

A Closer Look at Little Guy's New T@G Teardrop

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**SignaTour
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An Interview with
Jim Turley



Family Project
1947 Kit Restoration

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M A G A Z I N E

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Enter for a Chance to Win \$100!



We could all use a little extra money right? Well here is your chance to put an extra \$100 in your pocket!

Entering is easy! Here's how it works. All you have to do is email us a picture of your teardrop or tiny camper all decked out! You know... Yard ornaments, themed decorations, Christmas lights, whatever you do to make your camper stand out or feel like home when your camping. We want to see it!

Send us a photo you have already taken or use this as an excuse to get out and go camping. Trick out you camper or the whole campsite, take a photo and send it in. We will pick a winner and announce it in a future issue. And, of course, if you are selected as the winner we will get your winnings mailed to you and your photo will be featured in the magazine.

Send pictures to: submissions@cooltears.com

Thank you,

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

Kevin Cross
Editor
Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine™





A Closer Look at Little Guy's New T@G Teardrop

By Kevin Cross and Patrick M. Pellowski

Early this year Little Guy Worldwide released the newest addition to their teardrop trailer line, the T@G. The name may sound familiar as is very similar to another of the company's best sellers, the T@B. One look and you will see that the similarity between the two goes well beyond their names. In fact side by side it begins to feel a little like "Honey I shrunk the camper!"

Missouri Teardrop Trailers offered us an opportunity to take one out in the real world and try it out. So..... CAMPING TRIP!

The Trip

We were very excited to roll into the campground to find another teardrop in the site right next to ours! I had an opportunity to talk with the owner who built it and he gave me a brief tour. He said he had built it several years back and had been all over the country with it.

And, of course, like every other teardrop-per I have met he was a very nice guy.



First Impression

One of the first things I noticed about this camper is the interior height. It offers considerably more headroom than the Silver Shadow. The Silver Shadow is a nice trailer, but if you remember from our first issue that my wife is a bit claustrophobic and the Silver Shadow seemed a bit small for her taste. The floor space seems roughly the same but the ceiling height in the T@G goes a long way in making the cabin seem much roomier.

The unit we took out had been modified to include under bed storage and crank-down stabilizer jacks. My understanding is that these are now standard features. It had the optional A/C unit as well but no television.



I was pleasantly surprised and impressed with many of the other standard features like the stainless steel cook top / sink unit in the galley and the factory aluminum wheels. We also really liked the large windows on the side. They are tilt out windows with a very nice built-in screen/shade system.

The Cool Stuff

The wow factor really kicked in at night. This thing had a great lighting system. The cabin had very bright overhead lights adding to the roomy feel, and possi-



bly the coolest reading lights I have ever seen. One push of the button gave you a soft blue glow that made for very nice night light effect. Holding the button down switched it to a bright, focused light for reading. The swivel base allows the light to be pointed right where you need it. The galley light was more of a dome light but offered the same soft glow blue and bright white combination. The best thing about it was that the button has a lighted ring around it so you



can easily find it when you need it. The “porch” lights and tail lights were nice as well.

I was also very impressed with the fit and finish, especially in the interior. I have not had the opportunity to inspect other manufacturer’s teardrops as closely as I was able to on this one. I am sure they are very nice as well, but I can say that at least on this unit it was very well put together. Corner joints, seams and cabinets all appeared to be nearly perfect!

Overall I thought it was a great camper!

