

Q & A with AUTOWBRAKE

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March 2018

# COOLtears™

and tiny campers

## DINNER WITH THE CAMPER CHEF



Gift the Toaster



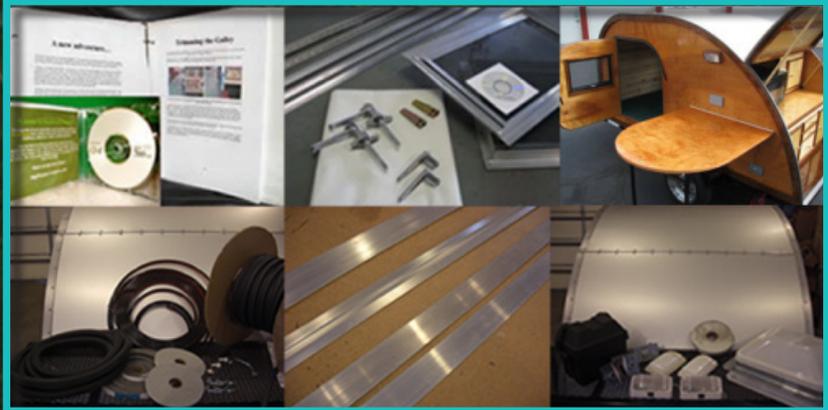
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# COOL Tears™ and tiny campers

Magazine

Vol. 6 No. 3

March 2018

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# Letter from the Editor:

## Tow Vehicles

Whew, am I glad to see February end! This month we had some seriously nasty weather here in the Midwest that resulted in a ton of snow days, I battled a two week long virus and to top it off, my tow vehicle had to be replaced. So I say, BRING IT ON, MARCH!

Replacing my vehicle did lead me to do some research on tow vehicle as it will be the car we pull the Cool Tears teardrop with almost exclusively. Having a family also plays a large role in the decision making of a vehicle. I learned quite a bit about the difference in towing between front/rear wheel drive, all wheel drive and a 4x4. Ultimately, I chose an AWD Kia Sorento as it seemed to really fit the bill all around for our family at this time. The AWD Sorento is rated to tow 5,000lbs which is substantially more than my Ford Edge and so I am confident it will do a great job pulling "Slice."

Although I learned much, **I would love to hear from you, the reader, on why you chose your tow vehicle and the process you used in making that decision.** Be watching a coming issue of Cool Tears for more info on this major part of teardrop camping!

I am blessed to receive lots of notes and letters from readers and this month I was sent a few that had questions I did not feel adequate to respond too. And so I am reaching out for help to answer them. Email your best answer/advice to [sarah@cooltears.com](mailto:sarah@cooltears.com) and I will pass them right along. Do you have a question for our readership? Email that to me as well and I will post each month!

*Until next time...enjoy every sunrise!*

**SARAH TUCKER**

Editor

Cool Tears Magazine™

[sarah@cooltears.com](mailto:sarah@cooltears.com)

## Notes from folks:

My wife and I have a teardrop, finally got the car to safely pull long distances, finally going on one of those life-time trips to Glacier Park. Never been west before. Hope to get there just after Labor Day Everybody has a site, book or opinion...

If I were your brother and you loved me, which parks around Glacier would you suggest for a couple of days after Labor Day? We don't need all the special amenities, just views, trees, and incredible air.

Patrick

Dear Ms. Tucker,

Allow me to introduce ourselves. We are Philip & Eyvonne Taylor residents of St. Louis, Mo. and teardrop owner/camper want-a-bees. I say want-a-be because until I retire which will be on December 3, 2019 funding for the purchase of a tear drop will elude us. Front runner for us is the TAG Outback with the big wheels and roof rack. This past July we visited Camp Inn in Wisconsin and though I loved the art deco style of their mid model Eyvonne favored the TAG Outback and if I 'm going to have a camping partner the wife will have her say.

We eagerly look forward to the monthly Cool Tears magazine and pay close attention to the pictures and most of all the advice. We have some things in place such as the tow vehicle (a 2008 Lincoln Mark truck currently 37K miles) and here and there we purchase camping items in anticipation of the day we can in unison sing "Born Free". Eyvonne, 7 years my junior will be limited to the short excursions whereas for the much longer excursions [the Redwoods in California] I may have one or more of my three military sons (One Navy, one Marine, one Marine on the way) pal up but if not I'll go solo if I have to!

