

AFTER YOU BUY: 5 SIMPLE MODIFICATIONS FOR A T@G

www.cooltears.com

November
2018

COOLtears™

and tiny campers

• THE HANDMADE •
TEARDROP TRAILER



DOCUMENTING LIFE WITH A TEARDROP

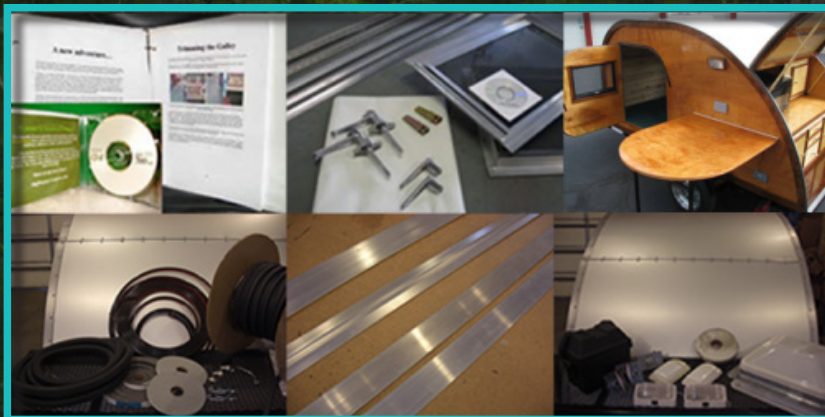
**BIG
WOODY**

Teardrop Campers

***Serious about building a
teardrop camper?***

Big Woody Camper
ULTIMATE KIT

\$899⁰⁰ plus shipping



Handcrafted Custom Campers.

Plans, kits, parts and accessories for the home builder!

BIG WOODY CAMPERS

715-271-0465 | www.bigwoodycampers.com

30 Seconds is all it
takes to get
started!!!



...life by the 'Drop



CUSTOM BUILT CAMPING TRAILERS

Office 715.842.0920 • Cell 715.573.7247

Wausau, WI

www.tcteardrops.com

VINTAGE TECHNOLOGIES

America's largest supplier of Teardrop Trailer Parts



Parts, Trailers, Kits & Custom Builds

www.TeardropTrailerParts.com

Contact us at (517) 741-5000

frankbear007@gmail.com

COOL Tears™ and tiny campers

Magazine

Vol. 6 No. 11

November 2018

8 COVER STORY

THE HANDMADE TEARDROP TRAILER:

New Book Chronicles Teardrop Build

By Bob Phillips

5 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

By Sarah Tucker

6 ON THE TEARDROP TRAIL: TEXAS CHILI

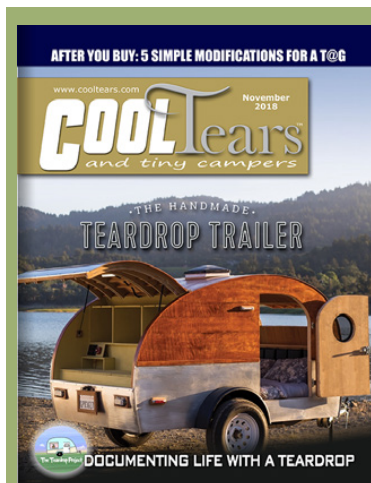
By Marilyn McCray

18 AFTER YOU BUY: 5 SIMPLE MODIFICATIONS FOR A T@G

By Donna Urquhart

28 THE TEARDROP PROJECT: DOCUMENTING LIFE WITH A TEARDROP

By Bob Phillips



Editor

Sarah Tucker

Contributing Authors

Marilyn McCray

Pat Marsh

Nicholas Tilleman

© Copyright 2018 Cool Tears Magazine™ All Rights Reserved
Cool Tears Magazine™ is a trademark. Written materials submitted to Cool Tears Magazine™ become the property of Cool Tears Magazine™ upon receipt and may not necessarily be returned. Cool Tears Magazine™ reserves the right to make any changes to materials submitted for publication that are deemed necessary for editorial purposes. The content of this publication may not be copied in any way, shape or form without the express permission of Cool Tears Magazine™. Views expressed in the articles and reviews printed within are not necessarily the views of the editor, publisher, or employees of Cool Tears Magazine™.

Mailing Address:

Cool Tears Magazine
2600 NE Douglas St
Lee's Summit, MO 64064

Connect with us!