It’s funny how things work out. As I was planning to do this article I was contacted by Patrick Pellowski, one of our readers who had just purchased a T@G. They offered to share their perspective as well as some ways that they have made the T@G their own. Here is what they had to say:

In November 2013, my wife and I purchased our first teardrop trailer, a Little Guy 5 Wide. Three weeks later I ordered a new T@G. When I saw a photo of the new Little Guy T@G, it was lust at first sight. It was all I could think or talk about. Well, I finally wore my wife down and, in a moment of weakness, she relented and told me to get a T@G if I really wanted one. Within five minutes I was on the phone with the nearest LG dealer (he’s on speed dial) placing my order for a silver/orange T@G. Hey, I know that when opportunity knocks at my house, it only knocks once and if you don’t answer immediately, the offer is usually revoked. Luckily, it was a unit the dealer already had on order and production was set for early 2014. All the dealer had to do was call the factory and change the trim color. Everyone told us that if statistics were correct, I would be upgrading our trailer within three years. Well, it actually turned out to be three weeks. At this rate, I will have a Class A Motorhome (or maybe a T@B) by the end of the year.

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Our T@G was delivered in March 2014, and we named it “The Towed Abode”. For us, it really is a perfect combination of form and function. For all of



you not familiar with a T@G, it can best be described as an undersized T@B clamshell. Although the footprint of the T@G's interior cabin is virtually the same size as our previous LG 5 Wide, it has a much more spacious feel due to several design features incorporated into the T@G. First and probably the most notable is the fact that the cabinets do not project into the sleeping area, as they did in the 5 Wide. Combine this with an extra 6 inches of headroom and two windows, and the interior feels cavernous.

Editors Note: Because the T@G is a new model Little Guy has made adjustments to certain features in response to dealer and customer suggestions. So some features may vary slightly from unit to unit.

The Cabin

On one end of the cabin there are two sets of cabinets, one on each side of the optional air conditioning unit. I refer to these as “his and hers” cabinets, for obvious reasons. The cabinets are roughly 17” x 17”, but are fairly shallow being only 6” deep. We are both still able to store clothes for a long weekend, as well as some miscellaneous items. Because we opted not to get the entertainment package, which included a flat screen television, we also have a nice nook above the air conditioning unit where we can put our iPads and phones while they are charging.

On the other end a rather nice looking headboard and overhead cubbies provide additional storage. We primarily use the storage inside the headboard for items that we need but don't use often, such as the first aid kit and other extra supplies. The lid of the headboard doubles as a storage shelf. We purchased several cloth baskets from Target (on clearance) and use them



to store our shoes at night, as well as keys, phones, flashlights and other smaller items that we want easily accessible.

I know a lot of people try to keep from placing items in the sleeping area of their trailer during transit, just in case they need to pull over and take a quick nap while traveling. Great idea in theory, but not sure if it's reality at least for us. The time came and we needed to find a place for everything in the T@G. While traveling, we stack the two mattresses and use the floor space to transport the bulkier items such as chairs, dog crates, camp tables, and several small totes. We found a home for most of the items; however, we did end up with a few items in the rear of the tow vehicle. After looking at the remaining space left in the tow vehicle, we decided to leave the anti-gravity lounge chairs home for the time being. After all, we needed space for our two dogs to travel comfortably! We may yet end up carrying these items inside the T@G, but only after we figure out how to safely secure everything.

So far, the only modification we have completed inside the cabin was to install an additional 110 outlet in order to accommodate a small plugin wall heater.



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We are planning on adding two shelves, otherwise the interior storage seems perfectly adequate.

The Galley

The T@G's galley is also nicely laid out and has potential, but lacks adequate storage as is. We opted out of the 12volt refrigerator so we could use the space for additional storage. We installed a fairly good size drawer in that area and still had room left underneath for a tote, in which we carry our food stuffs and miscellaneous items. (The cooler is carried in the tow vehicle.)

We installed the wire baskets that came with the T@G a bit differently, putting one inside the sink door and the other one over the sink to hold paper towels. We also designed and installed a wood shelf unit to hold our dishes, coffee mugs and wine glasses.

The cabinet under the sink has the various water and gas lines that make it more difficult to pack much in, although we have our nesting pots/pans, collapsible dish pan and extra propane cylinders in there now. We are contemplating the installation of a shelf, but are waiting to see how it works as is.