But we are new to all of this and will need tear drop advice so that our dreams of happily losing our grasp of space and time while visually feasting on the many vistas our state and national parks offer don't literally crash and burn. [Did Philip not hook up the trailer right to the truck?] You had an interesting article on winter storage of the teardrop but were that inside storage or out? I am aware of the \$80.00 lifetime senior discounts at federal parks but does that apply to state parks? How much are the parks you mentioned in the February 2018 caravan article charging? Where would one go if one's camper needed a repair they can't do when they are two thousand miles away from the dealer they bought it from? Firestone?

I 'm sure there are others like us "dropping" out of work and "dropping in" to "tear dropping" [or will] and may be having the same thoughts as us. Any and all advice would be extremely welcomed. In the meantime thanks so much for your ever so "cool" magazine.

Philip & Eyvonne Taylor

*Philip & Eyvonne Taylor*

(Tears of joy begins December 3, 2019)





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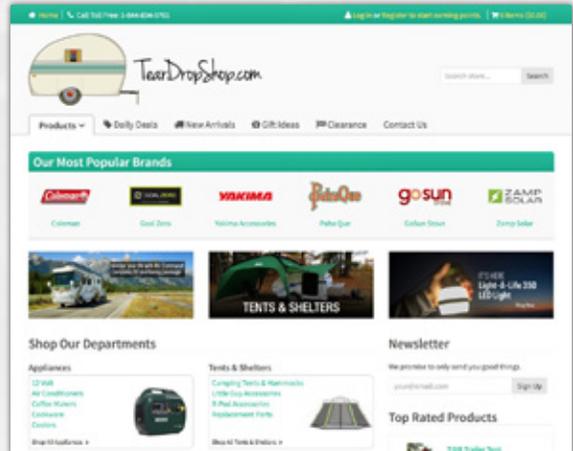
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# ON THE TEARDROP TRAIL WITH MARILYN

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/](http://teardroptrail.com/equipment-and-supplies/)

## DUTCH OVEN CHILI

*Cast iron cookware continues to be the new collectable. Prices in flea markets are going up as more people pursue the quest for cast iron to make food the old-fashioned way. Facebook is filled with new pages like Cast Iron Collection & Cooking Society, Cast Iron Chaos, The New Hillbilly Cast Iron Cooking and more. Cast iron how-to videos also populate YouTube.*

This recipe can be made in a large #10 Dutch Oven with lid, cooked in an oven or over a camp fire. A slow cooker will also work.

- 1 pound of dried pinto, black or great northern beans
  - Medium onion, chopped
  - 2 cloves garlic, minced  
(Add more to suit your taste)
  - 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- For the meat choose one:
- 1 pound of brisket or ground beef
  - 1 or 2 turkey legs, skin and bone removed
  - 1 pound of chicken breast
  - 2 cups of stock – beef, chicken or vegetable
  - 1 tablespoon chili or chipotle powder  
(Adjust to taste because some like it hot!)
  - 1 teaspoon ground cumin
  - Optional: 1 large can diced or fire roasted tomatoes

Sort the beans, cover with water in a large bowl, soak overnight and drain. Chop the meat into 1-inch squares. Heat the Dutch Oven or pan on either a burner or the camp fire. Fry the onion and garlic until fragrant. Add the meat and increase the heat to medium-high, cook for about 5 minutes. Add the beans, stock, seasonings and tomatoes and stir to combine. Cover and cook.



### COOKING METHODS:

**In the oven** – preheat to 350 degrees. Cover and place in oven and cook for minutes the oven. Stir occasionally.

**Stove top** – reduce to low and simmer for at least for 2 hours or as long as 4 to 5 hours. Stir occasionally.

**Slow cooker or crock pot** – Cover and cook on low for 4 to 5 hours. Stir occasionally.

**On the campfire** – Cover and place the Dutch Oven on glowing embers, avoiding the open flame, the legs of the oven should keep it elevated ½ inch above the embers. After cooking the onions, garlic and meat, cover and place 14 coals on the top of the oven and 7 underneath the oven. Keep some extra hot coals ready just in case you need them. Cook about 2 – 2 ½ hours. Stir occasionally.