Letter from the Editor:

The booming market

We have mentioned several times in the pages of Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine that this tiny camper industry that we love so much is alive and well. And it's true. The RV world has taken notice which is now apparent to the general public as many of the national manufactures are scaling down. No, their companies aren't shrinking but they are starting to create trailer options for those of us seeking the tiny camping lifestyle.



There are currently, according to my best records, 58 teardrop or tiny camper manufactures across the US, Canada and in Great Britain. We have been blessed to share some of those manufacturers stories here in Cool Tears. It's been awesome to share the faces behind the companies and to let you know really experience what it's like to build teardrops for the public.

In 2018 alone, this market has exploded onto the public scene due to teardrops making their way into American commercials, movies and many more places. In this issue, you will find two more venues that will broadcast a larger net with info on teardrops.

The new DIY book will, in my opinion, allow many people who have a dream of building their own teardrop, the starting point to launch their own project. I've enjoyed a sneak peak of the book and am thoroughly impressed with both the detailed steps of building as well as the artwork provided.

While I haven't yet seen "The Teardrop Project" new video, I know enough of this project to be ensured of both it's quality and intriguing view of the teardrop industry. I will share the video on our social media sites as soon as it is released.

Do you have a great story you'd like to see featured in Cool Tears? We are constantly seeking great material so be sure to email sarah@cooltears.com with your story idea!

Until next time...enjoy every sunrise!

SARAH TUCKER

Editor

Cool Tears Magazine™

sarah@cooltears.com



The Best Buying Experience and the Best Accessories for your Teardrop!

Plus new arrivals, daily deals and live chat with our accessory experts!



10x10 Cottonwood Shelter



10x10 Cottonwood XLT



All Weather Cover



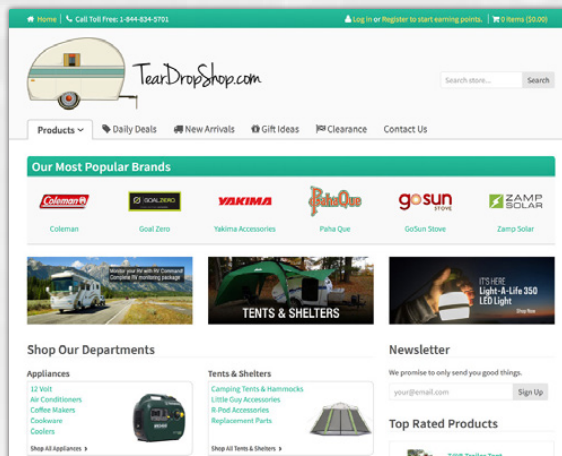
Side Mount Tent



Teardrop Lock



T@B Tent



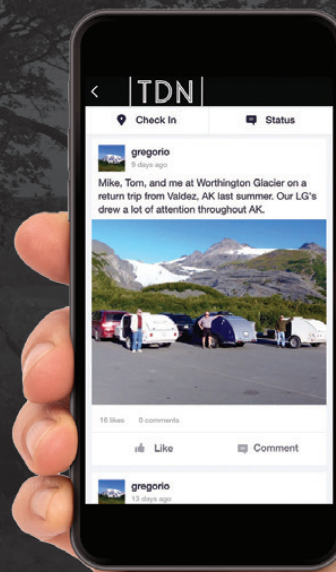
Visit www.teardropshop.com or call Toll Free: 1-844-834-5701



**THE APP FOR
TEARDROPPERS!**

Connect with the Teardrop Community!

- ✓ Status Updates
- ✓ Share Photos
- ✓ Likes & Comments
- ✓ Campsite Check-Ins
- ✓ Review Campgrounds
- ✓ Connect With Campers



Now available on iOS and Android!
<http://teardropnation.com>



ON THE TEARDROP TRAIL WITH MARILYN

Marilyn McCray is a published author of a cookbook titled *Canning, Pickling and Freezing* with Irma Harding, the International Harvester's fictional spokesperson. Marilyn and her partner, Jim Kerkhoff, travel in a beautiful teardrop to promote the book and she has graciously agreed to share some recipes with us in a regular column. Be sure to check out her book at teardroptrail.com/equipment-and-supplies/

