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Trailer for Two



Book Review
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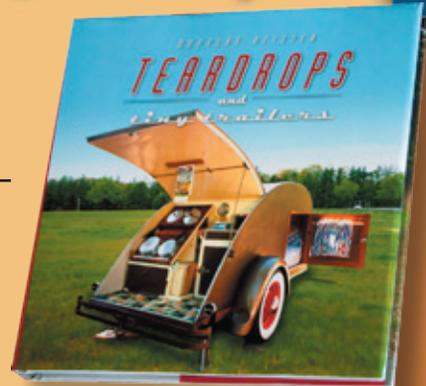
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Book Review & Giveaway

by Sarah Tucker



Teardrops and Tiny Trailers is an excellent coffee table style book about our favorite little campers, “teardrops.” The hardbound book, with gorgeous sleeve, would look great on the counter of any teardrop galley. It contains a rich historical overview of the teardrop trailer as well as canned ham trailers, tiny Airstreams, gypsy caravans from Europe and even fiberglass trailers made in Canada.

Dozens of color photographs showcase these trailers’ sleek exteriors, retro-styled interiors and, in many cases, the restored classic cars that tow them. I found this book to be chock-full of wonderful information for those just beginning to dream of a tiny camper all the way to the veterans of the teardrop lifestyle. The book ended with a resource guide of locations, clubs and rallies, although you must keep in mind it was published in 2008.



To win a free copy of this book
please visit our website
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{ One winner chosen randomly on June 10, 2015 }

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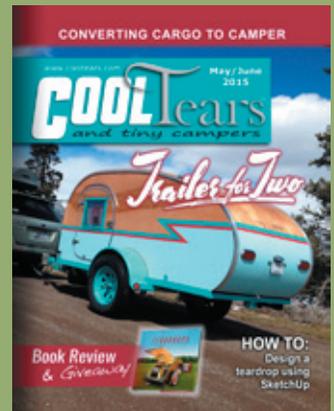
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A Whole New Adventure!

Hi! Let me introduce myself...I'm Sarah Tucker and it is with much excitement and a little trepidation that I announce I have taken over all production for *Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine*. What a honor it was when Kevin approached my husband and I about the possibility of taking over Cool Tears. We are avid campers and are thoroughly enjoying learning all about teardrops and the tiny camper lifestyle.

I look forward to continuing the outstanding publication Kevin started and plan to expand on it. Watch for new sections (even starting in this issue) including "How To:...", "Product Reviews", and some giveaways!

This summer will bring a Special Issue of Cool Tears dedicated to teardrops and tiny campers that are pulled by two wheels. We are looking for feature stories now so if you have something of interest please share with us!

Please contact me anytime via email sarah@cooltears.com with any suggestions, tips, builds or random comments you might have.

I look forward to meeting many of you at a gathering soon!

Until next time...enjoy every sunrise!

SARAH TUCKER

Editor
Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine™

New Wave Teardrops

An interview with Bobby Calhoun



by Sarah Tucker

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How did your business get started?

After 35 years in the residential construction business, it was time for a change. I love to camp and saw a teardrop camper on the internet. This seemed like a perfect fit for me, so I did some research and started building some units.

How did you name your business?

The name New Wave Teardrop was suggested by my cousin and his wife while I was building their new 5X10 unit complete with old style moon hubcaps. They suggested that this name would include a connection to the renewed interest in the old fashion teardrop style camping. I loved the idea so decided to go with their suggestion.

What are your most popular models and what are your most popular accessories?

The 5x8 Crest Sleeper/Hauler is my most popular model. This unit is very versatile because you can customize the inside to create a home atmosphere and also use the unit to haul cargo. Without a doubt, an air conditioner is the most popular accessory. I suppose people don't like to be hot.



What do you think sets your units apart from others?

We produce a quality product at an affordable price. Our website is set up so that customer can build the unit to his/her specifications and have a price immediately. It can be a simple



base model or a base model with three or four accessories added. Either way it will always be a quality product and the price is simple math. Take the base price and add the price for each additional accessory. Total is the price of the unit. This website feature enables customers to get a unit that fits their budget without a lot of hassle.

How can our readers find out more about your campers or contact you to purchase a unit?

