous by author John Steinbeck.

The spectacular views continue in Morro Bay along with several nice RV parks including Morro Dunes RV Park and Morro Bay State Park. This area is known for its terrific golf and wineries. Scattered throughout the Morro Bay area are nine golf courses and the Central Coast Golf Trail includes a variety of tracks including Morro Bay Golf Course, Avila Beach Golf Resort, Cypress Ridge Golf Course, and several more.

Morro Bay and the surrounding area are not the end of the scenic natural beauty along the California Coast. This is just a sampling of what's available to enjoy and this section of the SR 1 will certainly whet your appetite to discover even more in the Golden State.

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