TEXAS CHILI

I am descended from Stephen F. Austin, who was known as the father of Texas. Growing up I was aware of just how important traditions are in Texas, especially the culinary ones. Indigenous people greeted arriving outsiders with "Tejas," which means friends and would be the name of the state. The Spanish came in 1690, looking to spread Christianity. After the Mexicans gained their freedom from Spain, the colonization began with Mexicans as well as settlers from the United States. The Native Americans moved into the region in the late 19th Century. Europeans colonists ventured across the sea in search of religious freedom and land. Each group brought its own traditions, celebrations and food that now make up the unique cuisine of Texas. Chili is a legendary food in Texas. Some say that it was the cooks on the cattle drives of the 1870's and 80's who invented this spicy delight cooked over a campfire. However, there has always been a debate about Texas

Chili. Beans or No Beans. Often in the Lone Star state it is said, "if you know beans about chili, you know chili ain't got no beans." Some say real chili is really chili con carne or chili with meat. Not chili con carne con frijoles or chili with meat and beans. Even the Dallas Morning News published The Best real recipe Texas chili recipes - no beans allowed).

Serves 6

- 2 pounds beef stew meat or ground beef
- Olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4-6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1-2 Jalapeño peppers for heat or add chipoltes for a smoky flavor
- 16 oz beef stock
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 1 can stewed tomatoes
- 1 can tomato sauce
- Chili powder - to taste
- Ground cumin - to taste
- Salt and pepper
- Red Pepper Flakes/Chili Peppers

Variations:

- Turkey, Chicken or Pork instead of beef. Or omit meat or crumble tempeh for vegetarian chili.
- Can of beer or lager
- A store-bought can of pinto or black beans or cook dried beans at home (if you must have beans)

Prepare before leaving home:

- Measure dry ingredients and seasonings, place in plastic bag - label
- Freeze meat and place in plastic bags - label
- Chop onions, garlic, - place in plastic bags - label
- Use caution preparing Jalapeño or chipoltes peppers - discard seeds and membranes. Chop place in plastic bags - label
- For home-cooked beans - soak pinto or black beans overnight and cook until tender. Place in plastic bags - label
- Refrigerate in ice chest or cooler



In camp

Measure dry ingredients and seasonings, place in plastic bag - label
 Freeze meat and place in plastic bags - label
 Chop onions, garlic, - place in plastic bags - label
 Use caution preparing Jalapeño or chipoltes peppers - discard seeds and membranes. Chop place in plastic bags - label
 For home-cooked beans - soak pinto or black beans overnight and cook

until tender. Place in plastic bags - label
 Refrigerate in ice chest or cooler
 Cooking Methods-

On the campfire - Dutch Oven

Prepare the campfire. Use a tripod to hang the Dutch Oven over the camp fire to warm the olive oil and control the heat. Add onions and garlic. Add the meat, beef stock and stir with a wooden spoon. Follow with chili powder, cumin, jalapeños, pepper flakes and salt to taste. Stir and cover with the lid. Simmer but not boil. Move closer to fire, if more heat is needed. Stir in tomatoes, sauce and beer. Adjust seasonings to taste. Optional: Drain can of beans or use home-cooked beans - stir in. Cook for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally.

To serve

Ladle chili in bowls. Top with shredded cheese, chopped onion, dollop of sour cream or chopped cilantro. Serve with warm tortillas, corn bread or biscuits. Enjoy your favorite beer or a Margarita. Enjoy the warm glow or the chili around the campfire.

• THE HANDMADE •

TEARDROP TRAILER

DESIGN & BUILD A CLASSIC TINY CAMPER FROM SCRATCH



MATT BERGER



New book chronicles teardrop construction in careful detail

By **Bob Phillips**

If you have a hankering to build your own teardrop camper, a good place to start would be Matt Berger's book, "The Handmade Teardrop Trailer," scheduled for release on November 15. He's taken all the guesswork out of a build. His teardrop project, named The Weekndr, is a classic teardrop design with a retro "woody" exterior made from thin panels of reclaimed redwood on top and aluminum below. Custom doors blend right in with continuous wood grain and matching curve.



Writing the book was the easy part for Matt, who holds a journalism degree. It's also his second how-to book, the first being "The Handmade Skateboard" (2014), both published by Nashville-based Spring House Press. Matt, 42, lives in Campbell, Calif., in the heart of Silicon Valley, with wife Mary and daughters Nina and Madeline. He is an enterprise product designer at Apple, but spent 15 years previously in the media and publishing industry.

Two-thirds of the 224-page book is devoted to construction details of Matt's build, complete with many drawings and photographs, but he's made available other useful information to the reader. For example, he includes a list of all construction materials and tools that will be needed, and even an Owners Manual.

