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Anatomy of a Teardrop



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Editor

Sarah Tucker

Contributing Authors

Marilyn McCray

Tim Foley

Craig Edevold

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Mailing Address:

Cool Tears Magazine

2600 NE Douglas St

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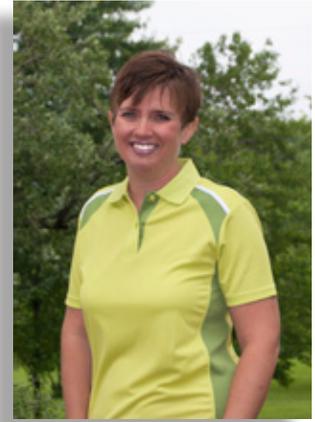
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Letter from the Editor:

A crazy month!

Well, spring has finally made a timid arrival here in the Midwest. And with those warmer weathers, we are seeing more and more campers out and about. While I know many of you enjoy winter camping, I am a wimp and really enjoy my house in the cold winter months. The anticipation was high last week as I prepared the teardrop to go for an overnight with a couple girlfriends. Just pulling the camper up to the main driveway made me smile from ear to ear.



My teardrop is electric only so I do not have worry about dewinterizing any water systems. However, there are a few things that still need to be done for that first trip of the year. I had been pondering my storage in the galley all winter and finally figured out a few things that I think will streamline my packing and unpacking process each trip. As always before any trip, I checked the tires and lug-nuts and crawled under to make sure the floor still looks great. I also be sure to check all the lights and wiring for any breaks or chew marks as my trailer sits on a gravel pad in the middle of what used to be pasture land. The hitch gets a close looking over as well to be sure the chains and latch are in great shape. Every area that has weather stripping gets opened to check for water damage and I run my hand over it to ensure it still has a great seal. Every seam on the roof, sidewalls and doors gets looked at closely to ensure it does not need new sealant and has stayed tight through the winter months. What are some things you do to open up your camper? [Email me](#) and we will create a master list to share with everyone!

This issue contains a couple great stories from readers just like you! Also included is the beginning of a new series of articles called "Anatomy of a Teardrop." I have been wanting to take a closer look at some of the aspects of teardrops or tiny campers and so I chose to start with the galley. The name of the series actually was inspired by some personal life experiences I'm going through right now. It's also the reason the magazine is coming out a few days late this month. Several days ago, my mom fell pretty ill and I have been at her bedside daily as she fights for her life. It's been intriguing to watch these medical professional use their years of experiences on very specific organs of the human body to help save her life. And so, we will do the same thing with the teardrop...although it is a much lighter subject...we will delve in and learn specifics about these tiny campers that we all love so much.

Until next time...enjoy every sunset!

SARAH TUCKER

Editor

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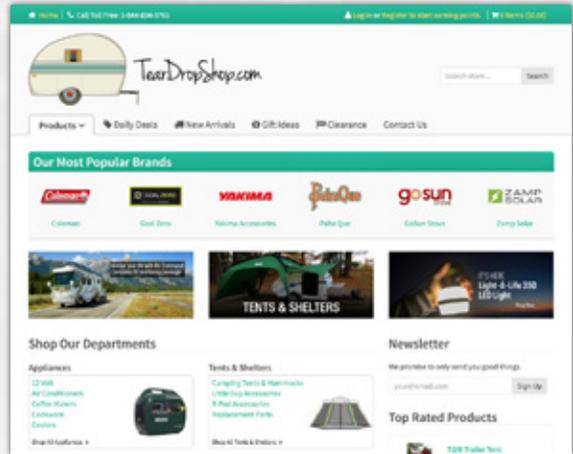
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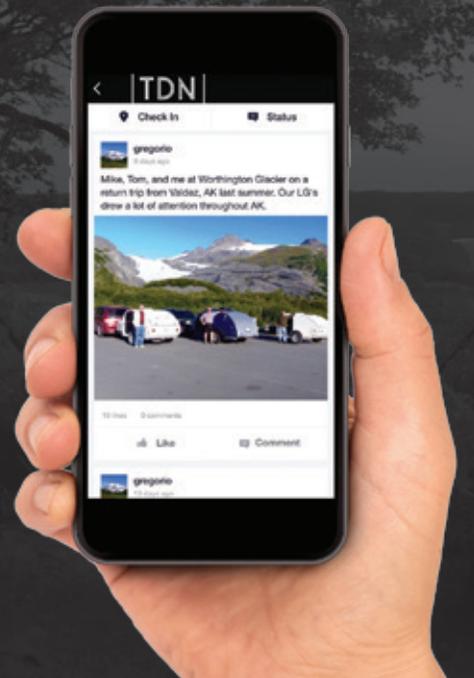
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ON THE TEARDROP TRAIL WITH MARILYN

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 <https://octanepress.com/book/canning-pickling-and-freezing-irma-harding>

TEARDROP PANCAKES

Who doesn't love to wake up to a breakfast of hot, delicious pancakes in camp?

