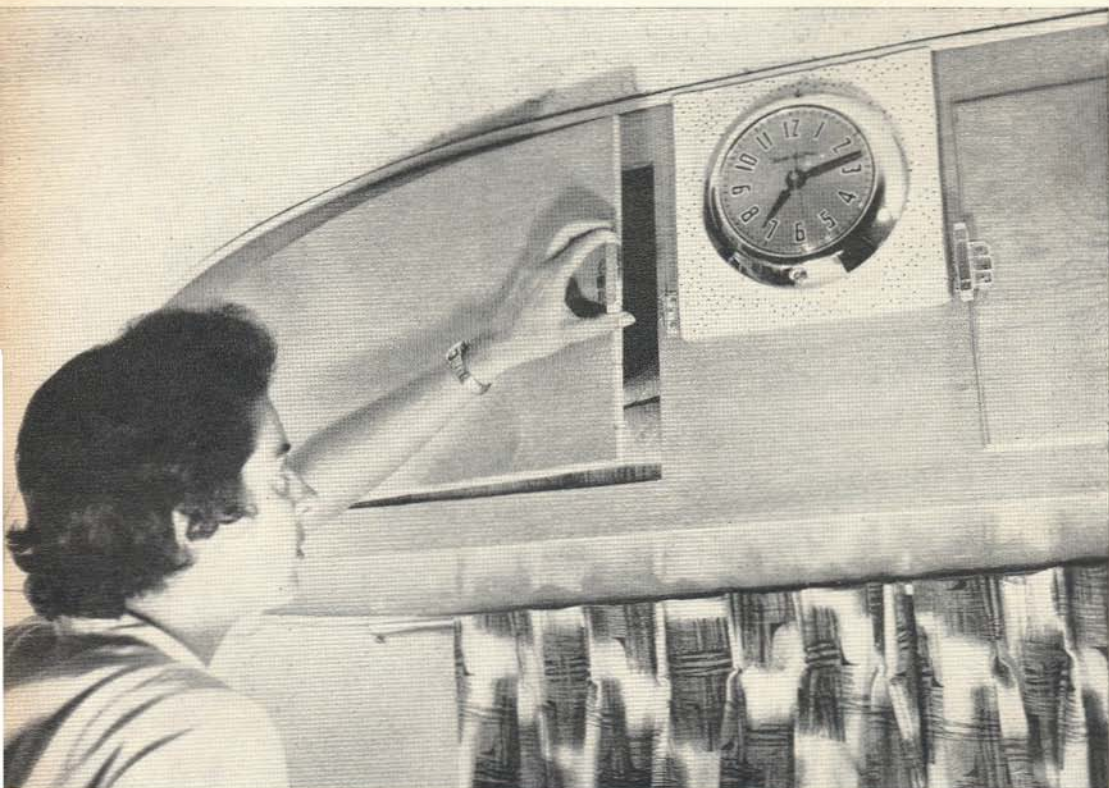


Customize Your Storage

By WILLIAM J. STOREY



Jiggle-proof catches hold the doors tight on the roughest roads; increase in storage space was easily attained in a weekend, with minimum amount of materials, money or skill. Author uses storage space for linens, blankets, clothing.

NEED A LITTLE EXTRA SPACE? How about a place to store extra towels and bedding, or perhaps a cabinet for those fishing clothes? Most of us can use a little extra storage space in our travel units or mobile homes. Manufacturers have been ingenious in devising storage space, but they cannot always surpass the owner himself.

To prove my point, next time you step into a friend's trailer, look around very carefully. I'll bet you will find a shelf here and a drawer there that did not come with it originally. It's these additions that can create individuality in a home on wheels, and also make day-to-day living more convenient.

Many people have hesitated to add any cabinets or

shelves to their mobile homes or travel trailers because they felt that they were not qualified to do the job themselves. But if you can use a screwdriver and wield a paint brush, you can add cabinets, drawers and shelves to your heart's content. If you can saw a line you can customize your trailer's interior.

There are a few guide lines that must be followed, but they are simple and no trouble should be experienced.

