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Recreational Vehicle Buyers Guide

By Jason Odom

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Recreational Vehicle Buyers Guide

Service Records – If you're buying from an RV dealer and they can't produce something – you've got problems – possibly serious ones. If not, he'd be proudly displaying the records. There should at least be receipts for repairs, service work, and possibly old owners manuals.

See http://busforsaleguide.com/rv_types.htm for the advantages and disadvantages of each major class of recreational vehicle on the market.

Body Leaks –Other than structural rust, I know of no other exterior related problem that will cost you as much money and cause you as many headaches as exterior body leaks. Body leaks are among the most difficult to fix if the body design is less than first rate. Front facing windows on many Class C's are nearly impossible to stop leaking due to flexing and stress.

I have been incredibly pleased with the purchase of my 1993 Class A. However, the wood over skeleton frame roofs like the type Georgie Boy used in this coach has begun to sag between the support tubes or "skeleton". The weight of air-conditioners, vents, my roof mounted kayaks, and walking up there to fix seams, has permanently created "ponding" issues. Price quote from my very trusted and competent local RV service center was \$4,200 to rebuild my entire roof.

Ponding is water sitting on the roof when the coach is level. When this happens you have increased chances of leaks, bugs, slime and algae growth, and dirty water run off when you drive somewhere. Rounded formed fiberglass roofs are the very best but only appear on the newer coaches that were out of my price range.

I have seen \$30,000 to \$60,000 coaches nearly ruined by leaks that went unchecked. Be especially cautious if you see ANY delamination of the side wall. I have never seen the permanent damage fixed for less than \$4,000 and that is WITHOUT a guarantee that it won't happen again. This is usually caused by poor roof and seam design.

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Nearly everyone underestimates how serious this is. I know I almost bought one. Couldn't figure out why a great looking Santara diesel pusher would only cost \$24,000. Then I walked around to the drivers side and saw the fiberglass body delaminating. I didn't think it looked too expensive to repair. I figured caulk the seam and just screw the panel back tighter to the frame. Of course the salesman agreed.

WRONG! People do not realize especially in older coaches that the WOOD (yes I said the WOOD) that is under the fiberglass skin does offer quite a bit of the stability, and rigidity of the exterior. Once it gets wet for a prolonged period of time it rots, breaks down, and becomes heavy enough to cause the entire skeleton to sag. Windows no longer fit right, seams pop open worse, storage doors underneath stick, and on and on. Do NOT buy an RV with this problem. It can cost as much as \$13,000 to fix (highest

horror story I have read about on the RV chat logs thus far).

Body integrity is one of the more important advantages that the big solidly constructed bus conversions have over 95% of the factory built RV's in use. Do NOT purchase an RV that has signs of leaking without a thorough plan for paying for and fixing the problem. Otherwise, I can assure you, it will destroy your experience and investment in a short time.

Mechanical Leaks – Look for ANY signs of leaks, particularly from Automatic Transmissions. Some Allison transmissions used in diesel motor homes have wimpy front seals and leak constantly when the transmission gets too hot. Don't buy an RV with a leaky transmission. A replacement Allison can cost \$3,000 parts and labor to replace. Leaking brake components or hydraulic systems can be expensive to repair also.

Leaky radiators can be expensive to repair or replace on larger coaches especially if the labor to pull them involves pulling a lot of other items. Same goes for leaky dash air-conditioning systems.

Body Style – Check out the visibility differences. The entrance door positions vary as well. The rear pusher buses offer a quieter ride. Fifth Wheels usually do not have flat floors inside and almost universally offer the "split level".

Transmissions – Get an automatic unless you really like the absolute control of a standard and never intend to resell it. Standard shifts are MUCH harder to sell as conversions because retirees are the most common motor home buyers and they don't like to shift. Allison makes the best transmission systems in the world. Many older gas RV's were mated to inferior transmissions that just cannot handle the extra weight and pull issue.