He opens with the history of small campers, dating back to March 1919 when a Pennsylvania inventor obtained a patent for a tiny trailer. In 1935, *Popular Homecraft* magazine carried a story about a man in Pasadena, Calif., who built a teardrop. World War II paused the camper craze, but in 1945 Kit Kamper became the first to mass produce teardrops.

WHAT WILL READERS FIND IN THIS BOOK?

"I've landed on a really great format for my how-to books that go something like this: I start with an introduction that sets out to uncover the industrial history of the object to understand how it came to be in the first place. One place I like to start is with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office searchable online database looking up old patent applications. Do a keyword search for "Teardrop Trailer" and it will take you down a rabbit hole that predates the automobile. You'll discover that no design idea is a new one.



"The introduction is followed by a chapter on design, which is intended to provide readers with design guidelines and boundaries so they can design a unique trailer that suits their needs. I provide lots of examples, variations, and I explore different ways to accomplish different design ambitions.

"The rest of the book is all about the build: 13 chapters that follow my build step by step. Along the way I explain where a reader might want to consider taking a different approach, and I'm always transparent about where I made mistakes so that others can avoid them."



WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN WRITING ABOUT DIY PROJECTS?

"I've been writing for a living for more than half my life. A few years out of college I was working as a tech journalist in San Francisco writing about Microsoft and the Internet when the Dot Com bubble burst and the tech economy started to tank. That's when I came across my 'dream job' while reading one of my favorite magazines, *Fine Woodworking*. They had a posting for an associate editor and I immediately applied, attaching a portfolio of projects I had made in my spare time. They must have seen some potential in me because when I look back at that work I'm not sure I'd hire me based on my portfolio. We packed up our things and moved to the East Coast.

"*Fine Woodworking*" magazine is widely known for its high quality photos and information. During my seven years editing and publishing articles and videos for them, I essentially earned a master's degree in furniture design and woodworking. I also learned





what it takes to produce super high-quality how-to journalism. That job taught me everything I know about how to structure instructional information in a way that's understandable and approachable for readers.

"When I left that job in 2010, I had the opportunity to start working on my first book with some former colleagues who started up the publishing company called Spring House Press."

HOW DID YOU DECIDE TO DO A BOOK ON TEARDROP CONSTRUCTION?

"I was eager to find another subject for my second book. I wanted to follow a similar format so I started looking around for commercial objects that started out originally made by hand in someone's garage but had become popular commercial products manufactured in factories. It also had to be something unique enough that there wasn't already a how-to book out on the subject to compete with.

"I discovered a really interesting woodworking project to build a hollow-wooden surfboard, and tried one out. But a few weeks into it I realized that the project would be too difficult to capture in a book, and even if it was possible I might not be the right person to write it; I'm afraid of the ocean!

"That's when my publisher suggested the idea of a teardrop trailer. Originally I wasn't big on the idea, but a year later my family and I started camping a lot around California and everyone kept complaining about sleeping on the ground, so the idea of a tiny camper started to sound more compelling. Once I started researching the topic and digging around the Web for building inspiration, I knew it was the right topic for my next book. I discovered a vibrant maker community that was underserved and on the precipice of really taking off. Tiny trailers are coming back in style, once again."



YOU GAVE A LOT OF ATTENTION TO DESIGN. WHY?

"Design is my favorite part of every project I take on. It's where I get to let my imagination run wild and not let the practicalities of construction get in the way of an idea. In fact, a lot of the times I don't ever get to building something. I had so much fun designing it I don't want to ruin it by finding out it can't actually be built.

"I want readers to be successful with their builds and not have anything slow them down. So I made a huge effort to help readers really plan their build ahead of time to make sure they don't run into unexpected delays or issues when they start to build. Some common problems are not having the right materials



SIDE ENTRANCE TENT for Teardrop Travel Trailers

**Fits most brands
& home-builts**

Dressing Room

Porta potty

Mud Room

Pet Area

Privacy



www.tinycamper.com/tent





on hand when you get to a step -- that can slow you down a few weeks if it means sourcing and ordering materials or even just finding time to make a trip to the lumber yard. Another problem is designing a feature but not planning for it earlier in the process. That's the case with my galley hatch door. I'm not sure why, but it was under planned and when I got to that step in the build I had to stop and solve my way out of a few big issues."