First, the manufacturer of your home on wheels, be it 15 or 50 feet long, gave considerable thought to engineering the interior. Weight distribution was a prime consideration, so don't install anything that will change the balance appreciably. By this I mean, don't install a cabinet to hold canned goods near (Continued on page 90)

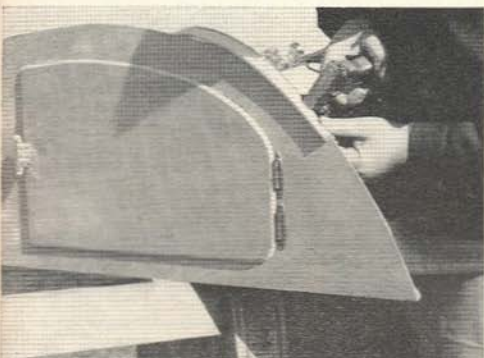
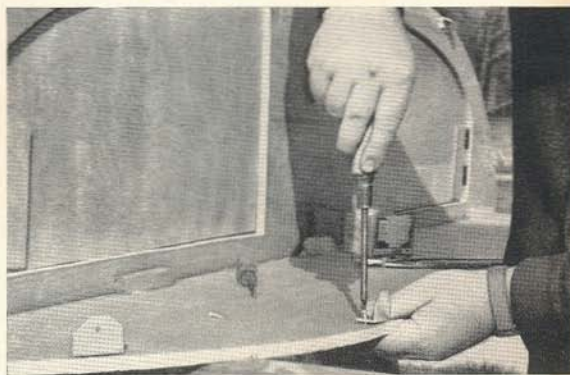
Space

If you can saw a board, you can create customized storage for your travel trailer or mobile home; this idea is easily adaptable

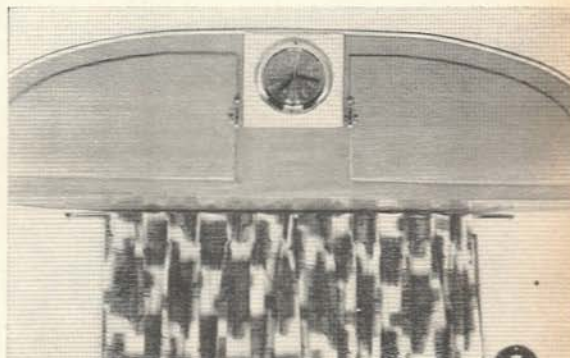
Cardboard patterns save costly mistakes and are highly recommended for the novice carpenter when building unit.



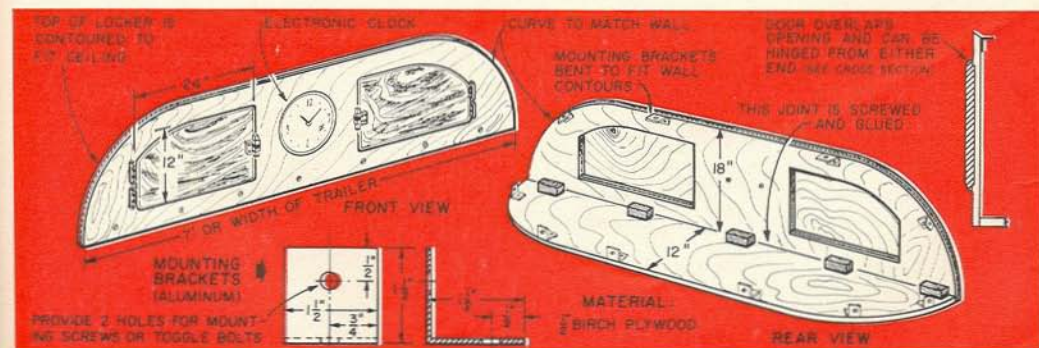
Aluminum mounting brackets hold the cabinet to the walls; bend in upper brackets is so they'll fit domed contour.



Cove welting is stapled into place to give a finished appearance where the cabinet will join wall; saves trouble.



Completed cabinet takes its place in the trailer; below, the detailed plans for the unit; adjust to your trailer.



Storage Space

(Continued from page 48)

the ceiling, or place a heavy chest of drawers in the rear where it will cause sway on the road. Neither should you add many pounds to the front where it will be passed onto your towing vehicle.

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In short, balance the load.

Secondly, you'll have to use the best construction principles in your additions. Forget nails, as they work loose. Use screws and glue: the new milk-white kind is excellent for permanent joints, and screws alone will work for attaching cabinets to walls.

Lastly, try and match the present interior when you install your cabinets, etc. Nothing looks more out of place than a mahogany cabinet installed next to a line of birch cabinets.