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Call of the Wild

by **Jay Taylor**

As long as I can remember, I have always loved camping. There is something peaceful and refreshing about getting out in nature, hearing the breeze blow through the trees, the chirping of birds and kids playing in the campground. Some of the strongest memories of my childhood were the camping trips we went on with family and when my brother and I were in the YMCA Indian Guides (now known as Adventure Guides). Whether it was going to the mountains or riding in the desert, it was always special.



I remember being around 5 years old and my dad packing us all up in our station wagon and heading up to the local mountains in California. We had this big olive green canvas tent that looked like something out of M*A*S*H. We slept on the ground or on old army cots with wooden legs and trying to figure out how to unfold them was something akin to solving a Rubik's Cube. We ran around at night with the army flashlights that looked like a periscope. I remember my dad filling the Coleman stove with white gas and pumping the plunger a bunch of times before you could light it up. As a kid, these were fun times but you don't really think about how special those times were, you just took them for granted.

Now, as an adult, those memories are very special to me. I love reminiscing at family gatherings at all the adventures my Dad gave us growing up. He was and still is one of the smartest men I have ever known and it seemed like he could do anything. Sometimes I wonder what his feelings at the time were when we went camping. Was camping with 3 kids and their friends stressful?



"As a kid, these were fun times but you don't really think about how special those times were, you just took them for granted."



When we first started camping, we did not have the modern conveniences or the products that set up so quick and easy like we do today.

One Man's Rambles

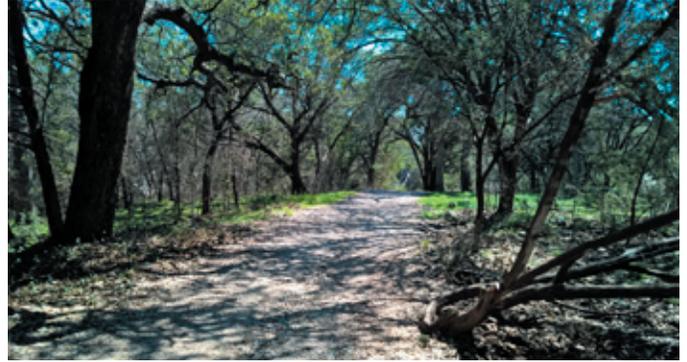
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It was only later that he would buy a camper that sat on his truck (and we had lots of memories in that for sure as well). However, for me, as soon as I pull into a site, I can feel stress melting away. I can forget about the daily hustle/bustle of work and life. It does not matter what else is going on in the world because for that weekend, it all just stops.

The sounds of a breeze through the trees or a babbling creek, this is the call of nature, the call of the wild. It's about letting go of the now and getting close to nature, going on hikes, riding bikes through



a campground, going swimming in a lake or just sitting around a crackling fire. Our soul has a desire, a need to mend itself. Nature, in all its beauty can be the perfect medicine.

In some ways, camping is a spiritual experience. Sadly enough, too many people are not taking the time to enjoy the wonders around them. We have a tremendous National Park System and every state in this union has their own state park system where camping is affordable and accessible. In addition to these, there are thousands of private campgrounds





full of amenities for all walks of life. There really is no reason not to take advantage of these opportunities and see the natural wonders around us.

It is too easy to get caught up in the daily routine of life and forget about how camping can make you feel. For over 10 years I had not camped, it was too much hassle, took up the whole weekend, it did not leave me time to get things done around the house... there was always an excuse. It got to a point where we just stopped thinking about it.

Well, it's time to stop making excuses and get out and relive some of those childhood memories.

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Trailer for Two



by **Kelly Harro**

We are artists who love backpacking. Two years ago we started hunting for a new base camp. We wanted a base camp that could be used for our art shows and also to travel to new backpacking trails. Whether it's car camping overnight or traveling to a longer backpacking trip in Yellowstone or beyond, we felt a base camp on wheels would be the way to go.

You've probably observed RV culture when camping. You see those giant diesel bus-like motor homes and there's the husband yelling out the window while his wife tries to guide him back into the parking space flailing her arms like a wounded bird. Surely there must be a better option for us backpackers.