Let the chili rest for 20 minutes. Season with salt before serving. Top with diced cilantro or sliced green onions. Serve with shredded Mexican-blend cheese or a dollop of Greek yogurt, sour cream (crème fraiche adds an elegant touch). Accompany with cooked rice, corn bread or camp-fire biscuits. Guacamole and chips are another option

*Cast Iron Goodness!*



# DINNER WITH THE

## CAMPER

## CHEF





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Photos and article by **Mindy Tatti**

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**I**n January of this year the Camper Chef, Bart Cops, invited teardrop owners Mike and Debi to a local winery in Pahrump, Nevada for a little experience and memory maker all his own. Camper Chef is a man of many talents and ideals, one being his passion for cooking and breaking bread with fellow campers from his very own trailer. Bart's 1983 Avion is not only he and his family's home away from home, but it's his "kitchen on wheels...his sanctuary." He wanted to explore and show teardrop campers that gourmet meals aren't out of reach and are much more attainable than one may think.



to make their teardrop as comfortable as possible. With gas can holders on the front and a Goal Zero solar panel and deep cycle battery, their journeys are extended which is perfect for this off-road couple. The trailers 35" tires match those of the Jeep that pulls it, so no spare tire is needed on the teardrop. The trailer is pulled behind a rather sexy 2014 black 4-door Jeep Wrangler Hard Rock Rubicon. The whole rig coordinates perfectly with matching off-road elements on the trailer itself to match not only the Jeep but the couples adventurous journeys.

### *A little about Mike & Debi...*

They are owners of a So-Cal Teardrop customized just for them. The trailer was completely custom made from their specifications. Starting with the frame and with the whole trailer made by hand in the factory, it sure is a special way to travel. Mike & Debi added the kitchen, LED lighting, 30 gallon pressurized water system, fridge, under bed storage, roof rack and side canopy with walls

The couple has traveled all over the southwestern states starting right in their own backyard of Southern California. The couple picked up their teardrop 7 years ago and have been on many overnight trips doing what we all





dream of and that's engulf the magic of the world around us while making memories. Mike & Debi have pulled their trailer to the "Doll House" in the Maze District of Canyon lands located in Utah. This is considered one of the most remote spots in the continental United States.

add to his skillet with the seafood from the local market he picked up earlier that morning. Then after the wine tasting festivities, the couple and Camper Chef started the food prep by chopping mushrooms, garlic, parsley, tomatoes and onions.

### *A little about the day...*

The afternoon started off with a little wine sampling from Pahrump Valley Winery to find the best wine to pair with Camper Chef's Pasta alla Chitarra with seafood. After a few samplings and many laughs, Camper Chef chose the Peak White Vintner's Blend to

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motorcycle helmet?”

**CAMPER CHEF:** chuckled and explained that although both good ideas, neither are necessary, “the root of the onion is the part that needs to be avoided. Never cut the root off an onion, the bottom side of the onion. You must instead “Lie the onion on its side and cut it into half. Then lie it down onto the board and slice and dice.”

*During the food prep the Camper Chef had a few little helpful tips for Mike & Debi.*

**CAMPER CHEF:** “Do you know how to keep from crying while cutting an onion?”

**MIKE:** “Wear sunglasses, or how about a

From here they all had a fun time learning how to chop, dice, slice and cut all the vegetables. Then it was time for the seafood! Camper Chef washed and prepared the shrimp, crab, squid, mussels and octopus. Into the skillet with olive oil and herbs and ready to sauté the seafood. After the seafood was coming to a finish, it was time to throw in the pasta and get those noodles ready





for dinner. Bart used spaghetti all chitarra and long thin spaghetti. The thicker chitarra takes a little longer to soften so that went into the boiling water first. Once both pastas were finished and the seafood was perfect, the Camper Chef plated the meal and dinner was served.