Most department stores, furniture stores, and mail order houses stock unfinished furniture. You'll find these pieces of unfinished furniture ideal for installing in your trailer. They have several advantages. You can stain them to match the present trailer interior, and the variety of items available is great. The cost is also quite low, but I must caution you again to buy the best quality. The cheaper items do not have glued joints and will not hold up well.

I have two pieces in my travel trailer now, and have received excellent service from them. A small chest of drawers is next to the dinette, and a shelf with sliding doors is above the water tank at the front of the trailer. These two items provide greater utility to the interior, and the installation was a simple operation. I used wood screws to fasten the chest and shelf to other existing cabinets, but I had to use sheet metal screws to fasten them to the wall, since my trailer's interior is aluminum. A small starter hole was punched in the wall and the screws went in easily, to hold solidly.

How to get a stain to match the interior has stumped many people. Don't let it stop you. Write the manufacturer of your trailer giving the model, year and description of interior finish, and ask for the name of the finish of your trailer's interior. Many manufacturers keep a supply on hand for just your purpose and will sell you what you need for a nominal price. I own an Avion and I got the matching stain from Avion's service manager, for example. It cost \$1.25 a quart

and matches perfectly.

If you feel that a little do-it-yourself carpentry would do you some good, by all means start to work! I recently made an overhead front cabinet for my trailer; the job was relatively easy and it cost only 15 dollars for everything! Here is what I did:

My wife and I wanted more storage in the front of the trailer for some light things. Although, in our trailer, this project didn't look easy in the beginning, it actually turned out to be no problem at all.

I bought the best grade of birch plywood to match the wood in the other cabinets. I didn't want to make a mistake when cutting the wood, so I made patterns from cardboard. I highly recommend this process for any area that is not square. (My trailer has a rounded body.) When the cardboard patterns fit perfectly, all I had to do was trace the outline on the plywood and cut along the lines.

Next I cut out the holes for the doors, sanded the front and bottom, and I was then ready to join the two pieces together with screws and glue. The doors were a little tricky because I wanted them to overlap and fit nicely, but a portable router did the job in 10 minutes. Putting on the hinges was no chore, but I took a little extra time to make sure the fit was good.

The door catch is the "catch" on trailers. It's hard to find good ones in stores; that is, catches that won't pop open on a rough road. Here again, I suggest that you check with the manufacturer, for he usually will either supply your needs or tell you of a supplier that can. Trailer supply houses also stock these items or will order them specially for you.

All the cabinets in my trailer are mounted to the walls with small aluminum brackets and sheet metal screws. I screwed the brackets to the cabinet and made starter holes in the brackets and walls, and the cabinet was up in no time. Toggle bolts can be used in place of screws if the cabinet has to support a heavy load. Where the cabinet fits against the wall I put in cove welting. This makes a neater job and it matches the other cabinets, since cove welting was used on the other cabinets by the manufacturer.

Some not-so-fancy brushwork (I dislike painting), and the stain and varnish job was complete. Presto-chango! A roof locker that looks like it was factory installed, and it took just spare moments of one weekend.

Plan the job, get your supplies from a trailer manufacturer or a supply house and get busy! In no time at all the job will be done and you'll be as proud as I am when visiting friends say, "I wish we had storage space like that, but those custom-made interiors are so expensive."

TOP OF LOCKER IS
CONTOURED TO
FIT CEILING

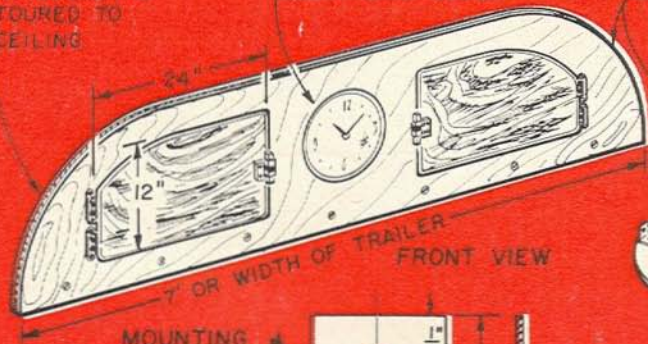
ELECTRONIC CLOCK

CURVE TO MATCH WALL

DOOR OVERLAPS
OPENING AND CAN BE
HINGED FROM EITHER
END (SEE CROSS SECTION)