Outside Storage

To address storage concerns for the larger items, we replaced the T@G's original propane / battery cover with a 48 inch diamond plate tool box. The T@G's

tongue box is definitely "cute" but lacks any real storage. I know that some folks don't like the looks of the diamond plate boxes; but, for me it's indispensable. My wife and I are able to store more gear in it than anywhere else other than our tow vehicle.



I mainly store the items used outside the trailer in the tool box. These are items that are typically bulky and are likely to get wet and dirty during our camping adventures, such as the Paha Que 10 x 10 Cottonwood canopy and 5x7 side tent, tent poles, wheel chocks, tool bag, tarps, electrical cords, small folding shovel, etc. It's nice to have a place other than the trailer or tow vehicle to re-store these items for the trip home when they are wet and soggy.

Several people have asked what I did with the battery and propane cylinder. I moved my battery inside the tool box and eliminated the 20 lb. propane cylinder altogether. As I only use propane for cooking, it seemed to me that a 20 lb. cylinder was overkill. So I set up the T@G's propane system similar to that of the 5 Wide. I installed a new gas regulator at the back of the trailer near the galley and now use the 1 lb. disposable propane cylinders.

Conclusion

At this point, I would conclude that the T@G's storage, with a few tweaks, is perfectly adequate.





SignaTour Campers

An Interview with Jim Turley

By Kevin Cross

Once again I have been privileged to interview a manufacturer of another quality tiny camper. This time I had the opportunity to find out more about SignaTour Campers. During the process I spoke with Jim Turley a number of times and he has been a pleasure to work with.

I noticed on your website that SignaTour Campers was started in 2011. How did the company get started?

It actually started as a hobby. We own a cabinetry company (Signature Cabinetry), hence the play on words for the camper company Signa“Tour” campers, and the cabinet business typically slows down around the holiday season. In November of 2010 as things were slowing down in the cabinetry business, we decided to build a teardrop style camper. Brian built a camper in his garage a couple of years prior and we both wanted to do it again. We decided if we were going to order the materials for one camper and pay the shipping we might as well order enough for two campers. Well, we built the first two campers and ended up selling three units in three days. A customer that looked at one of the first two units placed an or-

der for us to build the 3rd unit as the first two had already been sold.

While the cabinetry business gave us the design, woodworking and manufacturing experience to build a high-quality product, it didn't offer the same chance to connect with our customers on a personal level. Our SignaTour Camper customers get so excited when they receive their new camper, and the thrill of being able to use it to fulfill travel and camping dreams doesn't fade away like the excitement of a new kitchen does over time. It is so rewarding to hear from new customers that they first learned about SignaTour from a current camper owner—we have many great advocates for our business!

Your trailers have a fairly unique style that reminds me a bit of larger RVs on the market today. How did you arrive on the current design?

When we started looking at the true teardrop style campers, we realized that a square-back design would offer approximately 33% more interior



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space in the same footprint. The square shape also allowed us to add the side windows which offer more natural light and additional ventilation.

An additional benefit to us as the manufacturer was less wasted material with the square-back shape vs. a teardrop design.



You have a number of options that I don't recall seeing on other manufactured units. I noticed rooftop tents, side mounted grills, and extra storage areas. Can you tell us more about what is different about Signal Tour Campers and what options are available?

Brian and I both love the outdoors and enjoy camping ourselves, so we looked for options that we'd personally use. One of the unique options available is the rooftop tent which we call the "treehouse for the kids"—this allows a fam-



ily of four to comfortably camp. Even with the tent installed on the roof top, you can still park the camper in a standard garage. We also offer air conditioning to extend the camping season (especially important where summer comes very

early), roof racks, rear 2" receiver for bike racks, cargo carriers, a side mount hanging bracket that will accommodate several options such as a grill, sink, table and many other items available through camping retailers. Basically, we wanted to give our customers the chance to personalize their camping experience.

You offer a variety of models. What are some of your most popular models?

