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Off-Roadin' Teardrop Style!



**A Tiny Camper in
a Big Museum**

Manufacturer Feature
Teardrops NW
An Interview with Bill Coberly

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M A G A Z I N E

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We Have a Winner!

In our last issue we asked you to email us a picture of your teardrop or tiny camper all decked out with yard ornaments, themed decorations, Christmas lights, whatever you do to make your camper stand out.

We promised to pick our favorite and the winner would receive \$100! Well... we have selected a winner!!!

It's Barry and Darby Haskell from Acushnet, MA! Congratulations! What a great looking trailer!

Thank you to everyone who sent in photos. It was a lot of fun! There were some nice pictures but Barry's custom awning and flamingos were just too hard to ignore.

We are always looking for great teardrop and tiny camper photos so feel free to send them in any time.

We are also always looking for great stories as well. Big trips, great

builds and restorations too! So send them in today! Send pictures or story suggestions to: submissions@cooltears.com

Thank you,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Cross".

Kevin Cross

Editor

Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine™





OFF-ROADIN' TEARDROP STYLE!

By Bruce Pearson

Bruce and Denise Pearson didn't set out to build an off-road teardrop trailer. But that is what they ended up with and they couldn't be happier. Bruce has been an avid off-roader for years- Jeeps, dirt bikes etc, and will sleep on the ground anywhere. Denise loves the outdoors and grew up RV camping, but is not a fan of tent camping- too cold and no comfortable bed.

So, how does a husband get his wife of 26 years camping again, in the places that a Jeep can go to? A tent works for Bruce, but not for Denise. A full camper works for Denise but not for Bruce. Denise wants a warm place to sleep and a real bed. Bruce wants something he can get into remote places and that is light enough to tow behind a “built” Jeep.

So, the logical choice is ... an off-road teardrop. Bruce started researching designs and manufacturers, but soon became frustrated. The large manufacturers are not into off-road teardrop builds; while their products work fine for pavement, they are not designed to take the beating that a 30 mile washboard road or boulder strewn trail will deliver. Meanwhile, the small off road manufacturers build quality products but are VERY expensive.

So, Bruce decided to act as his own “general contractor.” He had the 5x10 frame built by Adventure Trailer in Prescott Az. The off-road design features a trailing arm and air bag suspension. He

then found a local high quality cabinet maker that was just starting to build on-road trailers- Matt Lingeman of Sierra Madre Teardrops. Matt and Bruce worked collaboratively over many weeks to design the trailer. Bruce designed the cabin with comfort and simplicity in mind- a comfy queen size bed with plenty of insulation, some simple (but well made) cabinets, basic lights, Fantastic fan and electrical plugs- no movie player, sound system or fancy electronics needed in the cabin.



For the galley, Bruce wanted to accommodate a large Yeti cooler, 2 seven gallon water jugs and a high BTU stove. However he did not want a sink or water tank and wanted to keep electrical systems to a minimum- just more stuff that can break off-road. All drawers and cabinets had to securely latch and all doors had to have dust proof seals. The result is a simple, elegant and functional “industrial” look, using many marine grade parts.

For the finishing touches, Bruce turned to his friend Chris Miller for help with the fenders and



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some miscellaneous metal work. Bruce wanted fenders that are light, sturdy, detachable (easily repaired if he hits a rock or two), with a built in step for Denise to get into the trailer; the result was custom made tube fenders with diamond plate covers.

On road, the trailer tows easily behind the Jeep, reducing gas mileage by no more than 1-2 mpg. Off road, the trailer goes any where the Jeep goes ... within reason. In camp, the trailer sets up in less than 10 minutes.

So, what is the verdict? Bruce likes the ruggedness, and sheepishly admits that the queen size bed and ready to go kitchen is pretty nice. Denise now sleeps in a warm, comfy bed in all the places her husband always dreamed of taking her to. In the process of building the trailer, Matt and Bruce's families became friends. One day during a design discussion, Matt mentioned that he often got requests to rent a teardrop, which got

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Bruce thinking. Several weeks later, Pasadena Teardrop Rentals was born, owned by the two families. PTR currently has one 4x8 teardrop available to rent, with plans to build at two more.