As two artists who travel to art and craft shows, it would be really nice to have a trailer to hold art and booth supplies, unload and then have a hotel on wheels. We decided to build a teardrop trailer. I discovered them in graduate school during an art history course about industrial design, where I learned about "streamlining" in the 1930s. Teardrops have everything we could want in an RV: 1. We can pull it with our Subaru 2. We can enjoy the luxury of a kitchen and a mattress but still be outside and 3. its got style.



design

During our design process, we stepped back and looked at what we wanted out of a teardrop, our technical limitations and the ergonomics. It was important to us that the design be both beautiful and functional. Since we are both artists, we knew we wanted our trailer to stand out. We owned an old utility trailer and decided to retro-fit it for our

new teardrop. This old utility trailer had a beefy 3000lb axle, full size tires and was strong enough to take down logging roads while light enough to pull behind our 4-cylinder Subaru Outback.

Lots of research went into choosing our specific teardrop design. We read books, fell into Pinterest rabbit-holes, blogs, and Cool Tears was super helpful. After educating ourselves in the world of teardrops, we then sat down and mind-mapped the



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primary functions we desired and used that to guide us in the specific choices that followed. For example: we decided to keep the cooler stored in the car rather than under the galley counter so that we had more space in the kitchen to fit those functions we desired. It was more important that we have a small sink, running water, trash and food storage than refrigerated items. Our cooler could then be ready for day-trips in the car. For the overall shape we were inspired by the original vintage teardrops. We had never bent plywood before so we wanted to keep the curves fairly simple. Every aspect of this trailer was modeled using Google Sketch-up we were able to play with the proportions of the curve and how it related to the interior space and kitchen. We would make fluid changes based around the functionality of the galley space and cabin.

The color scheme of the trailer featured the natural birch color of the wood while having vintage style. Mark had prior experience building a mahogany kayak that used fiberglass and marine epoxy. He decided to employ those skills on our teardrop. We liked how it would reinforce the thin 1/4 inch plywood top and also make the trailer impervious to water. I chose the specific color pallet based on a quilt made by my grandmother which we later turned into a duvet inside the cabin. The Formica counter top is an updated vintage pattern released for their 100th Anniversary. Used to camping in tents, we decided to build a deluxe version of those tent wall pockets so I don't lose that ever-important toilet paper roll. The wall cubbies hold keys, sunglasses, maps, books and phones next to the charger.





challenges

We had limited tools and space in which to build the trailer. We borrowed garage space from friends and worked in stages. After the roof was built we were able to store it under a tarp and work in our apartment's parking lot. We live in Montana and the weather was a real issue.

Retro-fitting our existing trailer frame proved more challenging than initially thought. Using Google Sketch-up we were able to resolve many issues before tackling them in real life. Sketch-up was our best tool. Using this free software and detailed modeling we were able to work through the most minute details and joints resolving issues before we touched tools to wood.

One challenge was the work-flow process. I kept a running spreadsheet to make sure the proper materials were being ordered so they were ready for each weekend they were needed. Sourcing materials took a lot of internet research. We tried to buy local when we could, repurposed things when available and tried to keep the building process as green and inexpensive as possible without sacrificing quality.



Our skill level was a challenge as well. Mark knew how to weld and we both could use various tools, but we had never taken on a project quite like this. We watched YouTube videos and read articles to find how to build this project within our means.

process

We modified the geometry of the trailer frame and Mark added a spare tire system from a Toyota 4-Runner. Then we painted the frame and then painted it a second time because the first coat didn't stick. We sealed the floor with FRP and then built a sub structure of 2x4s with foam insulation.

Using the CAD drawing, we printed a life size paper template using a local engineering supply store. This was the BEST thing we did.



We glued it to a piece of masonite, then used it to trace the side walls, doors, and to mark the router joints, and paint-scheme details. Once all the pieces were cut out it was Kelly's job to sand and poly and sand and poly and sand and poly some more.

To make this trailer strong and water-tight as well as show off the birch plywood, we coated the sides and top with marine grade epoxy and fiberglass. It's the same technique you see on a wood drift boat. Simply apply layers of epoxy, fiberglass and Spar Varnish for days and days and days. The exterior side of the walls were coated with fiberglass and epoxy before cutting out the doors and being assembled.