We recently came out with our Tote series with 4x8 and 5x8 models. This series has really taken off. I think it's due to the weight of the unit and the lower cost. People are looking for smaller and more economical units today and these units fit the bill.



For campers looking for a wider range of features, the Matrix series come in 5x8 and 5x9 sizes. The Matrix comes standard with the 12 volt converter, 2 - 110v outlets, 1 - 12v charging outlet, 30 amp shore cord, a high-quality Fantastic Vent 3 - speed reversible fan, LED interior and exterior lighting, steel spare tire and mounting bracket, tri-fold sleeping cushion, rear stabilizer jacks and a 2" rear receiver for bike racks or cargo carrier.

Can you tell us a little bit about the construction of your trailers?

Our campers are built on a steel powder-coated frame with a torsion axle suspension and 14"

wheels. The camper “pod” is constructed using all birch plywood (no particle board) and skinned with either aluminum or Lamilux fiberglass de-



pending on the model. The interior walls and ceiling are natural finished birch (instead of carpet or melamine) which adds to the appeal of the camper. Long-lasting and energy efficient LED lighting is standard for exterior running lights on all models, and LED interior lighting is standard on the Matrix series. We use wood-grain vinyl flooring that has the appearance of real wood. An emphasis on quality materials and craftsmanship has been important to us since the beginning and is one of the things that sets us apart from other

teardrop camper manufacturers.

Coming from a cabinetry background, we pay close attention to the details during construction. All of the interior joints in the campers are so tight that we virtually eliminate the need for any moldings to hide imperfections. Exterior joints are also scrutinized for tight tolerances, and when the units are skinned and the final aluminum trim is installed, water intrusion is virtually eliminated.



I noticed a few trailers on your website with varying colors. Is that model specific or do you offer a choice of colors?

Yes, that is model-specific and available mostly on the 4x8 Tote series. This is due to the material sizes readily available to us. We are still searching for



sources that will allow us to do colors on the 5-wide models in both the Tote and Matrix series. However, customers can customize either the Tote or Matrix with a color graphics package.

Where can your campers be purchased?

Our campers can be purchased through our dealer network. We currently have dealers in Florida, North Carolina, Chicago, and Texas. We are currently discussing dealer opportunities with folks in Alabama, Virginia, Tennessee, Maryland and Maine and hope to have these dealers on board very soon. If there isn't a dealer in your area, readers can contact us for more information.

How can our readers find out more about SignaTour Campers?

Our dealers are always happy to talk to potential customers. Readers can also learn more about us on our website www.signatourcampers.com or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/signatourcampers. And we're available to take phone calls or have potential customers visit our factory in Tampa, FL.




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Family Project

1947 Kit Restoration

By Nicki Blevens

Fourteen years ago Donnie Blevens Sr. purchased a 1947 Kit Manufacturing teardrop trailer in Rock Hill, SC for \$1000. Prior to his purchasing the teardrop, it had been with the same owner for 20 years. The trailer sat in storage as a rarely touched and unfinished project. In 2009 Donnie's youngest son, with a new child on the way, thought the teardrop would be an excellent way to participate in car shows with a young child. Donnie and his sons, Donnie Jr. and Jason, decided to tackle the project together.

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Late in 2009 the trio began documenting the demolition of the teardrop. The project was off to a slow start. Both boys have kids of their own and finding nights to work on the project was difficult and nearly impossible during baseball seasons. The birth of the youngest grandson came and went, along with several car shows. The entire restoration took the father and sons team four years to complete.

After the trailer was completely disassembled the restoration began by painting the frame and torsion axle. They faced a slight setback because the torsion axle was seized. They were eventually able to free it up and purged it with all new grease. They retained the old wood and used it as a pattern to cut the new birch plywood.

