

Q & A WITH MARK MICHAUD

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October
2016

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and tiny campers

the teardrop bug



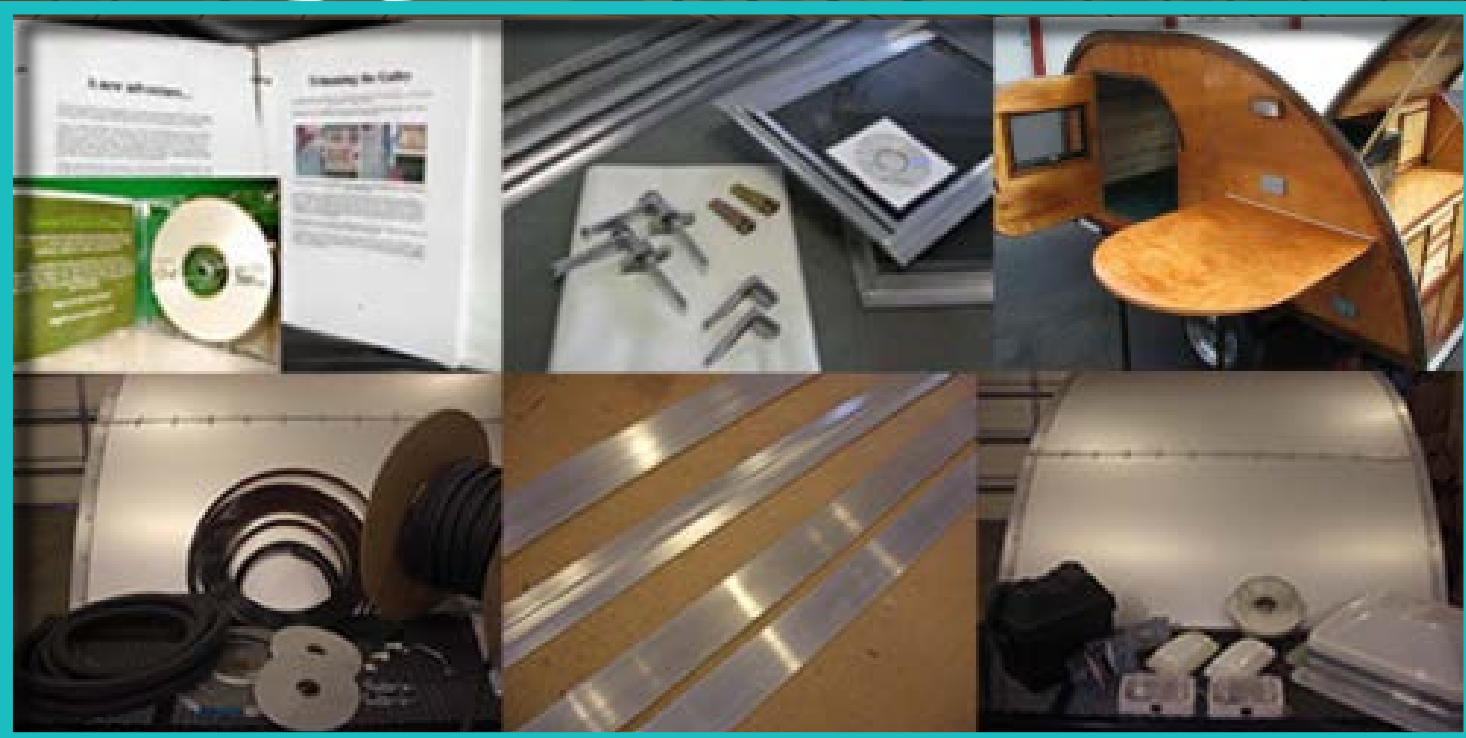
Adventure
begins

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

A quick trip to Elkhart

In late September, my husband, our oldest daughter and I took a trip to Elkhart for the RV Dealer Open House. Due to other work restraints we were unable to spend a great deal of time up there but we packed a ton into the trip.

I plan to write a blog post on all the different manufactures we were able to meet and the new 2017 models they will be releasing soon...so stay tuned!

One of the neatest parts of the trip was touring the RV Hall of Fame and Museum. I know Kevin (previous editor) was able to visit several years back and wrote a fantastic article on it but I wanted to just give you a glimpse of my favorite parts.

Be sure you check out the RV Hall of Fame website to plan your own visit www.rvmhhalloffame.org/



Until next time...enjoy every sunrise!

SARAH TUCKER

Editor
Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine™
sarah@cooltears.com





Bruce And Julie, NEW HAMPSHIRE

We just finished this home build and took it for a shake down camp over the Labor Day weekend, 2016. We plan on finishing some enhancements and taking it out west next year.

Tears in the wild

Take your teardrop to the wild, send us your adventure

Email your best shot to us, along with a brief description of your adventure, and we will publish the most inspiring collections.