Putting the sides, bulkhead and countertop together may have been the most stressful part of the build...where months of CAD drawings

become reality. These all had to be assembled at the same time and were against the clock on the glue set times. For much of our build we used a polyurethane moisture-curing glue.

The sides are 3/4 inch birch plywood and the roof is bent 1/4 inch birch plywood. Both the floor and roof are insulated with 1 1/2 inch



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backed foam insulation. To attach the roof as we bent it, we used washer-headed screws and screwed it to the spars while the glue dried. These screws were later removed and holes patched with sawdust and epoxy.

All wiring was routed between the inner ceiling and the outer roof skin. The Trailer-light wiring was routed under the trailer frame to make access and replacement possible in the future. Wiring in the hatch was carefully executed as it would be impossible to access in the future but we do have a way to access all the switch wires in the galley and battery area. In the battery compartment at the foot of the cabin, a small 31 amp-hour sealed deep-cycle battery connects to a Blue Sea Systems fuse/ground panel box. All lights are LED for minimal power consumption and we created an easy way to hook up a solar panel by using a 12 volt cigarette receptacle in the galley.

I found an awning rail and had a custom awning sewn at a local wall-tent builder. This we can deploy during inclement weather to shelter under and keep the cabin dry.

Our water setup includes a small sink which drains into a removable 5-gallon water container. Our fresh water is stored in a 60L Specter water can and a custom 1/4 inch poly hose runs from



this container to the electric pump and to the faucet. Both are removable for carrying to dumpsites, to fill up at home or for using campground water supplies.

Sources

Important sources include: So-Cal Trailers was an invaluable resource both for parts and the time they took to show us around their shop and their

trailers. We liked their design best because they keep their trailers simple while making them high-quality and beautiful. Mark has learned a lot about wood working from his father and more recently from the website and podcast series by The Wood Whisperer, by Marc Spagnolo. Our local paint-guru was really helpful to make sure our solutions were compatible with each other. Pinterest was a great place and community to see crazy and cool ideas to include in our design.



first trip

Our first trip was to Mammoth Campground in Yellowstone National Park. It was the first time we used the awning, the sink and had a chance to cook in our kitchen. We encountered minor issues and were able to resolve them back home. We are planning a trip to British Columbia this summer as well as those frequent weekend jaunts.



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HOW TO:

Design a teardrop using SketchUp

—by **Greg Redden**—

“Measure twice cut once” – still good advice for anyone undertaking a camper build. However, with the availability of 3D modelling free-ware, like SKETCHUP, you can plan your next design move, change your mind, and start over without ruining a piece of expensive construction material.

Certainly, there are some basic skills that make using 3D modelling software more

enjoyable, and feel less like you are in a fight between the design vision in your head and the image on the screen in front of you. Your skills will build with time and practice, and will develop into a more fluid and intuitive design process that will actually unlock design possibilities that you would not have imagined otherwise. Consider the time required in trying to fix a design error, or design change, or the cost of possibly making an irreversible error, as you are physically constructing your camper. That time might have been better spent learning from a free on-line 3D modelling tutorial and virtually building your camper.