Some RV's have engine/transmission setups that are so underpowered you will never be able to afford to use them. These transmissions are forever blowing seals, leaking, overheating, and breaking down. Buy a replacement transmission and guess what? Your only option may be a rebuilt version of the problematic transmission you already own.

Engine – If you are going to be traveling through mountainous areas regularly get the biggest engine you can afford. There is NO substitute for size (raw cubic inches) I don't care what the ads say. My car

has a 440 in it. Why would you buy a 34' RV with a 318 in it? Check carefully how many miles on the engine or since the engine rebuild. Gas engines last about 60 –100,000 miles, depending on whether they are driven stop and go in the mountains or over long stretches of flat highway. Diesels can often approach 200,000 miles before needing much of anything with proper maintenance.

If economy is a major concern, look for a good affordable coach with a great miserly engine/transmission combination. I bought such a coach with a Cummins 190 HP 6 cylinder diesel engine mated to an Allison 4 speed automatic transmission. Over the course of our 31 day, 7,980 mile trip, in mixed traffic, tough mountain and city driving, we averaged 10.6 MPG in our 34 foot fully loaded class A liveboard coach with 4 people and 2 kayaks.

NOTE: After evaluating the information above on SPECIFIC issues related to this particular platform you may find the prepurchase checklist found at http://busforsaleguide.com/bus_prepurchase_checklist.htm helpful. It covers GENERAL issues you should be aware of for ALL platforms. It will serve as a very valuable resource to assist you in evaluating a bus, motor home, or RV for purchase. Take a copy of it with you when shopping.

Jason Odom wrote <http://busforsaleguide.com> as a complete website full of bus and Rv buying information including the advantages and disadvantages of each type, make and model. Jason Odom has 14 Years in the business of assisting people in finding the Bus or RV that meets their needs.

Rent A Recreational Vehicle

By D Fraser

Though modern recreational vehicles are almost like a fully furnished apartment house on wheels, affording all the comforts and luxuries conceivable can be a real pain. Then you have to maintain, service and stow when not in use. Besides, the huge initial investment on these RVs appears to be sheer wastage of hard earned money, since many users end up not using them often. Owning a recreational vehicle also means lot of work. You have to load and unload all the equipment and gear every time you go somewhere. A lot of the work can go in setting up camp, hooking up water, checking about the sanitation, electricity (the batteries will go down if left unattended the whole of winter) and drainage (the pipes invariably get clogged up). Lubrication, tune up, servicing, etc are sure to make you go roving mad.

Rent a recreational vehicle instead

If you take my tip, rent a recreational vehicle first and see how it suits you. With a valid driver's license, you are free to rent a recreational vehicle that you can test drive for a week or so. See how it feels. If you are not used to drive heavy unwieldy wide-bodied vehicles, you may hit the curves every time you take a turn. Take an impassionate view. Do you really enjoy being in it or are you indulging yourself? Think also of all the possibilities as you are using it and see if it still appeals to you. Rent a recreational vehicle to be sure of the monster.

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Rent a recreational vehicle - Benefits

Rent a recreational vehicle to test your endurance, patience and stamina. Though the brightly colored brochure gives vivid pictures of contented families traveling in a multicolored motor home through a wild reserve or a national park, traveling in a recreational vehicle involves lot of work. See, if you can adjust to the routine. The rented vehicle will give you that chance to accept or reject it.

There is many other reasons to rent a recreational vehicle. Hiring companies spread all over the US offer excellent service that include (a). Choice of vehicle from a wide selection of fully equipped luxury motor homes from America's top manufacturers like Fleetwood RV, Winnebago, etc, (b). All their RVs are fully company owned and operated, (c). Toll free roadside assistance with more than 1500 service locations throughout the country, (d). Online reservation.

Some useful tips before you rent a recreational vehicle

Before going to rent a recreational vehicle it may be prudent to consider the topography of the place of visit. See if it is a narrow mountain road or a high plateau. You should also consider the size of the family, their sleeping arrangements, storage space, power of the engine, etc.

If you enjoyed this article about renting a recreation vehicle then take the time to visit our website all about Outdoor Activities and



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