*Mike & Debi had a true Sunday date with their custom So-Cal teardrop and*



## Contact the Camper Chef:

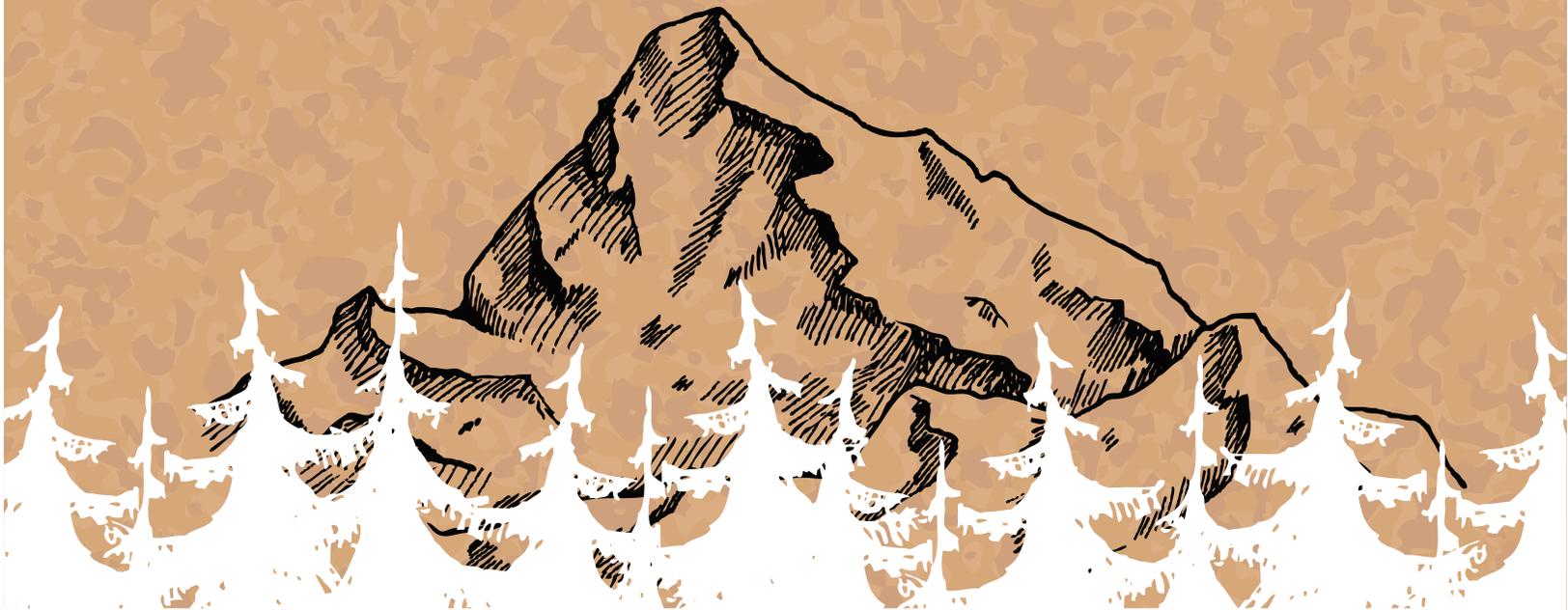
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 [info@camper-chef.com](mailto:info@camper-chef.com)

# Gifting the Toaster



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By **Stephanie Smith-Latham**

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**I** met my husband, Tony, in 2006. We had both lost spouses and had found that life was not as full as we like flying solo. We met online, and after getting to “know” one another via email and eventually telephone, we finally met face to face. Me, being a bit nervous meeting someone for the first time, and he being the gentleman, we agreed to meet at a coffee shop. I had just pulled into the parking lot when he drove up, so our first meeting was outside...where we both prefer to be. He pulled in with the window down and Nick, his Golden Retriever, was hanging his head out, tail wagging, smelling slightly of skunk and sporting a big grin. AND they were pulling a teardrop! How could this guy be bad? A dog AND a teardrop...I was definitely intrigued.





That was not only the beginning of our life together, but also the beginning of my teardropping life. I am pretty sure I had not seen a teardrop before, or at least they hadn't registered if I had. I grew up stomping the wilds of Montana and Idaho with my parents, sister and a myriad of friends and dogs. We backpacked and camped in a series of soggy tents and cold sleeping bags. Eventually my parents bought a VW campervan that pulled a pink (oxidized red) pup-up camp trailer with cream and green striped canvas sides. The "circus" camp was dryer, but not warmer. While our camping experiences were always fun and the best of my growing up memories, they were not always comfortable.

Now I had met a delightful man who also grew up adventuring the wild countries. He was a soon to be retired game warden and had done his time in soggy tents and cold sleeping bags before graduating to a 4' x 10' teardrop with a galley kitchen. He showed me the best of both worlds... we spent our time cooking, socializing, reading and relaxing outside while taking in the sights, smells and sounds of the wilds with the luxury

of a retiring to a comfy, warm, dry bed. We shared our camps with his dog, my two dogs, and my son, Chris, but their accommodations were definitely reminiscent of our earlier years.