MOUNTING BRACKETS
BENT TO FIT WALL
CONTOURS

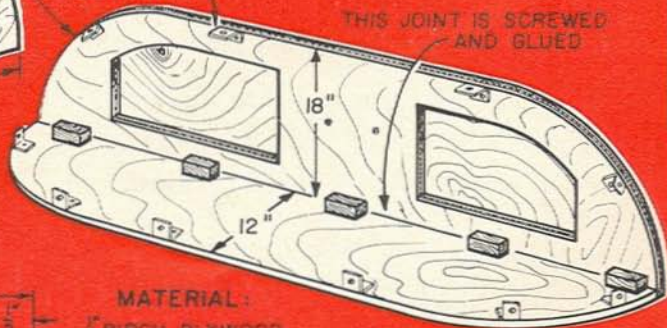
THIS JOINT IS SCREWED
AND GLUED



7' OR WIDTH OF TRAILER
FRONT VIEW

MOUNTING
BRACKETS
(ALUMINUM)

PROVIDE 2 HOLES FOR MOUNT-
ING SCREWS OR TOGGLE BOLTS



MATERIAL:
3/4" BIRCH PLYWOOD

REAR VIEW

AIRSTREAM



The model tested was the 28-foot International Ambassador Twin. Lane poses in doorway; picture was taken at Tarpon Springs.

TRAVEL TRAILER TEST REPORT



Tester Lane got his jollies this month in a 28-footer that rang the gong for five stars and percentaged out at a phenomenal 95.9%. The cost is high at \$7467—but then, so is the overall quality

By **DON LANE**

Travel Trailer Test Editor

THIS TRAVEL TRAILER test report is not intended for anyone who owns an Airstream.

In fact, anyone who owns this make of trailer is only going to read this evaluation to further inflate his ego in having confirmed what he already knows: that the Airstream is the trailerist's trailer.

And as for my road testing, I bow apologetically to the hundreds, probably thousands, of persons who have safaried all over the world and could better tell me about the Airstream's towing qualities.

Fortunately, despite the fame of the Airstream which has made it synonymous with travel trailering, there are still thousands of trailerists who have not possessed or towed this bullet-shaped vehicle. It is to these people that I direct my appraisal.

High-priced to be sure—at first glance. There's an old saying that fits the unit in this respect: you pay for what you get! Any buyer who plunks down \$7467—the price of the 28-foot International Ambassador Twin I tested from the sales lot of C. J. Stoll, Inc., in St. Petersburg, Florida—wants to know what he's paying for. And it's a lot, believe me.

First of all, Airstream was begun about 1930 under the aegis of Wally Byam, an aircraft designer and world



Compact but comfortable bath has every sanitary convenience, vinyl tile floor.

Lounge converts to double bed; upholstery fabric is treated to resist soil.



Complete galley has large work area, stainless steel sink, top-quality appliances.

traveler par excellence. Because of him, Airstream, oldest continuous manufacturer of travel trailers, instituted innovations that have become the standards of the industry. Today, the company continues as ranking pioneer in the field, and travel trailering continues to benefit from Airstream research.

So, a purchaser's money partly pays for an actually pretested trailer that never ceases to be a laboratory guinea pig. He pays, too, for knowledge the firm reaps from loyal owners of its products. Frequently, their suggestions bring about a better bit of merchandise for traveling. And a purchaser pays, also, for breaking pathways to all parts of the world, so that he may follow in the footsteps—we mean tire tracks—made by Airstream-sponsored Caravans.

An owner's money buys a product built to MHMA-TCA-approved travel trailer standards for heating, wiring and plumbing.

But, mostly a buyer pays for quality of construction, engineering of advanced nature, convenience, the best materials and equipment that will fit out any Airstream trailer for what the heart desires, the pocketbook holds, and adventure and faraway lands demand.

Like a certain well-known imported foreign car, the

manufacturer of this trailer doesn't give a hoot that its exterior appearance is unattractive to some. The firm knows that what really counts are the guts, and that customers will appreciate and pay dearly anytime for capabilities over frosted coatings.

Just because this reporter is a little testy regarding aesthetics, don't jump to any conclusion that the Airstream is a bitter pill to take. On the contrary, if you want *one* trailer that will take you there—anywhere—and back, you want one that can and will stand up to any condition of climate and road (or even no road at all to follow). The Airstream has done it all, many times over. It's famous simply because of its lasting towing qualities.

As the Bible or any good builder will tell, it's the foundation that makes for a solid structure. Here, the Airstream has no Achilles' Heel!