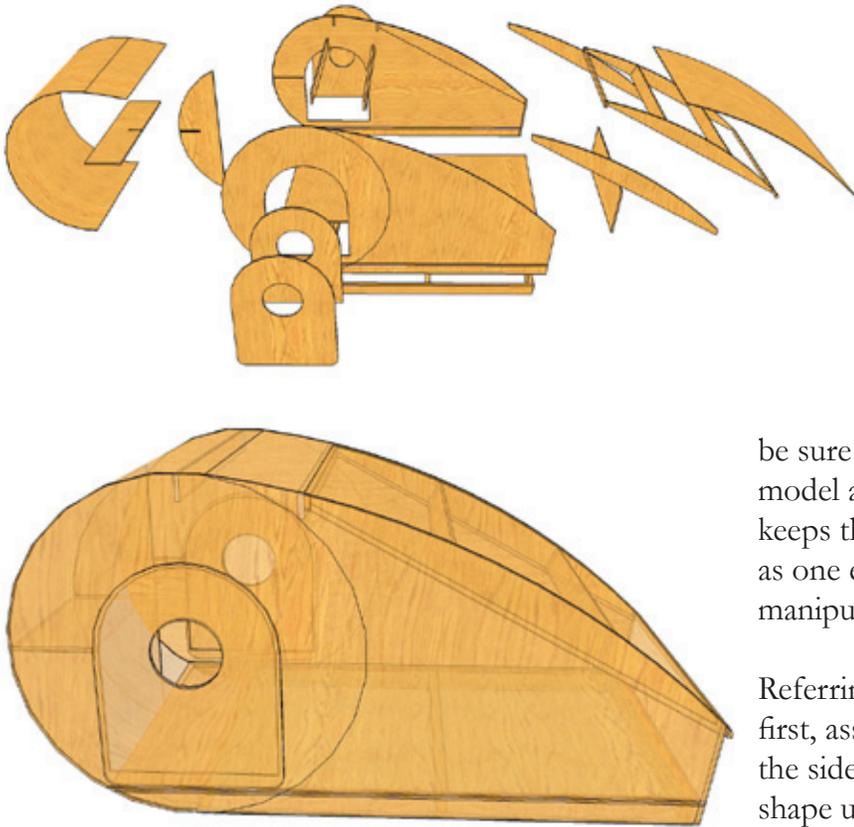


SketchUp

SKETCHUP MAKE is the free-ware version of SKETCHUP PRO and is perfectly suitable

for personal use as a design tool for any building project. You can approach your project as you would an actual build with actual materials. For instance, if you are using 4x8 sheets of plywood as the camper body, draw the 4x8 sheet of plywood as you first design move – it’s a rectangle, an easy 2D drawing. The difference between 2D and 3D is simply the thickness of that rectangle, the third dimension. SKETCHUP works best as an extrusion of shapes to create a model. Draw any shape you want with the available tools, as a 2D surface, and use the PUSH/PULL tool to extrude that shape into the piece of the design you need.





If that piece of virtual plywood is to be used as the side of your camper, then use the rotate tool to flip it 90 degrees and orient it vertically. Once you have multiple parts modelled you will have to start using the ORBIT tool to change the vantage point of your view of the model – like in real life, the pieces get in the way and you need to walk around and poke your head in to take a closer look. Always be sure to make the individual pieces of the model a GROUP, or COMPONENT, that keeps the individual surfaces of the pieces as one entity that can easily be isolated and manipulated as the design progresses.

Referring to the 4x8 plywood that was drawn first, assuming that it will be cut into as the side profile for your camper, layout the shape using the various drawing tools, arcs,