Put TEARS IN THE WILD in the subject line and send to sarah@cooltears.com today!



Dan & Laura Sutton

Enjoying a great campsite in their custom built, 6x10 teardrop camper, aptly named the SunShineInn.



Susan Johnson, KANSAS

The "country squire" enjoying a beautiful fall day at Knob Noster State Park in Missouri. Be watching a future issue for more on this gorgeous home-built 'drop.



**Mark Peterson,
NORTHWEST**

My wife and I just returned from a 8-day loop trip from Seattle through Glacier National Park, Calgary, Banff, Lake Louise, Winthrop (Washington), and the North Cascades Highway. We celebrated our anniversary in Lake Louise, where we had honeymooned 40 years earlier!



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by **Barry Klassen**

Adventure begins

My teardrop adventures started when I got sick and tired of being rained on every time I set up my tent. I had seen pictures of teardrops and thought it would be a great addition to my road car, a 1929 Ford Model A hotrod. I had started planning my build from scratch but then came upon an abandoned project on Craigslist. It fit my basic requirements of a 5x8 and a Benroy design which I liked.



Adventure Begins

The trailer was 600 miles from me but I had a buddy that lived a couple miles away from it. He hates camping but agreed to have a look at it for me. When he got there, he called and said, he could never sleep in it, but the construction was done pretty well. I had planned a trip in that direction so I told him to buy it and I would make the trip out to pick it up in a couple weeks.

The trailer was a bare shell with a couple shelves, a single door, and a smoked plexiglass window on the other side. It had utility trailer fenders and 14 inch wheels. Good bones to start with but I needed to make it mine.

Before towing it home, I had to replace the tail lights as they were all corroded and did not work. They were replaced with LED lights and I also rewired it from front to back while I was at it. On the way home I slept in it for a couple nights and without any opening windows or vent, I found out how warm an aluminum box can get when the sun starts shining on it.

Over the next year I made a bunch of changes to make it mine. I enlarged the existing door, and added another one on the passenger side. Both doors got sliding windows with screens, that I picked up at an RV salvage yard. They are a little modern for some peoples' taste, but functionality won over period correct. I ordered a set of KIT fenders for it and wheels, hubcaps and beauty rings to match my hotrod. Now it was starting to look like my kind of trailer.

One of the best additions was a Maxair fan to get some air moving through on hot summer nights. To keep that running I added the biggest marine 12V battery I could get. To keep the heat under control I insulated and paneled the sleeping compartment. One inch of Styrofoam between the ceiling/roof bows and a couple sheets of oak plywood made the interior really cozy. At the same time, I added some cupboards and shelves for clothes and what ever else needs to come along for the adventure.

The galley was mostly planned from the middle out. I started by buying a 5 gallon water jug, as I figured I would always need fresh water on the road. This was located in the center of the lower cabinet and from there I added two, 2-door cabinets on either side for dishes and groceries. There is also a flip up cabinet at the top where I



store my stove and barbeque tools and cutlery. The space under the counter has a built in icebox that is insulated with 2 inches of Styrofoam on all sides and top and bottom. The interior of the cooler is oak with 5 coats of Marine epoxy and glass cloth in the corners. It looks great and does not leak a drop. There is a bathroom sink drain in the bottom to let out the water from melting ice. Also under the counter is another compartment that has my battery and carries my tools, jacks and other miscellaneous stuff when I am on the road.

The tongue box carries my propane tank, barbeque, and lawn chairs. Last year I added a solar panel which really alleviates the anxiety of wondering how long my battery will hold out on long trips. I also added the spare tire/stove table which is an awesome feature that takes the stove or barbeque away from the counter area.

Now to the fun part. The trailer has been all over

Western Canada and the Western USA. I have made 4 trips in it to the Bonneville Salt flats to attend Speedweek. Last summer, myself and 2 buddies made a trip from Calgary, AB to Pleasanton, CA and back, all towing teardrops behind our hotrods. This year I did a solo trip logging 5700 miles. If you are interested in reading about those trips, you can find them here:

Road trip <http://www.jalopyjournal.com/forum/threads/three-hot-rods-three-teardrops-and-three-stooges.985462/>

Solo Road trip <http://www.jalopyjournal.com/forum/...f-make-the-most-of-it-solo-road-trip.1020556/>

If I could add a plug here, I would have to say that one of the best resources for information on building and or modifying my teardrop was found on the web at <http://tnttt.com/> It is a fantastic community that is all about sharing information about the world of teardrops.

The Teardrop Bug

The perfect match for
a 1969 Beetle.



by **Bob Calkins**

*M*y fascination with VW's and trailers started about 20 years ago when I began thinking it would be fun to have a camping trailer that could be towed with a Beetle. Because of the general shape of the Beetle, a teardrop was so perfect. About that time, I started seeing artwork from the VW Classic, one of the biggest VW events in the world, that had a rendering with many different VW's and one towing a teardrop.