Appearance alone of the chassis is enough to instill confidence even in the most unknowledgeable layman. But to anyone slightly familiar with construction, Airstream engineering is an inspiring piece of workmanship. The chassis, labeled *Aerostress* by the company, expresses solid strength in combination with light weight, achieved by use of 4-inch structural (Continued on page 59)

Airstream

(Continued from page 43)

channel steel longitudinal members, welded to flanged, perforated cross members under the principle of aircraft manufacture.

For smoothness of ride and ease of towing, the running gear is a Dura-Torque tandem axle, with rubber cushioned torsion bar, and independent wheel suspension sustained by Delco shock absorbers.

The gear allows an unusual heightened 18-inch ground clearance. According to the company, it eliminates a gross of parts, and never needs lubrication. Tires, nylon and tubeless, are a good six-ply.

The body of the Airstream continuously curves, and slopes at the rear. Called *monocoque* design, this curvature concentrates strength. The engineered contoured body absorbs and distributes, more equally than perpendicular and horizontal construction, tensional, compressive, shearing and torsional stresses. This type of design permits a lighter body so that studding and bracing within walls and roof may be considerably reduced in size and weight.

As a consequence, Airstream walls and roof contain a frame of 1/2-inch stretch-formed aluminum channel ribs spaced

about every 20 inches, and structural aluminum channeling 20 inches apart longitudinally within sidewalls and roof.

Exterior skin is heat-treated, heavy Alclad aluminum sheeting, riveted to the framing. Structural alloy aluminum interior paneling provides additional strength to the whole body.

Six of the seven windows in the Ambassador are awning type. The one to the right of the door has ten jalousie panes. All windows have recessed drip caps, positive locks for traveling, and plastic removable screens. The combination main and screen door is really a smaller door within the larger one that opens and hooks to the trailer body to permit ventilation.

An awning rail is standard, as is a police-type radio antenna, two 28-pound gas tanks with automatic regulator, 12-volt battery, and locking trunk. All outside compartments have flush body doors.

Two visible protrusions are a rear bumper and fold-away steel entry step, both welded to the frame.

The manufacturer describes the step with the words "touch control," but I'm afraid I never learned the secret, perhaps because of my short acquaintance with the test model. Charlie Sweet, sales manager for dealer C. J. Stoll, had no trouble extending it properly, I admit.

The step was sturdy enough, nevertheless, as I used it to enter the trailer. I'm sorry to say that my first glance at the '63 Ambassador's interior was disappointing. The first thing that hit my eye was the walnut-stained oak wood employed for the cabinets (it's not my favorite, for sure). Burying personal prejudice, however, I don't believe the large grain of the wood enhances the otherwise beautiful interior.

As for the interior, generally, and its features, I liked what I saw. In walking around to inspect the appointments closely, and later in photographing the various angles with a more perspective eye, the fine workmanship, quality equipment, functional design and comfortable livability were better revealed to me. Besides, I knew it was Airstream's construction—that hidden behind the walls and within the floor under my feet—that counted most.

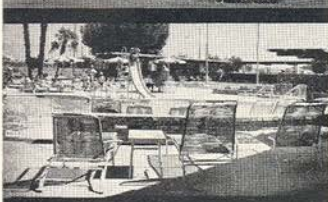
The lounge, with four built-in drawers below, opens easily into a double bed adequate for two adults. Over the sofa is a cabinet with two sliding doors.

Immediately to the left of the entrance door is the 5.4-cubic-foot Dometic gas refrigerator, a utility cabinet and drawers, and a pantry. Directly opposite is the large, Lyoncraft, stainless-steel,

(Continued on page 61)



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AIRSTREAM TECHNICAL REPORT

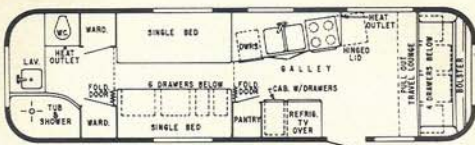
Ratings extend from one star to five, and are based mathematically on the score received in our technical report, seen below. The percentage points scored out of a possible 100 per cent allow us to determine the star rating. Any unit rated at three or more stars is, in our judgment, an excellent purchase; these are the homes and trailers we search out for evaluations, so as to present you with unbiased information on the best new products — Ed.