Over the years, Tony and I thoroughly enjoyed adventures all over Montana, Idaho and Wyoming with the 4' x 10' in tow. Coming home from a fishing trip in Montana, we happened upon another teardrop when we stopped for gas (you know how we all keep and eye out for them on the road).

It looked huge! Tony chatted with the owner and checked it out. It was a 5' x 10'. On our way home, Tony's wheels began turning and it wasn't long before he had decided that it was time to build a new teardrop. He had the skills (he had built and airplane and a cedar strip canoe, along with other smaller projects over the years) and the shop to do it. The 4' x 10' was a commercial teardrop. We knew all of its shortcomings and what we wanted in the new 5' x 10'. Do you know how much bigger a 5' bed is than a 4' bed? It's huge! We would no longer have to roll over in unison. So, Tony built us a beautiful 5' x 10' that was fully insulated, had a memory foam queen mattress, a fan and numerous other bells and whistles we weren't used to. Bliss! He then built a 4' x 8' for his sister and brother-in-law who designed it small enough to be pulled with a small vehicle. Now the sister tears and their families enjoy adventuring together in style whenever possible.

Skipping forward a few years, and my son, Chris, was engaged to be married to Chey (pronounced "Shy", as in Cheyenne). I had a year to come up with the perfect wedding gift. Something from



the heart and something that would bring them joy and outdoor adventures over the years. Chris and I have spent our lives together enjoying the outdoors, and his gifts from me had mostly been outdoor gear to encourage him to play outside and explore the world. I dithered over gift ideas and

finally lit on a teardrop. Brilliant! I asked Tony if he had another teardrop build in him (here is where his memory of this story and mine diverge a bit, but we will go with mine, as I am writing this and my memory is more accurate than his). He said, "No." I was discouraged and started thinking



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of other potential gifts. He and Chris are great friends, and he knew I wanted to do something very special for the newlyweds, but he just had

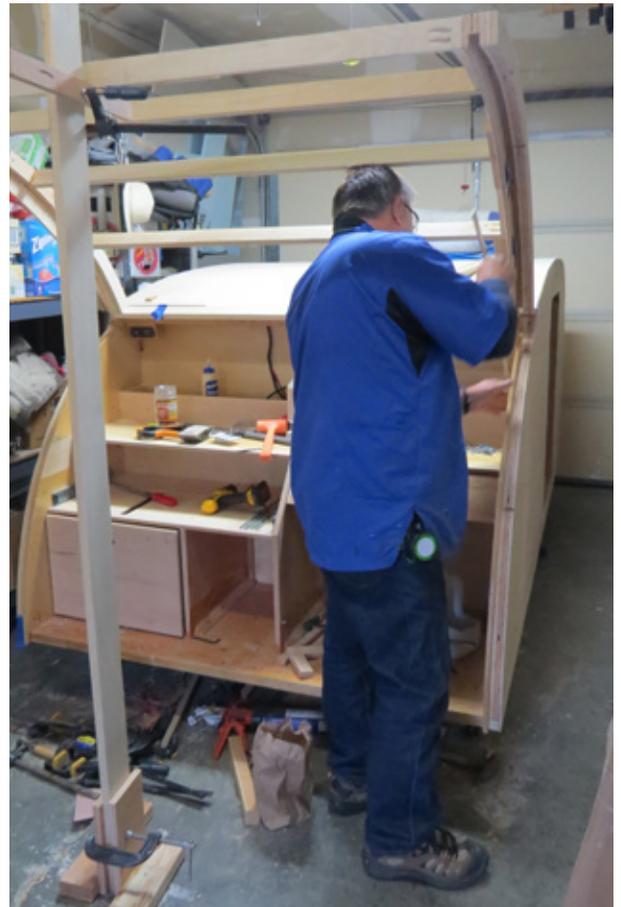
to tease me. He kept asking why we didn't give them the traditional toaster? Grrrrr! After a few days of pondering, I decided that I could build it with his guidance. I asked if he would coach me and he agreed. Yay! And "The Toaster" was in the oven by late summer with a due date the following June.

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A graphic advertisement for Retro Ride Teardrops. It features a stylized logo with the words "RETRO RIDE TEARDROPS" in red, bold, block letters. Below the logo is a photograph of a finished, silver teardrop trailer parked on a grassy area. At the bottom of the graphic, there is a promotional message in red and black text, followed by the company's website and email address, and the phrase "Made in Central Wisconsin" in italics.