The original wood was used for the doors, with a slight modification to fit new crank out windows. New fenders, made from the original Kit molds, were purchased. The original wheels were sandblasted, painted and equipped with new tires. LED taillights were installed for safety purposes along with updated wiring. All the aluminum skin was cleaned and returned to the trailer. They were able to utilize 85% of the original trim and moldings. The biggest challenges were using the rotten wood as a pattern and the alignment issues between the new fenders and not-so-plumb pattern.





A 4" foam mattress was trimmed to fit the cabin. Thanks to the Blevens women, full size bedding, homemade curtains and an over-abundance of pillows were utilized to finish the interior.



The galley had its own set of unique challenges. They were able to utilize the original propane stove and water tank, both of which still work. A new piano hinge had to be purchased for the galley door. The galley lights are also



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the original lights powered by a new battery. A couple of nights may have been spent trying to get the galley door to close.

The restoration had added challenges because the project spanned over 4 years and some of the pictures of the original were lost. Overall, it was a rewarding project and was a great opportunity for the Blevens family to spend time together. There were many nights that there were three generations in the garage around the

teardrop. The teardrop trailer's maiden voyage was in February of 2014 pulled by a 1964 Impala wagon and the grandson that inspired the restoration got to take his first nap in it a month before he turned four.



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Tiny Trailers at the RV Hall of Fame

By Kim Hollis

The RV/MH Hall of Fame is a must see destination for all teardrop and tiny trailer owners, camper enthusiasts and history buffs. It is located in Northern Indiana right off the 80/90 in Elkhart. Created to display historical camping units, it is a one of a kind museum. From the 1913 Earl Trailer (believed to be the oldest non-tent trailer in existence) to the modern RVs exhibit in the Go RVing hall, there is a camping trailer for everyone's comfort level.

The museum tour starts with a brief history of the camping trailer from one of the many knowledgeable volunteers staffed at the museum. An overview of the facility is explained and then visitors are encouraged to enjoy the collection.

The first stop is the Go RVing Hall. Modern day RV doors are open and the public is invited to tour the units. The vintage trailers are the draw, but touring modern day trailers without the pressure of a salesman is a great feature and comparing teardrops to massive RVs is always fun.

The RV/MH Hall of Fame lists their entire vintage inventory online, but the photos are quickly forgotten when stepping into the Founder's



Hall. Starting with the 1915 Model T with a 1916 telescoping apartment and a 1916 Cozy Camper tent trailer, it is quickly evident that the pop ups



and slide outs have been around since the beginning of recreational camping. A painted road leads the way to the 1940's, 50's and 60's, with an abundance of restored Canned Hams. Visitors



are welcome to climb in and take a look around many of the models. The trailers are decorated and outfitted with period camping gear.

A 1957 Serro Scotty 10 foot teardrop sits proudly among its larger classmates. Across the lane is the 1957 Serro Scotty 12' rear entry; both designed for garage storage. Larger travel trailers and motorhomes from the 60's and 70's are up next. Once again, doors are open to invite visitors in.



The craftsmanship and attention to detail in the 1930 housecar and travel trailer collection is very impressive. Mae West's chauffeur driven 1931



Chevrolet Housecar is another example of attention to detail. The trailers begin to form a maze



and tucked in a corner is the 1954 Spartan Imperial Mansion (8 feet by 42 feet). She is a very classy early mobile home.

A 1930 Model A pulling a 1946 teardrop kit brings the

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exhibits to a close. The museum curators did a magical job with props throughout the hall. Landscaped backdrops, cozy sitting arrangements, artificial landscape and vintage camping gear add to the charm.

One more surprise awaits, the second story overlook. An elevator is conveniently located by the registration desk. Make sure to take your time

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once on the second floor; the walls are filled with camper and trailer themed paintings. The second story overlook gives a fresh perspective of the vintage collection.

Upstairs is also home to the museum library. Visitors are welcome to spend time researching books, back issues of RV magazines and owner manuals. An historian is on staff to help with related questions. Adorable camper models line the tops of bookshelves throughout the library.