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	RATING		
		Above Average	Average	Below Average
WORKMANSHIP				
General	Double-wall riveted construction crosswise on arched 3/4" stretch-formed aluminum channel ribs, spaced approximately every 20", with structural aluminum channel longitudinal members approximately 20" apart in sidewall and roof sections; 3/4" flooring bolted to frame. Riveted aluminum sheet underbelly. All joints and seams caulked. Fiberglass wheel wells.	X		
Interior	Structural alloy aluminum wall paneling, .032 gauge, coated with multicolor splatter paint, hand riveted to frame. Walnut stained oak cabinets. Finely finished cabinet work. Hollow core wardrobe doors.	X		
Exterior	Heat-treated Alclad aluminum sheeting, .032 gauge, riveted. Curved window and vent frames riveted to body.	X		
Insulation	Flame, water, and vermin-proof 2 1/4" fiberglass in roof, walls and floor.	X		
Floor covering	Vinyl tile, .080 gauge.	X		
DESIGN				
Exterior	Contoured monocoque design equally distributes stress to provide greater overall strength.	X		
Interior	Well executed functionally, but artistically somewhat disappointing. Woodgrain too bold and heavy on cabinet work.		X	
ENGINEERING				
Chassis	Electrically welded A-frame, 4" structural channel steel with flanged perforated cross members. Bumper welded to chassis.	X		
Suspension	Dura-Torque rubber-cushioned torsion bar with individual wheel suspension. Delco shock absorbers.	X		
Tires	7.00x15, six-ply, nylon tubeless.	X		
Brakes	Two shoe, electric, self-energizing.		X	
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM				
Wiring	MHMA code standard, two circuit, 110-volt, 40 amps, Romex 12-2, plus 12-volt battery system.	X		
Lights	110-volt, and 12-volt; many, well placed.	X		
Outlets	Six double outlets, well placed, 110-volt exterior socket and 12-volt socket in bathroom.	X		
LIVABILITY				
Floor plan	Well arranged for ease in household tasks and comfortable relaxation. Folding doors to bath and sleeping compartments assure privacy.	X		
Dining area	Average, not the most comfortable arrangement.		X	
Kitchen	Fully equipped, good work area, Tappan gas range and oven, Dometic 5.4-cubic-foot gas refrigerator, Lyoncraft double-bowl, stainless-steel sink with single mixing faucet, spray faucet.	X		
Sleeping	Twin beds and dual purpose sofa, both very comfortable, easily sleep four adults.	X		
Bathroom	Excellent accommodations, self-containment.	X		
Ventilation	Good, adequate windows plus three powered vents and roof vent, screen in entry door.	X		
Heating	Li'l Darlin' by International, with floor registers at bath and front area.	X		
Water heater	Nine-gallon Bowen, gas.		X	
Storage	Plentiful.	X		
PERFORMANCE				
Braking	Excellent, positive reaction with no adverse effects to tow vehicle or trailer.	X		
Towing	None better.	X		
Sway	Absolutely none noted, well balanced both sides of trailer.	X		
Pitching	Complete absence although no equalizing hitch was used in test.	X		
Tracking	Follows perfectly, response quick, extremely easy in very difficult turns.	X		
Wind resistance	The very minimum because of streamlined airplane design; test day was quite gusty — unnoticeable.	X		
GENERAL FACTORS				
Life expectancy	Unlimited.	X		
Service policy	Trailer and manufactured components guaranteed life of original purchase; company noted for research.	X		
Extra features	SaniWare marine toilet, 30-gallon water pressure tank, 14-gallon septic holding tank, Western Ogden water purifier, plus complete range of additional equipment, at extra cost.	X		
Resale value	Best in the industry.	X		

AIRSTREAM TEST DATA

Manufacturer	Airstream, Inc., Jackson Center, Ohio. Other plant at Santa Fe Springs, California
Model Tested	28' International Ambassador Twin
Cost	\$7467 from dealer at St. Petersburg, Florida
Weight	3960 pounds
Hitch Weight	490 pounds
Overall Length	28'
Overall Width	8'
Interior Length	24' 9"
Interior Width	7' 4"
Interior Height	6' 7"
Ground Clearance	18"
Construction	Aluminum aircraft type
Axle	Tandem
Wheels	Drop center, 15"
Tires	7.00x15, six-ply, nylon, tubeless
Brakes	Kelsey-Hayes or Warner, electric
Sleeping Capacity	Four adults
Lighting	110-volt, 12-volt
Appliances	Domestic gas refrigerator, Tappan gas range, Bowen gas water heater
Extra Features	12-volt battery, Western Ogden water purifier, two 28-pound gas tanks, automatic tank regulator, galley spray; Plus other equipment and features
Tow Car	1959 Oldsmobile 98, HydraMatic, 315 hp
Distribution	National

Note generous sleeping accommodations and storage space. Galley is located for ease of meal planning, serving.



bedroom from the bath. Two large wardrobes, the sides of which abut the heads of the beds, are included in the bath area when the folding door is closed. One wardrobe door has a full-length mirror.