So, if you are in Southern California and want to rent a teardrop, check out them out! <http://www.pasadenateardropr rentals.com/>

Matt and Bruce will be happy to answer any questions you might have about Bruce's teardrop design and build. Matt can be reached at <http://sierramadreteardroptrailers.com/>

Bruce can be reached at brucepearson0122@gmail.com



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Teardrops NW

By Kevin Cross

An Interview with Bill Coberly

Every time I think I have seen all of the commercially manufactured tiny trailers out there along comes another one with great ideas and features. It is certainly a sign that teardrops and other tiny trailers are experiencing a huge resurgence in popularity in the US and around the world! As a result teardroppers have more opportunity than ever to find a tiny trailer that fits them perfectly. Hopefully this interview with Bill will help you decide if a Teardrops NW camper is the one for you!

How did TeardropsNW get started?

For 30 years I had been distributing, installing and training companies to use production CNC routers and CAD-CAM software. All told, about 450 installations in manufacturing processes like cabinet making, aircraft interiors, aluminum fabrication, furniture making and more.

I had just sold my distributorship and was going to pursue a life long interest in photography. I had been a Marine combat photographer in the Vietnam era and later dabbled in landscape and gallery photography over the years.

As an alternative to the truck and big camper I opted to tow a teardrop behind my Mazda Miata on the maiden photographic sojourn. It was a match made in heaven. I loved the simplicity and economy but even more I was overwhelmed by the interest my traveling ensemble attracted during the trip.

As a compulsive show-and-tell addict I soon decided that manufacturing teardrops was my new dream job. I am very much addicted to the daily excitement, creativity and sheer fun of building, designing, improving and occasionally using our teardrop trailers.

Your tag line is “It’s Still Camping.” Can you tell us about how you came up with it and what it really means?

Yes, “it’s still camping” in many ways. The idea is to spend your time outside of the cabin during the day and have a warm and cozy bed chamber at night. The galley is sheltered but still outside; but it is also something more. It is said that when two sailboats are on the water there is a race going on...when two teardrops are with in sight of each other there is a styling competition going on.

You have a very different style of galley door. Can you tell us about the thinking behind that?

Our signature hatch design is inspired by several considerations to balance utility and visual appeal. It is a large hatch that provides a double moisture



seal and more shelter than other styles.

By using a parabola instead of an arc, it lets us extend the counter top edge out to the plane of the floors edge, four additional inches of under-counter space, a larger counter surface and more upper cabinet space.

We call it a clamshell design. It requires a CAD-CAM and CNC machine to achieve the accuracy needed for it to function well...so we might just be showing off how clever we are too.

What are some other things that set your trailers apart from others?

We take a lot of extra measure to seal the exterior for NW conditions. The hatch and outer contour is perhaps the most pronounced visual difference but a visit our web site would show our willingness to customize the galleys and cabins to suit our customer’s wants and needs. If you don’t find

what you want, draw us a picture or tell us. If you are extremely tall we can relocate the foot board even for a 6'9" person. We love it when we can make something that is uniquely suited to our customer's expectations.

We also bevel the front of the mattress to match the contour of the bulkhead. This adds up to 6 inches of length to the usable sleeping space.

Is each trailer custom made for each customer or do you stock trailers as well?

This past year our lead times have fluctuated between 6-14 weeks. We would build an inventory but preorders have maxed out our capacity even as we expand.

So, yes...at this time every trailer is custom made. It slows down the building process some but also makes it more interesting to build something different every time.

We always become emotionally invested in our customer's excitement to have something uniquely crafted from their own ideas.



It appears that you offer quite a variety of options. What are some of the most popular options you offer?

Everyone adds a fan; we have some cabinet designs that are favored over others. We often named them after the customer who dreamed up the concept. The "Cheslow" is currently the most popular galley. (Thanks Bob.)



You also offer several models of trailers. What is your biggest seller?

It was the Sojourn until we made the Sojourn plus. The extra 6 inches extends the under/counter space from 18 to 24 inches, allowing us to put the cooler slide in lengthwise and add another 4 cubic feet of drawer space.