WHAT PROBLEMS DID YOU ENCOUNTER?

"The good thing about not being a pro builder is that if I had a question about something during the build,



most likely my readers would have the same questions, too. So my goal was to not only provide answers, but also give readers the context of each question to help them think critically about a problem and answer it their own way.

"A lot of DIY books just give you a list of instructions to make something; do it like this and here's how it should turn out. That doesn't give the reader any autonomy to be creative. I like to let the reader in on my decisions so that they can really make it their own. That's what keeps the project relevant for years to come; you can always adapt it to materials and styles of the time.

"I ran into a number of challenges that really freaked me out. But ultimately, I managed to find my way out of every one of them by asking questions of smart people and through a lot of trial and error. I'm happy to report that the teardrop trailer community is full of supportive makers who are always willing to share their experience.

"In the end of the day, almost every challenge had to do with water -- keeping it out mostly. The biggest area of concern was with my custom-made side entry doors. To be honest, they still don't keep the water out completely when you take the garden hose to the side walls at full blast. Solving that is going to be my winter project!"

As a result of this book, Matt decided to do a Handmade Teardrop Trailer Maker's Mark to collect information

from builders about their project. "My goal is to create the world's largest directory of handmade teardrop trailers," he said.

"One of the most exciting parts about writing how-to books and articles is seeing what the community does with that information. After I published 'The Handmade Skateboard,' I would receive emails or get tagged in social media posts from people who used my book to design and build their own skateboard.

"So with this book, I decided to create a place from the start where I could collect stories from people who built a trailer based on my book. Then I realized, why limit it to the future, why not invite anyone who built their own?

"That's when I came up for the idea of my Handmade Teardrop Trailer Maker's Mark. It's essentially an open source that anyone who built their own teardrop can use to identify their build. Submit photos and a description of your build, and you'll receive a unique



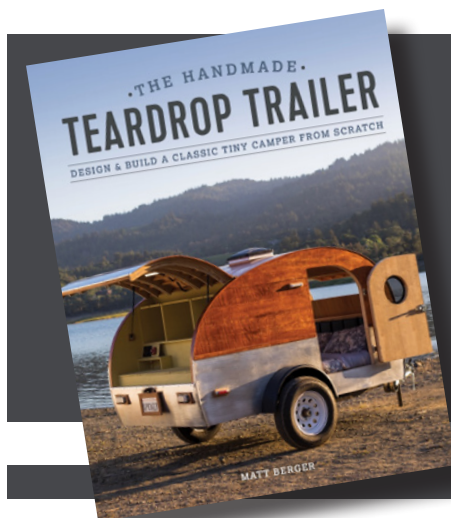
number -- beginning with #0001 -- based on the rank in which your trailer was registered, first come first serve."

Matt encourages folks to not be afraid to take on a trailer project

"My goal with every book I write is to take the fear and uncertainty out of complex building projects, and encourage people to go for it," he said. "Every building challenge has a solution. I want to give people the confidence to solve every challenge that comes at them with the tools, space, and skills at their disposal."

"If you're willing to part with your garage for a few months, and have some experience with basic hand and power tools, there's nothing that should stop you from taking on a building project of this size.

"Building your own teardrop trailer takes a lot of time and effort, but once you're out in the wilderness having fun on a camping trip, with electricity and a warm mattress to sleep on, you realize all the sweat, tears, and band aids were worth it."



Book GIVEAWAY

Matt Berger's book will be released mid-November. Be sure to watch Cool Tears's Facebook page for your change to win a FREE signed copy of *The Handmade Teardrop Trailer*.

facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/CoolTearsMagazine/>

Relax. Unwind. Turtle UP.



Quality, dependable, fully-customizable
teardrop trailers

Starting at **\$4,999**



www.turtleuptrailers.com
(217) 898-8404

THE ONLY CAMP KITCHEN YOU NEED



COMPACT CONVERTIBLE KITCHENS

- Three models: Compact Camp Kitchen, Camp Kitchen, and Camp Kitchen w/ Integrated Stove
- Less than 5-minute set up time
- 12.2 – 14.6 square feet of table space
- Superior table stability and load capacity (300 lbs)



AIRCRAFT GRADE ALUMINUM DESIGN

- All units use an aluminum frame with aluminum composite panels for years of corrosion free outdoor use
- All tables and legs pack inside the units
- Spring loaded handles are rattle free and offset for easy carrying
- The Camp Kitchen and Camp Kitchen w/ Integrated Stove both feature a utensil drawer with high quality ball bearing slides
- The Camp Kitchen w/ Integrated Stove features a 22" wide 40,000 BTU 2-Burner stove with simmer mode



www.trailkitchens.com

#cooltearsmag

facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/CoolTearsMagazine/>
Freebie Friday - giveaways for swag from the Cool Tears store.