Our shop space is limited and I am frozen all winter long. Working outside was not going to be an option once it started to be cold. Tony knew this and suggested that I have the floor built and the walls up by the time the snow flew. Then it would be time to take a break until spring. I have a little building experience on small projects and have always been good with tools and following instructions. I was confident I could do this. Off I went, and I met my deadline in 11 days! Tony loves a project and it wasn't long before he was in it up to his neck with this one. We had fun working together. By the time the snow flew, we were in good shape to stop for the winter.

Spring arrived and we were off again on this labor of love. While spending all those hours working, I had many a daydream of the kids off enjoying the world with "The Toaster." I learned volumes on building techniques, tools, and materials from Tony. There wasn't a step I didn't enjoy, that we didn't enjoy. I even welded the frame and

did the wiring under the direction of the master. I shopped all along the way for everything this teardrop would need to be ready to go the minute it was received. All Chris and Chey would have to do is fill the cooler and go. As it came together, I was thankful for my husband, the kids, wild places and the physical ability to "do" and to "go."

The due date arrived and "The Toaster" was fully outfitted and ready to play. We dithered over how to hide her until after the wedding. We hatched a number of plans, but in the end we kept her in full sight. She looked so similar to ours, and the kids knew we were leaving after the wedding on a camping trip. We figured they would be none the wiser.

The wedding was beautiful. The weather, family, friends, food, and dancing couldn't have been better. Before the ceremony, we hatched a plan with the photographer to get the newlyweds outside after the dinner and dancing for one more

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picture. Tony had moved “The Toaster” up to the front of the building. When they came out, he told them it was theirs. Over the years, Tony had teased Chris so often, that you could almost see Chris thinking, “Is this for real?!” Then they burst into tears and realization sunk in. It was the best

“tear tour” we had ever given.

The newlyweds and “The Toaster” took their first trip together to Yellowstone National Park. Life is a series of adventures and teardrops help keep them coming!



# TEARDROP TIPS



from:

## DRIVING ON HILLS:

***Pulling a trailer in hilly or mountainous terrain has unique challenges. Following are a few tips to help a "flatlander" drive like a "mountain goat."***

1. Going uphill or downhill? Drive using the tachometer rather than the speedometer. A good rule of thumb is 2/3 of engine redline, MAX. Occasionally going over 2/3 won't hurt, but why push it?
2. The higher your engine RPM the greater the stress on the moving components. Going above the redline will damage your engine. If your engine's redline is 6000 RPM, then 2/3 would be 4000 RPM. Keeping at 2/3 or below reduces the stress and gives you a safety margin before hitting redline.
3. Going downhill your engine will act as a brake, holding you back. You should only need to intermittently apply your brakes when using engine braking like this. If the engine won't hold below 2/3 redline, you are going too fast and are in too high a gear. Apply the brakes to slow down, then downshift.
4. Slow down and shift into a lower gear BEFORE starting downhill. Shift into a lower gear on both automatic and manual transmissions.
5. The steeper the hill, the lower the gear selection. This is for both up hill and down hill.
6. Shifting into a lower gear when uphill driving will keep your automatic transmission from hunting up and down the gear selection.
7. If you overuse your brakes, especially going down long hills, they will overheat. When the brakes overheat, they "fade" or take more pedal pressure than normal to operate. If you feel brake fade, stop as soon as possible and allow them to cool before proceeding. Overheated brakes may warp when cooled and cause vibration when braking.
8. Driving in mountains or unknown winding roads with your teardrop camper? Obey the speed signs for upcoming corners! If it says it is going to be a 20mph curve – go 20mph (or slower).