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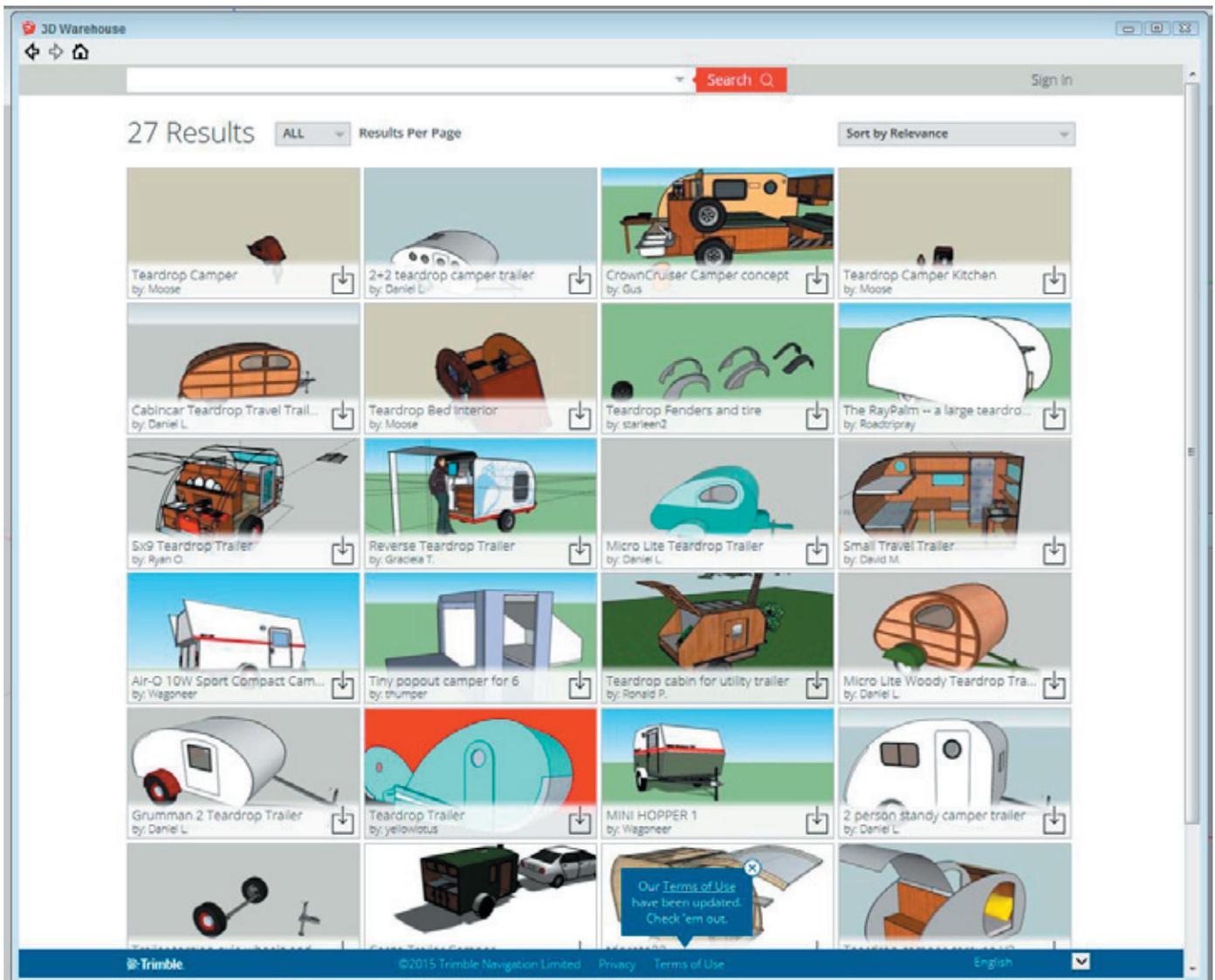
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lines, circles, polygons, and discover the camper profile that you think looks best. Like a pencil line on the actual plywood, “cut-out” the shape by extruding the waste pieces so they have a zero thickness and they will disappear. If there are multiple similar pieces of the design, copy the one you have drawn multiple times and drag them into the correct position. As you start to accumulate various pieces, and the model starts to take shape, try exploring SKETCHUP’s, 3D WAREHOUSE. The WAHRHOUSE is an open source library that might already have some of the components that you want in your mode, like a utility trailer, for example. When considering the

materials and finishes for your camper design, use the MARTIALS WINDOW to apply the various materials, textures and colours to your model. As you become more comfortable with your modelling skills, explore the SCENES WINDOW and learn how to make an animated video of your final design.

Now you are ready to go to your local building materials supplier and buy your materials. As the piles of sawdust accumulate on the floor, or driveway, you can refer to, or modify, your computer model for dimensions and anticipate your next moves.





CONVERTING

by **Frank Bolton**

When our children were still at home we owned several campers but as they grew we found we did not have time to camp. We sold our camper and simply did not camp for a few years. We went on a campout with some friends and rented a cabin, which gave us the camping fever again. We didn't want to buy another camper but had a cargo trailer sitting in our yard unused. So we decided to do a conversion from cargo to camper!



We had camped in a tent, popup camper and a large hybrid camper so when we planned out our camper, we had some general ideas of what we wanted. We sat inside the cargo trailer with a box of crayons and a tape measure drawing on the floor and walls until we had the whole inside of our camper mapped out.



The biggest challenge of the cargo trailer was the width because that was the length of the bed. The bed wasn't long enough once you subtracted the wall thickness from the 6' width of the camper. In order to fix this problem, we built a small slide-out for the foot end of the bed. The slide-out extended the bed



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length by 8 inches.