Start with a simple batter of eggs, flour, milk and baking powder for leavening. Experiment with the type of flour. Add blueberries, nuts or mini chocolate chips to the batter or serve with fresh fruit, or Nutella. Whatever you like.

Serves: 6 to 8 pancakes depending upon the size of the pan.

Ingredients

- 2 eggs beaten
- 1 ½ cups buttermilk
- 2 Tablespoons butter melted and cooled
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder (to make the pancakes fluffy)
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar

Optional:

- Chocolate chips (mini chips are great to mix in the batter).
- Fresh Blueberries
- Currants
- Chopped pecans
- A teaspoon of cinnamon or nutmeg

Prepare before leaving home

- Measure dry ingredients and sugar, place in plastic bags – label
- Measure and place liquids, oils, maple syrup reusable containers – label
- Pack a whisk and spatula
- Refrigerate eggs, butter, buttermilk and fruit in ice chest or cooler

Preparation

Make sure you have all the ingredients and equipment ready before beginning to cook.

Whisk eggs and buttermilk in medium bowl, add cool, melted butter to a bowl.

Whisk all dry ingredients in another bowl. Some campfire cooks like to use a 24-ounce Mason jar with a lid to mix the ingredients. Optional: mix ½ cup mini chocolate chips into the batter. Blend liquid and dry ingredients together until no obvious dry bits remain. Some lumps OK. Pancake batter should never be overmixed. This develops gluten, making a tough pancake. A few lumps are OK. They will take care of themselves.

If you are feeling creative, recycle an old squeezable ketchup



bottle for your pancake batter and draw fun shapes on the griddle for your pancakes.

Cooking Methods

On the campfire – Cast Iron Skillet or Griddle

Prepare the campfire before starting to cook to produce hot coals. Spread the coals evenly under the pan to prevent burning or hot spots. Cooking over a fire

pit with an adjustable grate over the fire is another option. Some cooks prefer using a heat diffuser to distribute the heat more evenly across the pan. Pre-heat a flat-bottom cast iron skillet or griddle over coals. Test the skillet by sprinkling a drop or two of cold water on it. If the water sputters and bounces, the pan is ready. If it evaporates instantly, the pan is too hot. Add butter, vegetable oil or spray with cooking spray the skillet or griddle. Measure ¼ to ½ cup of batter and ladle into the hot skillet. Leave at least an inch around each pancake to make flipping easier. Add the desired of fruit, nuts or chocolate chips at this point. Cook until tiny bubbles appear 3 to 4 minutes and edges browning, 2 to 3 minutes each side. Cook until golden brown. Flip the pancake with a spatula and complete the cooking. If the pan seems dry, add a bit more oil or cooking spray. Lift the pancake to a serving platter, cover to keep warm. Repeat with the remaining batter.

On the camp stove –

Heat a flat-bottom cast iron skillet or griddle or a stainless-steel skillet on your camp stove over medium low heat. Add a teaspoon of vegetable oil to coat the pan or spray with cooking spray. Measure ¼ to ½ cup of batter and ladle into the hot skillet. Follow the process outlined in the campfire method.

To serve

Place pancakes on plates. Serve with butter and maple syrup or a drizzle of honey. Garnish with blue berries, sliced fruit, or mini chocolate chips. For a really chocolate experience, spread Nutella on the pancakes. Sprinkle a bit of powdered sugar on top of the pancake for extra sweetness. A dollop of whip cream can be a treat for a special occasion.

Optional: Serve a side of bacon or sausage. Add a mug of campfire coffee and start the day!

OIL SLICK



Unique teardrop and tow vehicle capture attention

By Bob Phillips

People often do a double take when Ry and Christi Scott drive by in their 1968 VW Bug with a tiny barn-wood-covered teardrop in tow. The rustic-looking camper is as much of an eye catcher as the multi-colored car.

My first impression was that the Scotts must be the rat rodders of the teardrop set. The vintage Bug's unusual paint job and the trailer's barn-wood look is something to behold. They take the rig to parades and car shows, but they use it for camping, too.