You mention on your website that your trailer builds are green. What are some of the efforts you make as a manufacturer in that area?

First; we try not to waste anything. We use our fall down to build other items like the swivel drawer corner shelves and cup holders. We also make a line of flute racks that we sell on line.



On your website you provide a link to an organization called T.O.W. Can you tell us more about that?

T.O.W. stands for Teardroppers of Oregon and Washington. A wonderful community of Teardroppers who's collective DNA can be found in our design and craftsmanship as a result of their shared wisdom and experiences.

We use Baltic birch with exterior grade glue for all the walls, cabinets and interior paneling. It is taken from sustainable forests and allowed to replenish naturally in forest with biodiversities. We send it out to be finished on a UV beam line that efficiently conserves and controls solvents and airborne particulates. It is about 40% more cost than domestic fir core but a far better quality.



What is the best way for our readers to get more information or place orders?

We include a lot of information on our website with many different cabin and galley designs and explanations of options. There is a pricelist/worksheet to calculate the cost of one of our Teardrops.

The best way is to visit our shop, if you can, and take a tour. There will always be teardrops on the floor in various stages of completion. We love to show off the precision joinery, craftsmanship and quality of material that we install in places that will be hidden after the outer shell is installed.

When ordering we have a build session and candidly discuss options, colors and space considerations to discover what the customer ultimately wants in their teardrop. Some of the orders come from a distance and we create the build order with discussions, exchanged images and

drawings by phone and email.

We always try to exceed expectation in every build. Hopefully, a review of the posted letters we get from appreciative owners will show our determination to get it right.

For more information please visit our website teardropsnw.com or call us at 503-385-1227



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Bringing Back A Classic Teardrop



If towing home your newest restoration project includes the phrase “If that hitch breaks and that thing falls off, we are going to keep driving like nothing happened.” that should give you a pretty good idea of what I was dragging home.

By Van Vlist

According to the couple that had owned it the gentleman who they bought it from in the 50's was a Boeing engineer who had built it in the late 30's. Ron, the guy I got it from, smiled as he recounted the many happy times he and his wife spent towing the trailer with their then new 1958 Chevrolet Cameo pickup.

My wife was, shall we say a bit less enthusiastic than I with the newest acquisition. Her idea of camping was a tad different; you know the type- 5 stars, room service, and the big one, a bathroom. No one can ever say that she does not have a sense of humor however because you should have heard her laugh at my suggestion as to how incredibly fun it would be to sleep in it when it was done. I had my work cut out for me.



I always like to begin with a clean slate, literally. Lots of soap, lots of water and commercial cleaning chemicals that if mixed "correctly" guarantees it will be clean enough to eat off of. And as a bonus it removes at least two or three epidermal layers from your exposed skin and leaves you coughing so hard you would swear you are going to meet the majority of your internal organs personally. Now that it's exterior is sterile (and more than likely you as well) its time to take the next step, disassembly.

Now is the time to plan your attack, take lots of pictures because you won't believe how quickly you forget where stuff goes or maybe to remind yourself how far you have progressed. Have an idea of what you want the finished product to look like and stick to that plan. Changing direction in the middle of your restoration can not only in-

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crease the investment substantially, but also leave you with what I refer to as a confused end result. Too many different themes or eras represented leave one scratching their head wondering what exactly is going on.

Save everything you take off, either for cleanup and reuse or for patterns. This is especially true for these little teardrops as their irregular shapes can be complicated at best and why try to re-engineer it? On most everything I have brought back to life over the years I try to use as much of the original materials as possible, sort of like helping to retain its soul. I'll give you some examples.

The aluminum exteriors on most of these little trailers were manufactured without any kind of finish and we all know too well how bare aluminum holds up to the elements. I spoke earlier about hav-



ing a plan for the end result, mine was to end up with a unit that looked like it was a barn find, you know sporting the patina of being well cared for, when in fact it had not been. So that eliminated replacing of the exterior skin as I did not want it to appear as being new. After experimenting with several different methods I discovered a process I will share with you.