In the building process, we started out by cutting out the window holes in the walls and installed bracing around the openings and then installed the windows. Then we placed outlets, lights and ran all of the wiring. Next thing we did was insulate and sheet the ceiling. We insulated and installed pine planks on the walls and applied 6 coats of polyurethane. We then built framing for the cabinets, cabinet doors and benches out of reclaimed cherry flooring which we planed down. We used cherry paneling for inlays of doors and cabinet sides and then applied 6 coats of polyurethane to those also. We then installed the flooring and trimmed out the interior of the camper.

Some suppliers we used were Vintage Technologies, R&P Carriages, Richfield Trailer Supply, Johnson Surplus, Menard's and Bontrager's Surplus.

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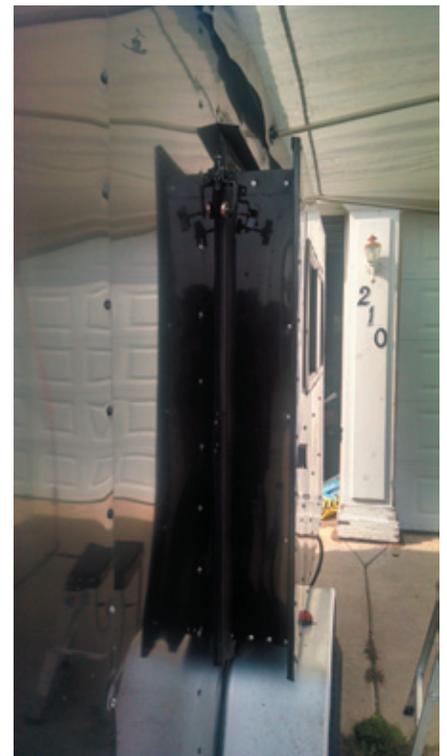
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CONVERSION: CARGO TO CAMPER



Our first major campout with our custom built cargo camper was a Tear Jerker gathering, Crossroads of America 2011 at McCormick Creek State Park in Spencer, Indiana for 8 days. We had a great time and realized that the camper was absolutely perfect for our needs and we were extremely satisfied with our design.





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A CLASSIC TEARDROP
WITH A **NEW**
TWIST

FROM INKA OUTDOOR





When Mike Stanford decided to exit his recent career in the gaming industry for a more personally fulfilling pursuit, you wouldn't have guessed that he would have chosen reardrop campers! Twenty-plus years building studios, trucks and mobile gear for the TV industry, a few years doing custom architectural pieces and then a decade working with overseas vendors to manufacture casino tech add up to some unique experiences. Now Mike, with the strong encouragement of his wife Blair, has aimed it all at the teardrop world!

For Mike, the continuous obsolescence cycle of technology (and too much international travel!) wasn't working for him anymore and he began searching for a more gratifying lifestyle. A love of craftsmanship, a diverse engineering & design background and

a healthy need to create stuff led to the beginnings of Inka Outdoor, LLC.

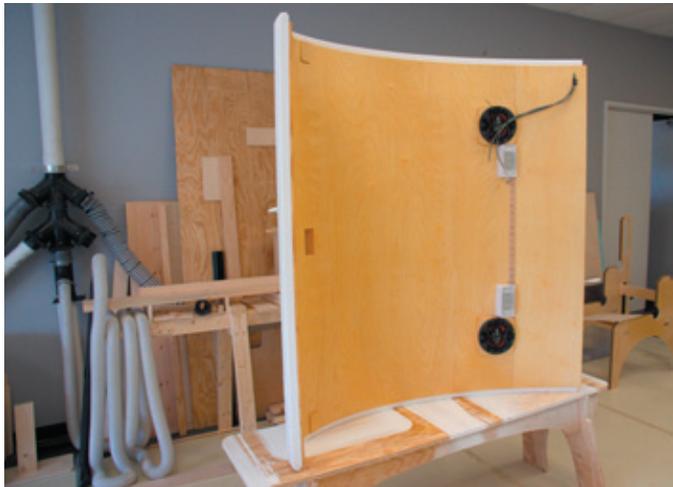
Inspired by running across an artist's rendering of a teardrop at a street festival, a teardrop camper design evolved early-on.