"We can't travel anywhere without people asking if they can get pictures with our car and trailer," said Ry, a Wichita, Kansas, business owner. "We love the attention and have plans on building a second trailer for Christi's 1961 VW Bug."





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The Scotts purchased the home-built teardrop about three years ago. It sits on a hand-built trailer frame with a leaf-spring axle. Sheet aluminum was used for the walls, roof and floor to keep the weight down. Ry said the tongue weight is about 68 pounds and the trailer weighs only about 450 pounds. "The shape was achieved by taking one-inch angle iron and cutting a slit in one side of the angle iron every one inch," Ry said, as related to him by the builder. "This allowed the angle iron to be formed into the desired teardrop shape. Once the shape was correct

the slits were then spot welded to hold the shape. The hitch had to be specifically designed to be pulled by the VW. The unique hitch was designed and built by John Sainden of Wichita.”

The Scotts wanted the trailer to appear old in keeping with the vintage towing vehicle so they attached aged barn wood to the outside walls. They placed license plates and street signs on the walls to add to the theme. A rack was built on the front for a bike from the late 40s or early 50s, reflecting the camping enjoyment from that period. The fenders are



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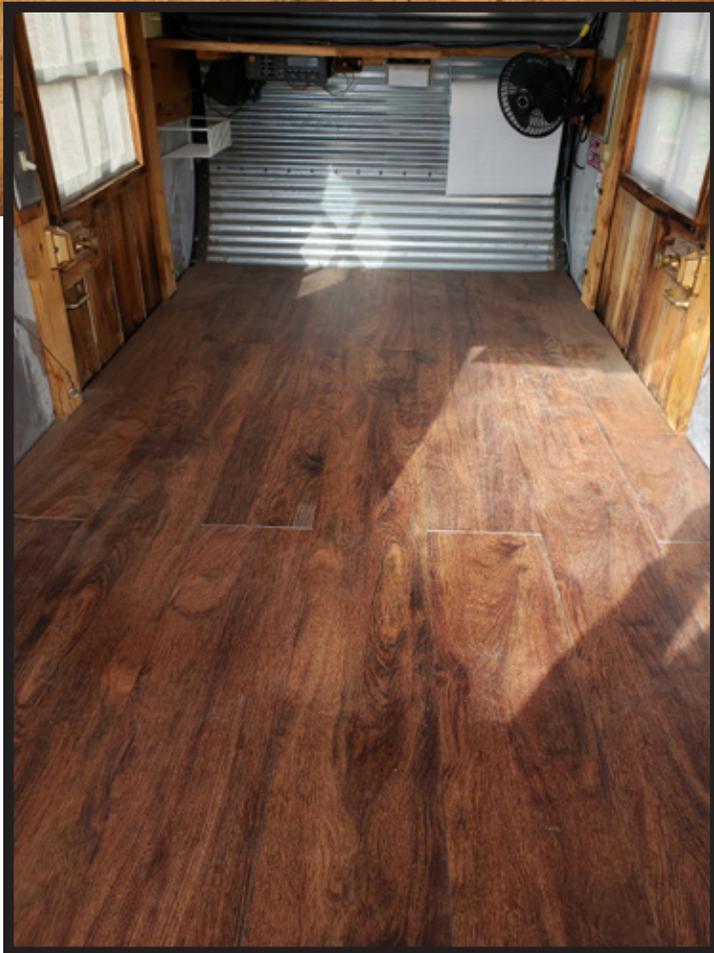
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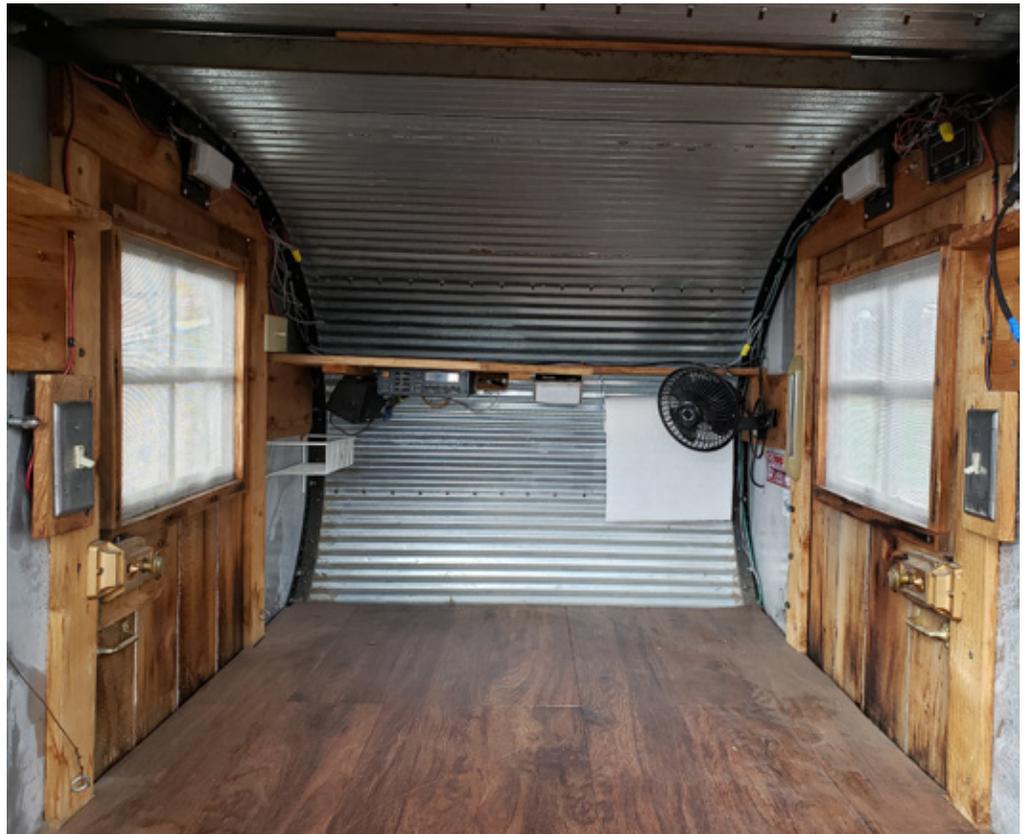