T-shirts and souvenirs are available for purchase by the registration desk. Overnight parking is available before and after visiting the museum; however water, sewer, electric hook ups and security are not available. Campgrounds in the area are listed on the website.

When visiting, plan on several hours to absorb all that the museum has to offer. Please share your experience with others; it is too great of a gem to keep secret.

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Campfire Cookin'

One of Our Favorite Camping Meals



We have a few meals that we always include when we are planning our camping trips. We like them because they are simple, easy, delicious and, of course, cooked over a campfire! We thought we would share one of our favorites with you. Enjoy!

Apple Cider Ham Steak



One of the things that makes it an easy and fairly quick meal is that we buy hamsteaks that are fully cooked so when it comes to cooking time you are really just heating the meat and searing in the maranade. However you do have to plan ahead a little in order to give the maranade time to settle in. (A list of every thing you will need will be provided at the end of the article.)

First place the ham steak in a gallon size resealable bag and pour in the apple cider to cover the ham steaks.

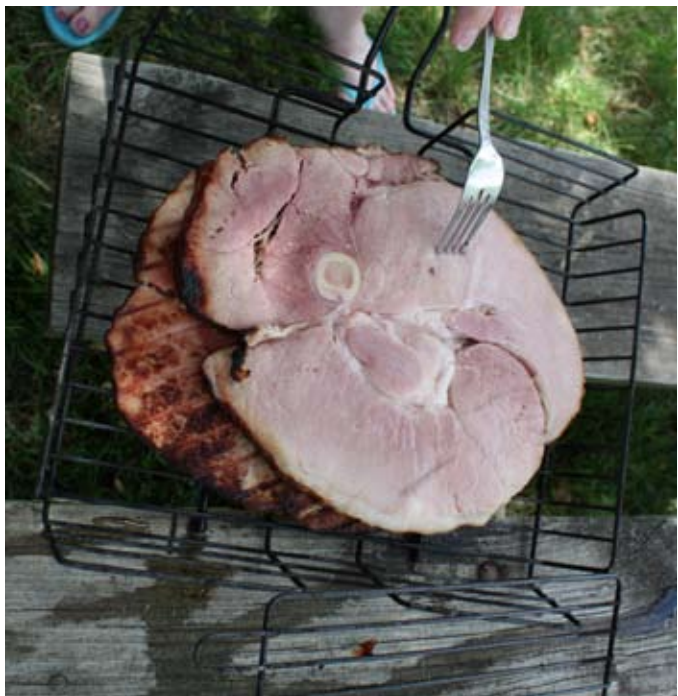


Close and refrigerate for at least four hours but preferably overnight.



Remove the ham steaks from resealable bag and place the ham into a grill basket or place on cooking grate and cook over a campfire for 4-5 minutes. Cooking time will vary based on the tempature of your fire and how crispy you like your ham steaks. We like ours fairly well done.






If you are using a cooking basket open the basket and flip the steaks so that the cooked sides are facing each other and the uncooked sides are facing out. (Or simply turn over if you are cooking on a grate.)



Cook another 4-5 minutes over the fire and they are ready to eat.

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Zucchini and Summer Squash

There are a variety of ways to cook the zucchini and summer squash. Many times we use a skillet on our propane stove. For this article we wanted to make it all about cooking on the fire so that it applies to everyone including those who don't have a cooktop in their galley. So we decided to go with the foil packet method.

Prepare a piece of foil with cooking spray. It's best to use heavy duty foil. If you do not have heavy duty foil, double layer the regular foil.



Quarter and slice the zucchini and summer squash. Slice a medium onion into rings. Place about 1 cup of veggies onto foil.



Add some of the onions to preference and a couple of pats of butter or margarine. Sprinkle with season salt and seal close.



Cook over the coals for about 10 minutes. Again, cooking times may vary depending on your fire. You can always open one up to check it and put it back on the fire if it's not done. Checking is better than burning it. Open and enjoy!



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