You will need a finishing sander, I used a Makita 4 1/2 " Finishing Sander, some Scotch-Brite General Purpose Hand Pads, some kind of liquid window cleaner (I used Windex), and an ample supply of towels, more on the towels later.

After cutting the Scotch-Brite pads to fit your sander liberally spray an area about two feet by two feet with your choice of liquid window cleaner. Move your sander in a back and forth motion being careful to maintain this direction of travel throughout the process, think sanding with the grain of the wood. You will notice quickly two things, one is the liquid is quickly turning black, and

A photograph of a red Fiat car towing a white teardrop trailer on a road. The background shows a mountain range under a clear sky.

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A photograph showing the interior of a teardrop trailer. It features wooden flooring, a window, and a small storage area.

Ready, Set, Tow!

A photograph of a teardrop trailer with a tent attached to its front, parked outdoors.

secondly so are you. This is the time you need to wipe up the mess you have created and marvel at how good it looks. However we need to address what not to do regarding these soiled towels. First off do not use your wife's good towels, and under no circumstances launder these blackened terry cloths with your better half's frilly undergarments. Personally I thought them to be a lovely shade of gray, she however, no so much.

Once finished with that step your choices are to continue with a good aluminum polish and create an eyeball searing solar reflector visible from the space station, or leave as is for an easy to care for and authentic patina. I chose the easy way out.

I might add that all of the panels had been removed from the framework prior to the cleaning, which brings up the sheet metal screw removal. Imagine if you will, ordinary run of the mill small sheet metal screws anchored in steel tubing for over 60 years. Did I really think they were going



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to come out easily? Not even I was that optimistic. One thing I have discovered is that heat and vibration can be your friend when removing stubborn fasteners. Bring on the Dremel tool with the tiny

cutoff wheel. A quick swipe in the screw heads slot not only cleans it up for your screwdriver to fit in, but the heat generated and the vibrations from the tool makes the sheetmetal screw surrender without a fight! And when you are removing over 500 of the pesky buggers that's a real time saver.

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In part two we will address some nifty tips I discovered while honing my non-existent wood working skills. Like I have told my friends for years "Give me a chunk of steel and I can do anything, give me a piece of wood and I'll need a ride to the ER."





By Kim Hollis

Normally, once bitten by the teardrop bug, a bucket list of camping destinations soon follows. The list quickly becomes longer than allocated vacation days and life responsibilities. Word of mouth trips find themselves inching to the top of the list. To add to the ever growing list, I would like to personally invite you to my home state of Kentucky.

Kentucky is filled with wonderful camping opportunities, but one hot commodity has put the little town of Bardstown on the map. Thanks to the thriving bourbon industry, Bardstown, Kentucky has become a travel destination. Filled with scenic beauty and small town charm, the award winning town offers history, leisure activities and preserved outdoor spaces to enjoy. A tiny trailer makes a comfortable base camp while enjoying the area attractions.

Just outside of town, nestled among mature hardwood trees, sits My Old Kentucky Home State Campground <http://www.parks.ky.gov/parks/recreationparks/old-ky-home>; 39 campsites cre-

ate an intimate setting. Each site has water and electric. The heated bathhouse sits at the back of the campground. Sites 17-30 (along the edge) are the largest sites. Feel free to ask the staff for activity and dining recommendations. If golf is something of interest, bring the clubs; the campground is tucked amongst a 18 hole regulated, golf course.

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Less than a mile from the campground is Heaven Hill Distillery and Bourbon Heritage Center; an informative place to start the bourbon experience. When finished, Willet Distillery, a family owned



craft distillery is an excellent follow up to its king size neighbor. Don't stop there, Barton 1792 Distillery is located on the other side of Bardstown and offers an educational start to finish distillation/bottling tour. Still wanting more? Makers Mark, Jim Beam and many other distilleries plus



wineries are an easy drive. The Bourbon Trail website <http://kybourbontrail.com> is a helpful tool when mapping out routes. Don't leave out the craft distilleries. <http://kybourbontrail.com/craft-tour> What they lack in size they make up in personality. One can't spend all their time at distilleries and not visit the Kentucky Cooperage Tour in Lebanon, KY. View the entire bourbon barrel making process from start to finish. Tours run Monday – Friday. Check website for times. <http://www.independentstavecompany.com/tours>. For those diehard bourbon enthusiasts, Bardstown offers Oscar Getz Museum of Whiskey History. <http://www.whiskeymuseum.com>. The month of September might be a prime time to plan a trip, Bardstown hosts The Bourbon Festival. <http://www.kybourbonfestival.com>.