Inka Outdoor was born shortly thereafter as a partnership with Blair, a high level business exec who will eventually join the daily operation. Like many startups, Inka originated in the couple's garage and shared space with a couple of old cars. Needs quickly outgrew that garage though the company name comes from the particular shade of bright orange paint on Blair's 1975 BMW 2002, Inka Orange. Inka Outdoor (the company) now operates a manufacturing facility in Monroe, North Carolina, just outside of Charlotte.

While Inka Outdoor may be new to the teardrop game, their product feels mature and well designed as a result of Mike's past experience. The highest quality materials are used throughout and the camper is roomy

with tons of storage, standard features and available options. Mike coined the phrase "natural composite" for the lightweight camper body which uses structural-foam-





cored panels that were engineered to save weight and increase strength as compared to the standard plywood construction used in most Teardrops. The foam cores also add a nice-to-have layer of insulation. The walls, floor & roof are built up from sustainable birch plywoods, partially-recycled foams, glass fiber and epoxy. The one-piece tubular steel frame is jig-welded in-house and is powder-coated



for long life. LED running lights and a Dexter torsion axle with electric brakes are standard.

The larger than usual feel of the Inka teardrop comes from five-foot wide raw materials used (rather than 4-foot) and excellent space management designed using 3D CAD. Flat panel stock is cut in-house on a CNC router, curved foam-cores are cut using another

CNC machine and panels are hand assembled in a vacuum press. Completed wall, floor and roof assemblies are glued and screwed together and then skinned with a hand-applied, seamless epoxy/glass-fiber layer. The final exterior finish is a thick, tough, textured polyurethane/epoxy hybrid that was originally developed to protect the decks of oceangoing ships and it is available in the color of your choice. Standard interiors are finished in satin polyurethane with stainless steel and engineered plastic hardware throughout.



The galley is complete with stainless steel countertop, large sink, 2-burner propane



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cooktop and plenty of latching cabinets. A pull-out compartment can carry a Yeti cooler or ARB refrigerator/freezer. There is a shelf for your blender, cubbies for silverware and a bottle opener comes standard. The onboard pressurized water system holds 9 gallons of fresh water with optional connections for hose and campsite water hook-ups. All LED - the task lighting, adjustable colored night-lights and outside floods operate from the standard 55AH battery giving several days of dry-camping power.



In the cabin, you get eight latching cabinets, two cubbies and a wide shelf for your stuff. The standard Ikea queen-size mattress is available in 3 firmness levels. USB charging ports, 12V accessory outlet and dual LED reading lights are standard. Quiet AC & heat are available and operate from a wall thermostat. Large storage drawers are accessible when the cabin doors are open for storing shoes, camping equipment and other junk.

Inka is just beginning to offer units for sale on a build-to-order basis. Mike's plan is for Inka Outdoor to be around to support its customers for many many years and is building the product, manufacturing process and company with that goal in mind. Base price for the teardrop is \$11,995 with an extensive list of standard features. Options & custom upgrades are almost unlimited - ARB refrigeration, upgraded electrical, heat and AC, generator, hot water, shower, gas furnace, upgraded water tanks, TV, stereo, custom racks/carriers, grill, solar panels, vestibule tent, awnings, etc. The list goes on...

A few custom projects are also in the works

- one is a high-end tailgating unit with built in concealed satellite receiver & 70" HDTV, generator, refrigeration, beer taps, large grill and custom cantilevered tent. A self-contained, branded events Teardrop for a craft brewer is also being developed to support 6-8 standard kegs with on-board event power, chilled taps and full refrigeration.

2015 has been exciting for Inka so far with the move from the garage into a real facility and the development of a truly unique camper. Mike shared that he'd be thrilled to only sell a few units this year but that interest in the product has been overwhelming. Hitching one of their teardrops up to Blair's orange BMW generates so much excitement and so many questions that a local errand can become a several hour adventure. Journeys on the Blue Ridge Parkway are one of the couple's favorite pastimes and stopping at any overlook quickly becomes a 45 minute teardrop Q&A session.

For more information, please check out www.inkaoutdoor.com. Inka Outdoor, LLC is located at 1823 Tower Industrial Drive, Monroe, NC 28110, by appointment only please. 828-539-0842

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