The bath has every necessity and comfort, though on a small scale. A molded fiberglass tub has a telephone-type

showerhead with shut-off valve as a water saver, and the plastic shower curtain is lined. The stainless-steel lavatory is built in with cabinet space below, including a hamper. A modern touch is the one-control faucet, plus a hand spray that is used for the SaniWare Swirl-A-

(Continued on next page)



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double-bowl sink set in a sizable Formica-surfaced work counter. The sink is equipped with a single mixing faucet, hand spray, and a tap for the Western Ogden water purifier. To the right of the sink is a Tappan gas range with four burners, oven and broiler. The work area here is increased by fitted sink covers and a hinged, three-position lid over the range.

Galley storage is well arranged with overhead cabinet, three drawers and cabinet below, and two shallow cabinets on the wall separating the kitchen from the bedroom. The utility cabinet has a pull-down front for use as a tiny desk (or the compartment may be used for storage). There are five deep shelves with turned up edges.

A folding door provides privacy for the bedroom, which has twin beds with 6-inch-thick mattresses. Over each bed is a cabinet with sliding doors. Under the bed on the door side are two large drawers and four smaller ones.

A second folding door separates the

(Continued from page 61)

Matic toilet. There is a glass holder and toothbrush holder, a pivoting mirror, and a compartmentalized medicine cabinet with adjustable vertical and horizontal shelving. The window curtain matches the shower curtain and is also lined.

Wardrobes, drawers, and sliding doors of the sidewall overhead cabinets have locks which keep them closed in transit. Closets have ventilation grilles.

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The interior aluminum paneled walls are sprayed with a thick, multicolor splatter paint that covers rivet heads, and provides an easy-to-clean and durable surface. Armstrong's vinyl tile, in a terrazzo pattern, is the attractive covering for the floor.

Electrical outlets and lights are numerous. Besides the ceiling lights, there are two wall fixtures over the lounge, one over each bed and sink, and one in the bath.

The large windows on all four sides assure good cross ventilation. In addition, there is a powered vent fan in the bathroom, which uses either the 110-volt or the 12-volt system, as does the galley exhaust fan. A roof vent and a 110-volt ceiling fan cool the forward end of the coach.

The Stoll firm, one of Florida's oldest and most reliable, provided a four-year-old car, which—they cautioned—pulled to one side and sagged in the rear from a bad case of soft springs. They shook their heads at what it would do to a road test of the Airstream.

Well, I haven't yet figured out whether it was my ability as a driver or the superior towing qualities of the Airstream, but the 315 hp, 1959 Oldsmobile 98 never wavered in its lane over the 81-mile course I took from St. Petersburg

to Tarpon Springs, and return through Clearwater to my starting point. However, it did drag its hitch bar and kissed, with a resounding, sickening smack, about every loosened brick in the pavement of old Tarpon Springs.

And those streets in that sponge center of Florida—oh boy! Narrow as they were, parking on both sides was permitted, making it an ordeal to pass an oncoming car. And turning from one street into another was a nightmare. One turn I made I thought was right-angled, but much to my surprise when I was into the swing, it turned out to be a sharp acute angle. I just about met the rear end of the Airstream going as I was coming.

On the highway, it was a different story—smooth sailing. I mean *really* smooth sailing, just as if I were floating on the most tranquil waters. There was no sway, no wind resistance that I could determine despite a gusty wind. Deft balance of equipment in the trailer by the manufacturer, plus its streamlined exterior, made towing the best I've ever experienced. The Airstream also tracked to my slightest touch or swing.

Panic stops from 65 miles an hour failed to bring about any pitching, despite the lack of an equalizing hitch and the drag of the Olds' rear end. ●

Note generous sleeping accommodations and storage space. Galley is located for ease of meal planning, serving.