The weekend doesn't have to be all about bourbon; The Bernheim Arboretum & Research

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Forest in Clermont is one of Kentucky's treasures. With 38 miles of trails and ongoing seasonal nature programs, it is recommended to stop in the visitor center for a quick overview. Jim Beam's Stillhouse is located just down the road from Bernheim Arboretum. Tour Jim Beam's in the morning, pack a picnic lunch or indulge in a treat from Isaac Café and spend the rest of the day exploring the 14,000 acre forest preserve. Check the website for hours, scheduled programs and activities. <http://bernheim.org>.

Looking for a relaxing evening under the stars? "My Old Kentucky Home" musical runs seasonally at the Stephen Foster Outdoor Theater <http://stephenfoster.com>. Or a round trip dinner excursion on My Old Kentucky Dinner

Train might be an option. <http://www.kydinnertrain.com>. Horse drawn carriage rides are also available downtown.

Kentucky made sacrifices during the civil war, like many states, and Bardstown proudly honors it's forefathers with The Old Bardstown Village and Civil War Museum of the Western Theatre. Don't skip the Women of Civil War, an eye opening portray of the importance of women during the war. <http://www.civil-war-museum.org>.

Curious about monastery life, The Abbey of Gethsemani in Trappist, KY might be an inspirational visit. Founded in 1848, the Abbey has become known for their bourbon fudge, artisan cheese and fruit cake; all available at the wel-

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come center. Public is welcome to explore their walking trails. <http://www.monks.org> Downtown Bardstown is filled with locally owned shops and restaurants. Dining options are from casual to fine dining. Mammy's is a local favorite. Step back in time and dine in a historical tavern at Old Talbotts Tavern. Looking for a morning pick me up, Hadorn's Bakery has the best doughnuts in town. Trip Advisor is a helpful resource when picking out a dining experience. http://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurants-g39163-Bardstown_Kentucky.html. Downtown is also home to a farmer's market, festivals, car shows, summer concerts, and historical walking tours. Information is available online <http://www.visitbardstown.com> or Bardstown Tourist and Welcome Center One Court Square Bardstown, KY 40444 1 (800) 638-4877 ext. 114

Centrally located, Bardstown is a day's drive from many metropolitan areas.

- Columbus, OH 250 miles
- Indianapolis, IN 155 miles
- Chicago, IL 340 miles
- Saint Louis, MO 300 miles
- Nashville, TN 130 miles
- Atlanta, GA 400 miles

Whether your interests are in bourbon or spending a relaxing day window shopping in historical downtown, a long weekend in Bardstown will leave you relaxed and wanting more of Kentucky hospitality.

Cool Tears is looking for weekend trip ideas. If you have a favorite getaway and would like to share it with the tiny trailer community, Cool Tears would love to review it for a possible upcoming issue. Please include campground information and local attractions & events. 200-

300 word count is fine, plus a few high resolution pictures would be great. Email trip submission to campingandteardrops@gmail.com with "Weekend trip" in subject line.



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By Kevin Cross

A Tiny Camper in a Big Museum

There's just something about a teardrop. Something that just catches your eye and makes you stop for a minute and smile. Is it the unique shape, the small size, the thought of a simpler time? Is it the amazement at the ingenuity of getting so many creature comforts into such a small space, or just the idea of getting outdoors in such style? Whatever it is it seems to effect just about everyone. This teardrop attraction is clearly demonstrated at a car museum in Branson, Missouri.

I was contacted by Bill and he told me a little bit about the teardrop trailer he had built and mentioned that it is in an auto museum. I turned out that the museum was only about a 3 hour drive from us so I could not pass up the opportunity to meet Bill and see his cool teardrop in person.