from a Model T Ford, adding realism to the old-time look.

The 1968 Volkswagen tow vehicle named “Oil Slick” has captured attention across the country through media features. The car and teardrop will be featured this summer in an edition of a Volkswagen-themed magazine.

“When I bought the Bug it was about to go to the crusher,” Ry said. “It barely ran and leaked oil everywhere -- hence the name. The paint was an accident. As I was sanding down the flat black paint to get the car ready for painting, I found multiple colors under the black. We fell in love with the uniqueness of the look. We then applied a clear coat to lock in the colors. We enjoy having the only car that has this color and a teardrop that is unique as well.

“I never thought a trailer would bring so much happiness. We love our camper and will never get rid of it. It pulls easily and safely. We are always going to car shows and cruising with other car lovers and we are looking forward to this year’s adventures. We will be traveling out of state for several car shows and will be using the camper far more than we ever have. We look forward to meeting other teardrop owners in our area and spending a lot of time at the lake and other locations.”



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TEARDROP TIPS



from:

CLEANING TIPS

You should always carry solvent cleaner with you. A neat trick for this is to use nail polish remover for fingerprint removal. It is acetone and comes in small travel sized bottles.

Be aware of your environment. If camping next to the ocean, the salt air can quickly tarnish aluminum and other metals on your teardrop. In environments like these you will want to wash periodically on the trip and not wait until you get home. Waxing with a good marine wax is helpful in these locations. Also watch out for locations where there might be acid rain.

For heavy oxidation or stains on aluminum teardrop skins use a fine kitchen cleaning powder like your mother probably used. Bon Ami and Bar Keeper's Friend are both products that work fantastic for this. Rub very gently in the direction of any brushed finish your aluminum has. Keep in mind; spot cleaning makes clean spots. You may need to clean the entire surface or whole teardrop camper to have a uniform appearance. Experiment in a less visible area before cleaning visible areas.

Know what your teardrop windows are made of before choosing a glass cleaner. Some teardrop windows are made of Acrylic. Not all glass cleaners are Acrylic safe so make sure to read the bottle and determine if it is Acrylic safe before using.

The number one way to keep an aluminum teardrop looking good is to not touch it. Fingerprints will drive some teardrop owners crazy. If left on the aluminum the fingerprints will prematurely patina the metal at that location making the fingerprint fairly permanent until the rest of the camper patinas evenly around it. To remove fingerprints use a strong solvent cleaner like lacquer thinner, acetone or rubbing alcohol to wipe them off before they patina the metal.

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

Watch monthly for more great camping helps!

www.tinycamper.com

MONNOM CUSTOMS

GHOST CAMPER BUILD



By **MIKE GUSTAFSON**

My wife, Sandy, and I have been wanting to build a teardrop for several years so we took the typical approach, scour the internet to find what we like and what we didn't like in design and function. We knew that we wanted a classic, vintage teardrop look and a clean, contemporary interior space. We also knew that we didn't want a bed that was smaller than a queen size and we would need as much storage space as possible. We also really didn't want the footprint to be any larger than necessary. Our original thought was use an existing trailer frame to build off of but it became clear that the camper would be much more to our liking if I built a custom steel frame and purchased our own axle and wheels to spec.