@cooltearsmag

Tag your 'grams with #cooltearsmag for a chance to be featured on our Instagram feed and in the magazine.

You Tube

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSaBN6uzzb9YSrcATl_7lMA

Time for a new adventure. Videos of builds, tips and tricks.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONNECTION CORNER

DON'T MISS A SINGLE ISSUE



www.cooltears.com

AFTER YOU BUY



**5 SIMPLE MODIFICATIONS
FOR A T@G**

By Donna Urquhart

Our camper is so well designed that we have not needed much in the way of teardrop modification. Our mods were really just minor changes to increase comfort and functionality of the camper.



HIT THE OPEN ROAD

*With Autowbrake on your trailer,
just plug and tow.*



The only electric brake control with nothing installed in the tow vehicle, 100% trailer contained. Period.



www.getautowbrake.com • getautowbrake.com



HEATER STAND

This may not technically be considered a modification because everything is removable. We needed a heater for our winter trip out west;

*Be sure to follow along on the
Urquhart's journey on their blog*

BIG GUY TINY TRAILER

Retired Couple Exploring Teardrop Camping



<http://www.bigguytinytrailer.com/>



so we purchased a Honeywell HCE 100B Heat Bud Ceramic Heater. It has tip over protection, but we soon realized that we would need a stable surface for it to operate. A Facebook user had posted photos of a stand for a heater and my husband built one that was similar. The stand has proven to work very well.

The holes on the back panel enable the stand to rest very securely upon the door handles. There is a hole in the bottom panel for the cord to flow through to the electrical outlet. Lastly, there are two piano hinge to allow the stand to lay flat for easier storage in the cabinet when unused.

An added bonus, the stand works great for holding tablets that are being charged when there is no need for a heater.

UNDER CAMPER STORAGE CONTAINER

We needed a place to store my husband's shoes and the inspiration for this teardrop modification came from another post on a Facebook group. It required drilling holes below the bed and mounting a track in which a plastic box can slide.

This has worked well for the shoes. We store the bin in the cabin when we travel. We were concerned that we might forget to remove it when the camper is being pulled, but so far, so good.



We used Velcro, but noticed the factory was using screws to attach the mesh pockets.

When the door is closed, the storage pocket is just above the bed. We installed these on both sides.



MESH NET DOOR STORAGE

We like to watch TV or DVDs before sleeping and I am the keeper of remotes. Before we did this teardrop modification, I was often searching for them. We have seen that other T@G owners have made this mod and at the rally in Ohio, we learned NüCamp is now installing mesh storage on the doors of new units. I love this mod!

STORAGE BEHIND TELEVISION

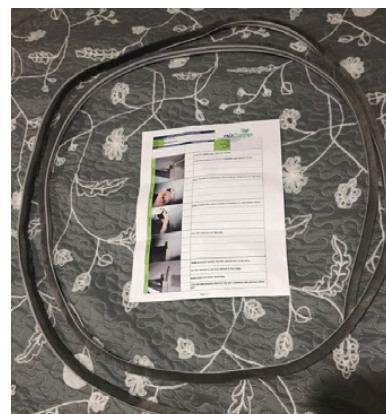
This is another modification that many owners have made that is also included at the factory on new models. It involved removing the panel and putting hinges on the door. My husband finished the inside with particle board for ventilation purposes.



