



5th-wheel



LazyDaze
Class C



Slide-in
Camper



28 ft. Safari Trek with Electro-majic bed

Deciding Which RV to Purchase

1. Evaluate your travel style and your needs. Will you be staying mainly in campgrounds or do you want to get off the beaten path? Will you be living in your rig full-time, using it for extended travel or short trips? Do you spend a lot of time indoors or outdoors?
2. Look at RVs and talk to RVer. Attend RV shows to see what features you like. Forums are a good way to get feedback about RVs: motorhomes vs. 5th wheels or trailers, various brands.
3. Join the [RV Consumer Group](#). For someone starting out and considering many brands, the Membership Plus category is well worth it. They have ratings on new and used RVs.
4. Join user groups. After you have narrowed down your focus to a few models or brands, a user group can provide good information about the practicalities as well as recommendations for dealers and leads on used rigs.
5. Take your time. Visit dealers and RV shows but leave the checkbook at home. This is a major purchase and one you want to be comfortable with for several years.
6. Be a smart consumer. Once you have made a decision, handle this as you would in purchasing a car when choosing a dealer and financing.

Buying a New RV - or Not?

by Jaimie Hall Bruzenak

Should we buy a new RV or keep the old one?

When George and I met, we each had an RV. His was a 2001 33-foot New Horizon fifth wheel, pulled by a GMC Duramax. After eight years of full-time RVing in a 32-foot Pace Arrow, I now had a home base and a Lance camper with slide-out on a 350 Ford with 4-wheel drive.

We spent last winter in the fifth wheel at Big Bend National Park where George volunteered. While it was very comfortable, we decided to take the smaller Lance to Alaska that summer.

The New Horizon and truck have an overall length of almost 50 feet. We thought we could go places more easily in the camper, even though George had driven the larger rig to Alaska in 2003.

We began talking about eventually selling both RVs and buying something in between the two in size. A motorhome under 30 feet, possibly with a slideout, would be compact yet provide more living area and more comfort than the camper, and it would also be easier to park than the fifth wheel.

In March, after presenting my "Support Your RV Lifestyle" seminar at the FMCA convention in Pomona, California, we looked at the motorhomes on display, concentrating on those 30 feet or less in length. Both of us wanted a regular bed. Most shorter units either had a pullout bed or a bed in the corner, often with the bottom corner angled.

Finally we stepped into the Safari Trek. It is unique in that the bed can be raised to the ceiling above the living area during the day and lowered for use. Treks are 27, 28 or 29 feet long. However, the inside is like a much larger unit but without the bedroom. Another plus: George is tall and could easily walk under the bed when stowed.

Research

To find out more about the Trek, George joined the RV Consumer Group as a basic member. Besides obtaining ratings on various brands of RVs, he also received the book *How to Select, Inspect, and Buy an RV*. When you consider you will often spend more than \$100,000 on a new RV, the \$98 or \$139 membership fee is well worth it.

The Trek was highly rated in several categories as a "snowbird unit." George also joined the Trek user group. User groups are made up of owners and potential owners of a particular brand who share information.

User groups can be found at Yahoo Groups and MSN Groups, with a few at Google groups. Search for "RV." User groups often list older models for sale as well as give advice.

The Trek usergroup is nwtfc.com.

George posed a number of questions that could only be answered by actual experience, questions like, "Do you have problems with the bed going up and down?" and "Can you put an air mattress on the bed?" He also inquired about solar panels. He found that Trek does not have a solar readiness package, so a buyer would have to pay for after-market modifications.

Factory Tour

Touring the Northwest, we set up an appointment with the Trek manufacturing facility in Coburg, Oregon. (Since our visit, the Trek manufacturing plant has been moved to Wakarusa, Indiana.) The tour was very informative, and we could observe the quality of workmanship.

A dealership was located nearby so we looked at completed units. We saw three. We stopped by again several weeks later hoping to see one with a blue interior but were out of luck.

One of the drawbacks to the Trek is that the bed lowers over the main sitting area and optional computer desk.

If one person was in bed, the person who was up would not have a comfortable place to sit or work. We considered making the eating table in the kitchen area into a desk. Then we read in the brochure that any changes would incur a large engineering fee and not include the cost of materials. Nor would you get a credit for an item you did not use.

For almost six months we traveled in the Lance camper, towing a Suzuki Sidekick. While the camper is convenient for short trips, it had many limitations for extended travel.

The main drawback was lack of a comfortable place to sit. I do know of RVers who travel full-time in a Lance camper, but we realized it does not work for us.

Decision

After returning home, we talked about what to do. We will definitely sell the Lance. However, if we purchased a Trek, we would need to make modifications to suit us. The most economical choice would be to find an older rig and do the modifications ourselves.

The New Horizon is already customized, comfortable, in excellent condition and has four solar panels and an inverter. We did not end up going to Alaska, but we could have taken it any place we took the camper last summer. So we decided, all things considered, to keep the fifth wheel. Besides, it's paid for!

Update from Margo:

As an owner of a 28 ft. 1999 Safari Trek, I highly recommend this motorhome to anyone traveling solo.

As Jaimie pointed out, it not designed for two on a full-time schedule, but could work for seasonal travel of 2 to 4 months.

Monaco purchased the Safari manufacturer in 2001 and the Trek line was discontinued in 2008. Monaco began changing the design and in the later models, rear bedrooms were included and the electro-majic beds optional as an extra bed for guests.

The unique bed design has changed again for the 2016 Trek (back on the market). Take a look [here](#).