I was not disappointed at all. The museum was awesome and it was so great to get to know Bill a little bit better. We spent some time taking pictures and talking about the build and then he took me on a personally guided tour of the rest of the museum.

“Branson Auto & Farm Museum originally opened in May of 2009 as a purpose-built museum dedicated to the appreciation and preservation of historic automobiles. It was located in

what was formerly known as the “Engler Block” crafts mall location, and in 2010 was purchased



by a successful real estate and farm businessman by the name of Maurice Wilder. In February of 2012, a devastating tornado completely destroyed the museum. Mr. Wilder vowed to rebuild the museum, even bigger and better than before,



and added the Farm portion to the name of the museum after acquiring numerous automobiles, tractors, and other farm implements for display in the museum.”

Bill’s teardrop was on display in the original museum and miraculously survived the tornado. When the new facility opened the owners were enthusiastic about once again including this teardrop as a featured display in the new museum. They said that it draws visitors in and is always a favorite among all ages.

Bill and a good friend of his built the teardrop back in 1989. Bill’s friend did all of the welding

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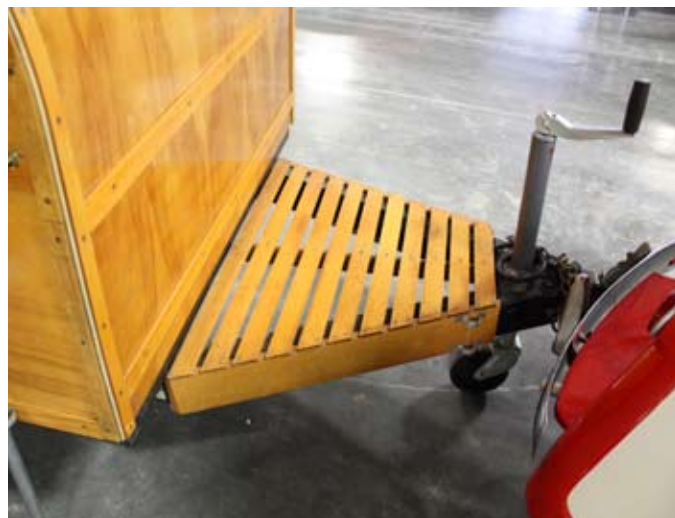
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on the trailer while Bill handled the woodworking.


All of the wood was thoroughly sealed on every side and then the entire thing was assembled using screws. He said the entire thing can be disassembled and reassembled with a screwdriver.




The fenders are fiberglass and were purchased from a trailer parts supplier. The Wheels were taken from a 1962 Rambler and are dressed up with custom made trim rings that were created by carefully cutting the center out of a wheel cover.



The wood slat cargo area on the front really adds a nice craftsman touch to the trailer and the interior has a wonderful vintage feel as well with bead board storage cabinets.



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The trailer has been to 49 of our 50 states and decals representing many of them adorn the inside of the entry door. Bill told us that one of the state decals was applied backwards and that

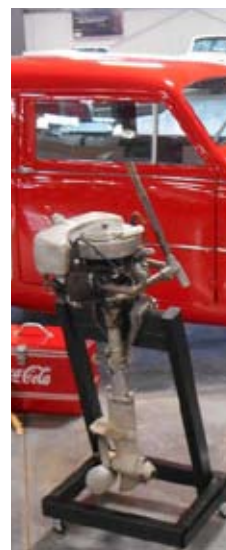


he did not notice it until someone pointed it out some time later. He said that he decided to do the same thing on his next trailer just for fun.

The smaller teardrop you may have noticed in the pictures is one that he built for his grandson and was pulled behind a vintage style pedal car. The trailer is mostly aluminum and includes custom fenders made out of flower pots. So cool!



Bill also collects antique outboard motors which are displayed along with his teardrop at the museum. They really add to the display taking you back in time to a vintage campout setting.



Bill said that building this trailer, camping in it and showing it has been so much fun. He is so glad he decided to build this teardrop all those years ago.



If you are interested in visiting the museum you can find more information at:

www.BransonAutoMuseum.com



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