The car is a 1969 Beetle. The official term for this kind of modification to a VW is a Volksrod. A "Hot Rod" VW built in the rough image of an American Hotrod from the 40's and 50's which includes no fenders, light weight, premiered paint and pinstripes etc. Modified frame and front axel, the pickup bed is from a 30-31 Model A Ford. Currently the VW engine is being replaced with a 2.2 liter Subaru for more power towing the teardrop. The car belonged to my late father, who found the car in about 1994-95. It is totally a hoot

to drive. Between my dad, myself and my 3 kids, we have owned over 300 VW's and this is the funnest one of the lot.

Around the year 2000, I found a home-built teardrop that was rough and very heavy. The frame was all cast iron and weighed much more than a Beetle would be able to tow without overheating. I later sold it and purchased a Heilite single wheel tent trailer from 1957.

My current teardrop was in fairly rough



condition as it had been sitting out in the weather several years and needed refurbishing. It was built by Bob Riggs in Sacramento, Ca in 2001. Very lightweight with torsion suspension and 15"

wheels, which visually, with a VW was important. Bob built it with 1" square tubing and skinned in plywood. When I purchased it from him, I had to replace the floor as it had been sitting outside several years and water had gotten in. I put insulation inside and covered the walls and inside roof in burlap. Then I refinished the plywood sides and used an oil based marine spar varnish. It took a lot of sanding to get the weathered plywood smooth. I painted the outside with Rustolium RED and had it pinstriped by Ray "The Vulture" Peoro in Folsom, Ca. I then added a luggage rack as well as a roof rack for bikes. I used vintage trailer lights from a 50's trailer for tail lights and an old 8" stop light. The teardrop tows great and along with the Volksrod gets tons of attention.



The trailer could be a tad wider, the inside cabin is 37" which is fine for one person but for two is really too crowded. It has no galley.

My use of the teardrop mainly was for attending VW shows in California and Bluegrass Festivals of which I am also involved. The first time I slept in it was in 2015 at the Sacramento Bugorama. It was comfortable and since it has stabilizing legs doesn't move about much. A week later I was off to the California Bluegrass Associations Fathers Day Festival in Grass Valley, where it was the hit of the festival. I hardly had time to do much picking as I was always showing the rig to everyone.

The work never ends but I love every minute of it.



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Q & A WITH MARK MICHAUD

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO BUILD A TEARDROP?

I found a number of wonderful ideas on Pinterest which led me to the Cool Tears website. From there so many ideas flowed forth. Dave Moulton's Campernati the most intriguing and I knew I had to make my teardrop with a trolley top. I am used to building without any design plans so the shape and overall build changed as work progressed.

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS YOU FACED IN THE BUILD?

In a word: Curves! Bending flat plywood or metal trim over the curved top was interesting, especially the aluminum corner edging. It took a bit of patience, and at one point, I had to put down the tools and walk away. I came back a few hours



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later and it all went much smoother.

Solutions: I found that taking a flat section of plywood and bending it around the trolley top was easier when leaving a bit hanging over the edge and using a router to trim edges smooth. I don't have a wood working shop, only my hand tools and battery powered saws and drill drivers. So I took my time and enjoyed the challenge of watching it grow right in my driveway.

TELL US ABOUT THE BUILD PROCESS AND YOUR PARTS SOURCES:

I found an old rusty bent Harbor Freight trailer for \$50. I had to completely dismantle it, bend the components back to straight, paint and reassemble with all new bolts. I didn't want to just use plywood for the sides so I found



shiplap at Home Depot in the clearance aisle and that's where the ideas started rolling out. I wanted that rough textured exterior much like Dave Moults Campernati. A local RV dealer had a parts barn where I found some "barn fresh" old stock aluminum trim that adds character and that aged look even though it's all new. I got everything at a fraction of the price and I helped them clear out the barn!

SHARE SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR FIRST CAMPING TRIP IN YOUR NEW TRAILER.

The first camping trip was an interesting travel experience. We decided to go hiking along the Appalachian Trail from the base of Katadan in what is called the "100 miles wilderness." Taking the camper out on Interstate 95 for about 50 miles at 70+ mph was unbearable. I kept looking back to make sure it had not blown apart. I couldn't believe it was holding together as I didn't really think much about the effects of highway speeds when building. When we got back I did brace things up a bit. I think it's best to do a road trip first before finishing the interior as it makes those 'modifications' easier. We spent 3 wonderful days over Labor Day weekend in Acadia National Park near Bar Harbor Maine, it has a beautiful coastline! We spent a week in The Forks Maine on the

Kennebec River hiking trails and just enjoying the mountains of Maine. We will be heading out to the White Mountains of New Hampshire in mid October for fall foliage.



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