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

***Watch monthly for more great camping helps!***

**[www.tinycamper.com](http://www.tinycamper.com)**

# Q & A ? WITH AUTOWBRAKE



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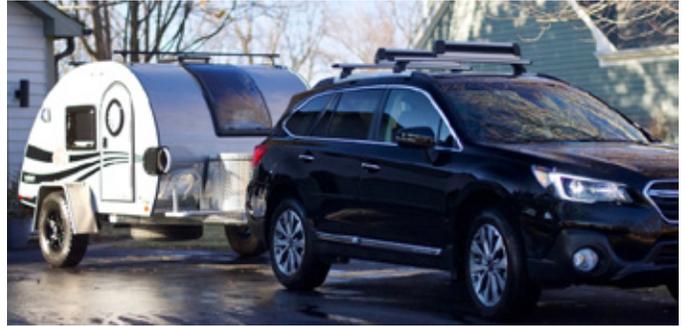
by Sarah Tucker

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**O**ne of the age-old questions in the teardrop industry is whether trailer brakes are needed when towing a tiny camper. So many factors go into this question and each individual owner must take the time to answer for themselves. How big is the tow vehicle? How much does the camper weigh? What is your tongue weight? Where do you plan on taking the camper? The guys over at Autowbrake have created a product designed to quickly and functionally allow a camper to have the security of electric brakes.

## WHAT IS AUTOWBRAKE?

Autowbrake is a proportional trailer mounted electric brake controller that can be mounted on any trailer anywhere and at any angle. You simply set it once and then just plug and tow. Allowing anyone to enjoy the trailer towing experience without any other hassles.



## WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF AUTOWBRAKE?

18 years ago we strived to make the trailer braking experience safer and simpler for customers. Today, we have



# 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.



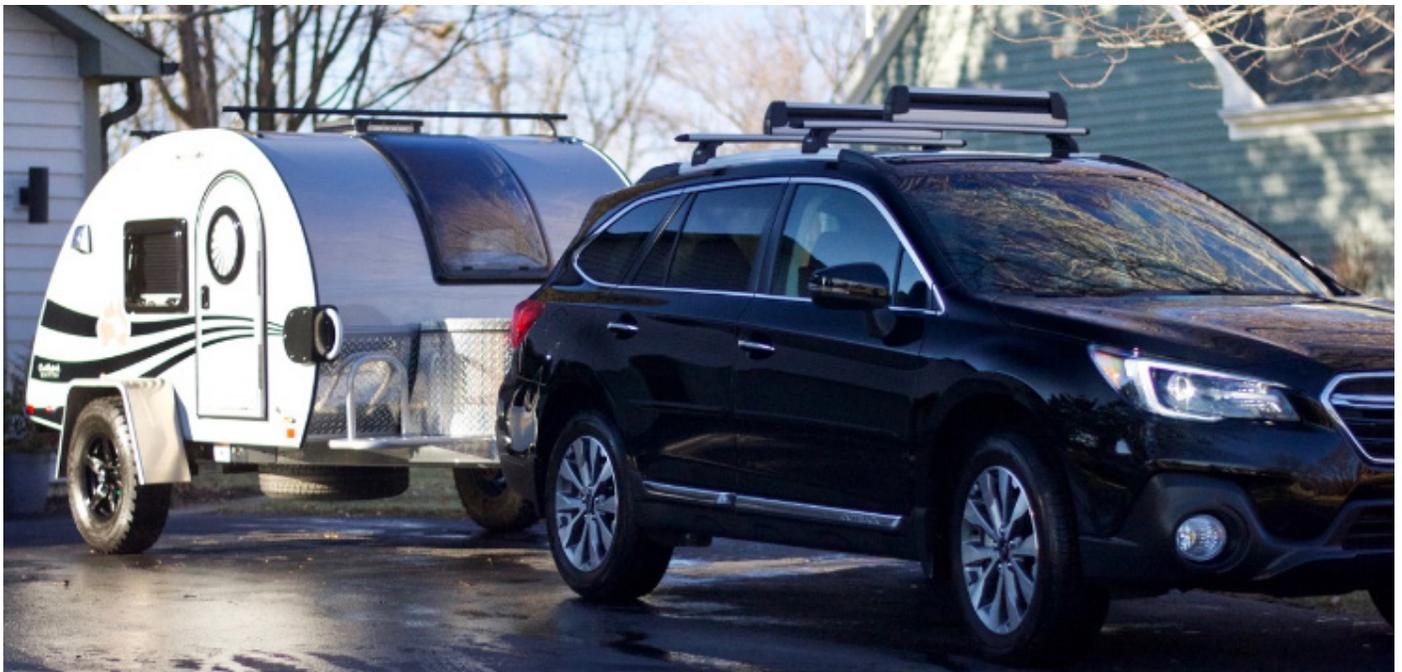
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created an electric brake controller that has evolved into one of the simplest and most effective controllers of it's kind, and it is mounted where it belongs, on the trailer not in the vehicle.