The queen sized mattress gave us the basic footprint and we designed the kitchen and internal cabinetry based on those dimensions, we don't use any fancy 3D modeling software so everything was designed with a pencil and paper and then to full scale on 1/4" MDF for templating.

The body of the camper is made from UV coated cabinet grade Maple plywood and the floor is constructed from an exterior sign grade plywood material. All joints, seams and fastener holes were coated and filled with a 2K marine epoxy and the skin is a 1/16" aluminum sheeting. The entire roof is insulated with 1" rigid foam insulation panels and the undercarriage is coated with an epoxy paint. The electrical system is based around 45 amp AC/DC power distribution system that is made by Progressive Dynamics. When the camper is plugged into 30 amp shore power we can use an



electric tea kettle, an electric blanket and a small electric space heater. The D/C portion of power covers all the interior / exterior lighting, exhaust fan and USB outlets, the on board Optima Deep Cycle battery allows us boondock for up to 5 days with no A/C shore power.

The kitchen features 4 drawers that are a full 24" deep, we use one drawer just for a food pantry and there is plenty of additional storage in the open area under the counter for a





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cooler and other items. The interior cabin has his and hers cabinetry, each includes a USB charging station and plenty of space for packing additional clothing. There is also lockable cabinetry built into the headboard that is large enough to carry hammocks, shoes, camp chairs and heavier jackets. A skylight and a temperature controlled exhaust fan that features a built in rain sensor that automatically closes when rain detected is also installed. Another handy feature is the kitchen

to bedroom pass through, it makes coffee in bed easy!

The unit weighs 1,300 lbs. loaded and has a tongue weight of about 80 lbs. so it can be pulled by any vehicle.

This project was on the back burner for us so it took a couple of years to complete but it has been an absolute pleasure to use. It is basically like tent camping with a gourmet kitchen and a 5 star hotel quality bedroom. You can choose the exact





experience you want, you can stay with the larger RVs in a proper campground or you can trek to more remote areas be completely on your own utilizing the battery power. Its wonderfully cozy inside and has all the amenities that you need and not a thing that you don't. You are still outside experiencing the elements but you have the

security of the bedroom at night and in in-climate weather.

The biggest thing to me is that you can keep it loaded with everything you need to enjoy a nice weekend away, all you have to do is grab some groceries, hook it up and go.



Anatomy

OF A TEARDROP



THE TEARDROP GALLEY

By Sarah Tucker

While the most unique feature of a teardrop trailer is the shape, the most unique part of it would have to be the galley. Outdoor kitchens are becoming more popular in large rv's but the rear galley has long been a trademark of the teardrop trailer. While most teardrop trailer galleys are small, you can still fit a surprising amount of gear inside.

While not every teardrop boasts a galley, the majority of them do. There are so many different galley set ups as each manufacturer tends to put their own spin on them and of course, home builders can customize it to their likes and needs.

The galley in the Cool Tears teardrops is very narrow as I wanted to keep the bulkhead as spacious as possible due to the fact my husband is over 6 feet tall. Even with minimal space, my galley is one of the favorite



parts of the camper. The space is cozy and so many memories have been made standing under the hatch.

So what exactly goes into a galley? Again that depends on personal choice but generally cabinets, cooking space and some kind of cooking device make up the galley. Many teardrops also contain a sink whether it be hand pump or electric. Some have built in cook

tops and some specialty teardrops have a full-bar as the galley (pictured left.)



Easy access is one of the most important features of any galley. Having all your cooking supplies within arms reach is a huge help. The ease is always supported by great organization. As with any small space, the more organized you can be, the more useful the space will be. Spice racks, paper towel holders and Ikea are all some of my best organizing tools. After camping several times, you will figure out what set up works best for your cooking needs.

While you can camp in a teardrop with little to no electricity, the galley is one place that a few outlets are







helpful. This can be done on either 12 volt or 110 volt lines allowing it to be used when boondocking or when hooked up to shoreline power. Lights, charging ports and outlets for small appliances are a must.

Slide out drawers are a very popular feature in teardrop galleys. Slide outs can allow easier access for cooktops, coolers, additional storage and even bar tops.

No matter what your galley contains, these unique outdoor kitchens are one of the best features of any teardrop trailer.

Email your galley to sarah@cooltears.com and we will showcase them next month.



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