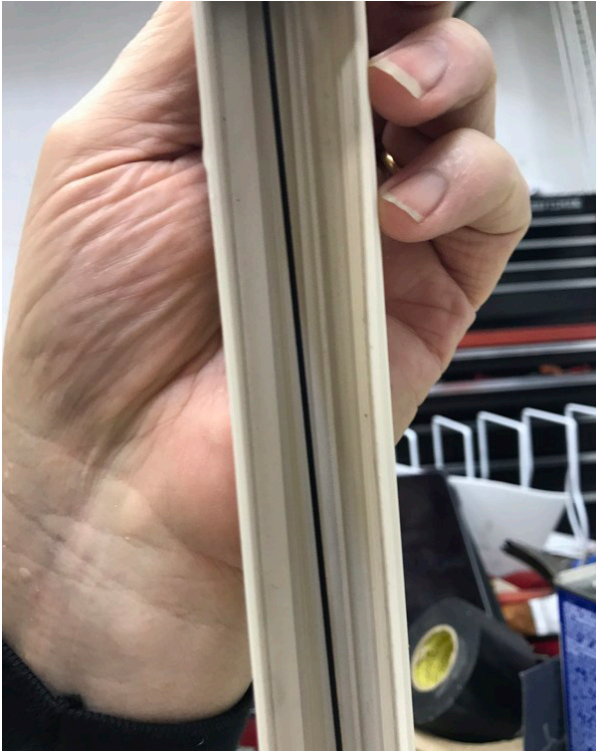
WINDOW RAIL BRUSHES

We learned that nüCamp will provide rail brushes for the windows to prevent bugs from coming in. You have to install them, but it is not difficult. We obtained them at no charge from the parts department.

We really saw the need for them earlier this year while camping in an area that was overrun by mosquitoes.



The photo below shows the side of the window without the rail brushes.



The rail brushes installed below should be effective in keeping out insects.



CONCLUSION

Our T&G has been wonderful this last year! The modifications we made primarily added a little more storage in key areas and we are happy with them.

In this next year, we are considering getting a bigger camper. The nüCamp 400 will likely be the replacement. However, it is hard for me to imagine loving any other camper as much as Endeavor.

Our reasons are simple. We now know how much we love to travel and are willing to take it to a higher level to have something that provides comfortable daytime space inside.





BahaQue
Has you covered!

Trailer Cover, Shade and Tent Solutions for:

- Liberty Outdoors
- R-Pod Trailers
- T@B Trailers
- Safari Condo
- Aliner
- Chalet
- And more!

Custom Shop Services

We'll take your concept from napkin drawing to finished product.

Call us toll-free at

888-700-TENT
(888-700-8368)




All are available at



TearDropShop.com



Poway, California
pahaque.com
pahaquecustom.com

TEARDROP TIPS



BACKING UP

LEARNING

Practice turning, stopping, and backing in a secluded place away from traffic. Large empty parking lots work well.

Start by backing in a straight line 100' or more. Learning how to back a straight line teaches you 80% of the skills needed to back a trailer. The other 20% come with practice. If things go wrong, pull ahead and try again.

To back up your trailer, put one hand on the bottom of the steering wheel. Push that hand in the direction you want the trailer to go. When the trailer starts turning, turn the tow vehicle so it follows, "chase" the trailer.

When backing up your teardrop camper if the camper goes too far left or right – don't try to "chase" it. Pull ahead to straighten out then try backing up again. Avoid backing

angles more than 30 degrees.

With your trailer hitched, drive in a tight, full 360 degree circle. Stop. Look over your shoulder. Check your mirrors. Make a mental note of the angle of car to trailer. When you are backing your trailer, you should never allow your trailer to get sharper than this angle. If you ever get this sharp or sharper, you will not be able to recover by "chasing" the trailer. You will have to pull ahead to straighten out and try backing again.

When backing it helps to have someone spotting near the rear of trailer to guide you. It's a good idea to agree on a set of hand signals beforehand, so you can communicate clearly with the spotter. Make sure the spotter stands somewhere that you can see them.

When helping someone back up a teardrop camper, remember, if you can't see the driver's eyes (in the mirror), they probably can't see you.

When guiding a trailer, backing at night, make sure you are illuminated so the driver can see you. If necessary hold a flashlight so it shines on you or at least illuminate your signal hand.

A special thank you to Craig Edevold with Camp Inn Trailers for these tips.

Watch monthly for more great camping helps!
www.tinycamper.com

REAL WORLD

The best tip for backing up is to avoid doing it! Consider your route carefully to avoid having to back up. Park on the street where you can pull out and walk the extra block to save pulling into a parking lot that will be tricky to back out of. When you do have to back up to put the camper into the garage or into a campsite simply unhook from the tow vehicle and maneuver in by hand. (only do this if the surface is level)

Before backing into a camping spot, get out of the car and inspect the campsite. Make a note of possible obstacles and choose where you want the trailer to end up.'

It is very difficult to concentrate on backing a trailer if you are tired. If you have just finished a long or stressful day of driving, close your eyes and relax for 5 minutes before attempting to back into a tight spot. In the end, you will probably save time.