**?** **HOW CAN AUTOWBRAKE DIRECTLY EFFECT A TEARDROP OR TINY CAMPER?**

**!** The freedom to have a brake controller mounted on the trailer verses the tow

vehicle opens up many doors for the tow vehicle owner. It eliminates any unsightly control box on the dashboard or dash plugs. It eliminates the worry of voided warranties or effecting sensitive automotive electrical systems from invasive wiring in the tow vehicle, and it allows the tower to do one thing and one thing only...plug and tow. Once mounted on the trailer, Autowbrake takes care of the rest for smooth effective braking that matches your vehicle for a carefree experience while towing.



## AUTOWBRAKE TESTIMONIAL

"I want to share with you the reason why we have selected the Autowbrake product for our travel trailer. I spent some time online searching for a brake controller product that was wireless and required no equipment mounted inside of our car. Our main objective was to keep our car intact and away from splicing a standard brake controller into the car wiring. The clean esthetic of the dash once the brake controller was mounted on to it was also a hindrance. It turns out that there are only few companies that offer wireless brake controls. With a little bit of a research I was not impressed with any of them. Also a main worry was that if I got something from overseas, I could expect little to no support.

As I was researching more, I came across a Youtube video review of "Autowbrake" by MRtruck. The video sparked my interest immediately. After the review, I decided to call MRtruck, Kent, to get more information about this Autowbrake and his thoughts of the product. To my surprise, MRtruck was super nice and he provided me with more information than I could ever hoped for. Happy that I'd found product that I really liked, and that was made in USA with solid reviews, I placed my order.

When I asked my local RV dealer to install the Autowbrake unit for me, they told me that they could try but they failed. At this point I figured that I would give the Autowbrake support a call to help me figure out what the issues was and how to fix it. This is how I met Carlton. Carlton was really nice and understandable of the situation, and he walked me threw the procedure on how to hook up and validate the Autowbrake on my trailer. Once done, the brake controller was calibrated

and working! I was impressed with Carlton's dedication and personal touch.

I could not be more happier with the Autowbrake product and especially knowing that I can depend on Autowbrake and its company in many years to come. We have since put over 3k miles on the trailer and the Autowbrake systems works perfectly every time."

- Kris, T@G customer



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# BUILDING THE YELLOW ROCKET



by Joel Staruck

**I** ride a Can Am Spyder and wanted a small camper to pull behind it. There are small pop-up type campers for motorcycles, but I wanted something with minimal/no set-up. I wanted a camper that I could climb into at a rest area or truck stop and take a nap. It also had to be very light. Under 400 lbs. So I built it myself!



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I started with a 4x8 trailer from Harbor Freight and shortened it 18 inches and added a plywood floor. I constructed the walls and framing from 3/4 x 1-1/2 pine and 1/4" underlayment. Everything was glued and screwed together. 3/4" thick foam sheets were glued to the inside walls for insulation.

I added a 4" thick memory foam mattress to sleep on. A roof vent with powered fan was also added. I used a lawnmower battery located in an aluminum box made from thin diamond plate.

The side windows are made from lexan, can be slid open, and have screens. LED lights light up the interior with white lights to see or red lights for privacy. There is an AC outlet that can be connected with a leadcord at campgrounds.

The rear door was sourced from Ebay to provide a "real" door that locks for security. I also incorporated a switch so the battery could be charged from the tow

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vehicle when needed. I painted the exterior with Rustoleum enamel applied with a roller. It should last a long time!

It turned out great and weighed in just over 350 lbs. I did several test tows with the Spyder and it towed great, but wind resistance limited my speed to 70 mph on a flat highway and much less on an incline grade.

I decided to sell my mini teardrop and I am getting ready to build another one. This time I will use an aluminum trailer and the teardrop will have a lower profile for less wind drag. <https://youtu.be/CtXNJH4QoUs>



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SOCIAL MEDIA CONNECTION CORNER



## Christopher Dills

My wife, Cheryl, and I built this teardrop, "Shivering Timbers" upon my retirement from public school teaching. We've taken it to the mountains and to the desert - couldn't be more thrilled to be outdoors in this hand-built wonder.



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# Tears in the wild





### Barry Scott, INDIANA

Our home built Indianapolis based teardrop followed us through Michigan to Traverse City. We then spent a few days traveling down the M22 with this stop at the Sleeping Bear Dunes.

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