If you get to a campsite really late and

are exhausted, just pull straight in to your camping spot. You can back out in the morning, when you are rested.

If you have a long driveway, drive in forward, unhook the trailer, turn it around, and push it into the garage by hand. If you need the tow vehicle to move the trailer into the garage, line up the trailer, turn the tow vehicle around, then re hitch the trailer and back it the last few feet.

When stuck backing down a long or narrow road or out of a dead end street or alley. It may be quicker and easier to un-hitch at a wide spot, turn the tow vehicle around, turn the camper around by hand, then re-hitch the camper and proceed on your way.

When helping someone back up a teardrop camper, remember, if you can't see the driver's eyes (in the mirror), they probably can't see you.

When guiding a trailer, backing at night, make sure you are illuminated so the driver can see you. If necessary hold a flashlight so it shines on you or at least illuminate your signal hand.





DOCUMENTING LIFE WITH A TEARDROP

by Bob Phillips

Cameron Smith is an adventurous fellow who has never met a stranger. With a borrowed teardrop camper and a video camera, he put together a series of web documentary videos called The Teardrop Project. Since 2015 he's done a series of 40 episodes about people he's met along the way in his journeys. Now, Cameron and his girlfriend, Pixie, have completed a "feature film" that documents their lives as they've worked on a teardrop, traveled, made friends and captured the lives of others on video.



Cameron and Pixie started dating in 2016 and she jumped into the project wholeheartedly. She is a professional photographer so the match-up was perfect.

The feature is set for release on the Project's Facebook page November 2, two days before Cameron's 30th birthday. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the two as they filmed the Web series, interwoven with the stories of incredible folks they've met on the road -- a retired hot rodder; a burly man that wears only skirts; Cameron's father, a mural artist; a Sicilian rockabilly band; and an amazing musician. And it's about their personal struggle to survive as self-employed artists and the hardships and triumphs that go along with it.

"I've been making films since I was a kid and started doing it professionally after I left college in 2010," Cameron said. "I mostly do music-related videos and promo videos for bands, but my penchant for travel, meeting new people, and wanting to make as much content as possible, I came up with the idea for The Teardrop Project about seven years ago. I actually started it in 2015 when I found out about teardrops.

"We were donated a half built teardrop and we've

been slowly working to finish that bad boy so we can take the show on the road. It's about 95 percent complete."

A donor provided them \$1,500 to finish the teardrop so they were able to put on solar panels, install a TV, the rest of the wood, all of the electric, and everything needed to finish the teardrop except for paint.

"The main issue was that even though I had been researching how to build teardrops for a few years, until you actually do it there's no way to know what to do," Cameron said. "I had to learn how to bend wood, do electrical, which still isn't right but it works, wire solar, and take what the previous owner had built and make it work for our needs.

"The teardrop is pretty large at 5x10 feet so there was a lot of work that went into making everything fit accordingly. Pixie and I had to hand-install the giant hatch by inverting it and holding it on top of my head until she could line up the hinges. I



This incredibly generous veteran named Jordan (left) graciously donated his literal teardrop project to The Teardrop Project.

remember having to stand with the thing balanced on my head for about 10 minutes while we called my dad for reinforcement. Even then, because the wood was starting to warp, it wouldn't slide into position, so we had to add a bunch of extra oil and hammer it in. It works great now, though."

The Teardrop Project Website states: "Go behind the scenes with Cam and Pixie as they tell the stories of the incredible people they meet for

their documentary travel series. Get a glimpse at the actual realities of being self-employed artists and see the authentic lows and soaring highs.

"The Teardrop Project is an endearing, engaging, charming, and open look at the monetary and emotional developments over the year of two artists, putting together a documentary travel web series. See a real relationship develop, struggle, and learn lessons from the inspiring people they meet along the road."

The video episodes are available at www.Facebook.com/TeardropProject.

The Project's sole source of income is a Patreon Page (www.Patreon.com/TeardropProject) where people who enjoy the videos can contribute money monthly. Cameron said that's only about \$60 currently, so they have to limit their travels to North and West Texas.

Uncompromising quality.



CLASSIC TEARDROP STYLE
MODERN AMENITIES
QUALITY DESIGN & CRAFTSMANSHIP
PIKA STARTS AT \$11750
CLASSIC STARTS AT \$19850



www.timberleaftrailers.com

