

2018 SPRING MAGAZINE

# COAST TO COAST



**Down East Maine**  
**An Outdoor Lover's Paradise**

**Timeless**  
**Mackinac Island**

**Yooper Country and**  
**the Comeback City**

## **SPRING DESTINATIONS**

Hideaway Ponds RV Resort – Ocean Canyon  
**Gibson, Louisiana**

Niagara's Lazy Lakes Resort  
**Lockport, New York**

Sunrise Adventures – Ridgeview  
**Bullhead City, Arizona**





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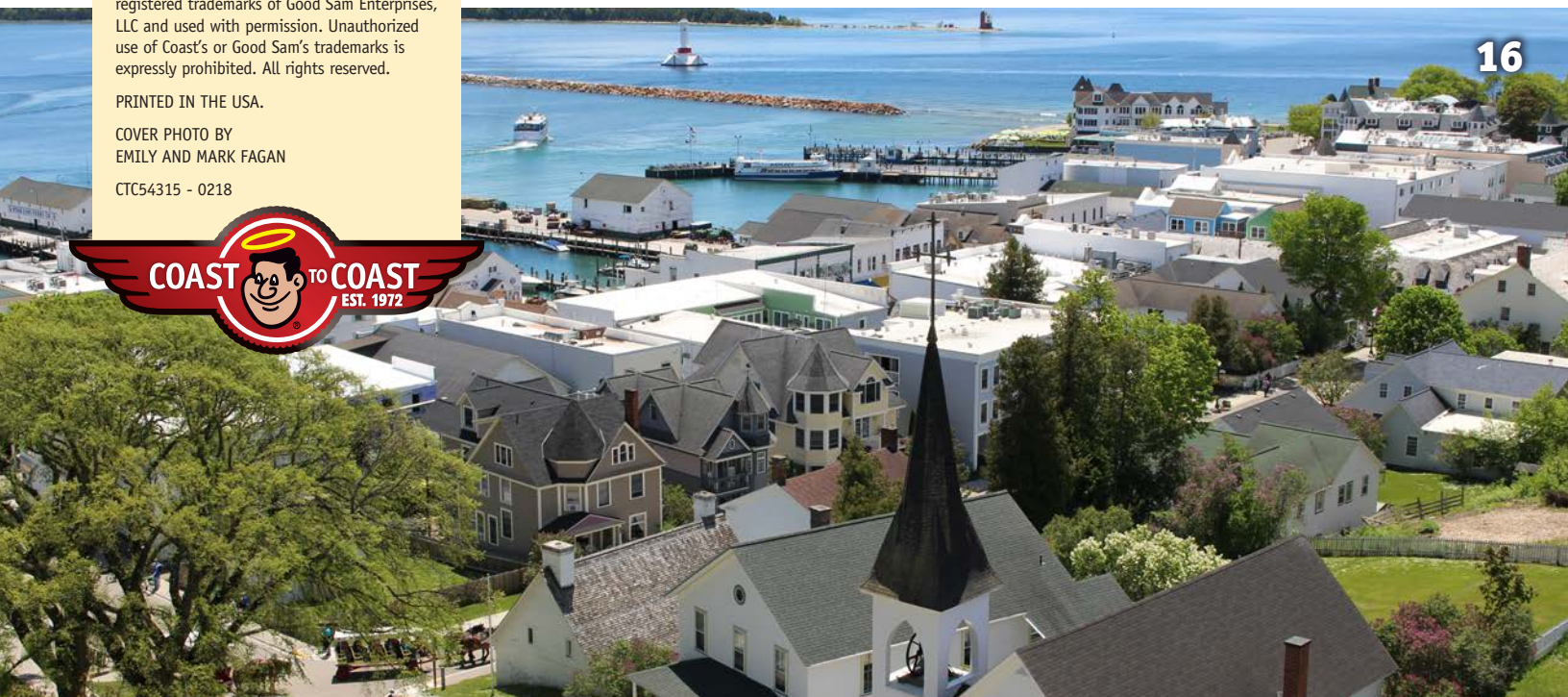
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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

PUTTING MEMBERS FIRST



## Check Out the New Coast Videos!

In addition to recent upgrades to our member materials, Coast to Coast has created a series of videos to help both new and current members get the most out of their Coast member benefits. There are Welcome videos for new members as well as “How to” videos on benefits such as Coast Travel Services, Trip Plus, and other benefits. In addition we have created videos to help members navigate the

CoastResorts.com website and to book RV stays at Coast Resorts using our Tripsetter reservation system.

To view the videos, sign in at CoastResorts.com and select “Videos” in the Benefits drop down menu at the top of your member homepage. While these videos are perfect for new members, they are also a great refresher for current members. Get the most out of your Coast membership by watching our member videos. If you have any feedback on our new videos, drop us a line at [CCRPresident@CoastResorts.com](mailto:CCRPresident@CoastResorts.com).

## Good Neighbor Park Program Changes

If you plan to book RV stays at a Coast Good Neighbor Park (GNP), this is a reminder that the reservation process for GNPs has changed. Effective January 15, 2018, instead of making GNP reservations through the Coast Tripsetter Reservation System, Coast members will contact GNPs directly to make reservations and also pay GNPs directly. We are making this change in order to

grow our GNP network and to provide more availability of GNP nights for Coast members.

Coast members will still be able to search GNPs via the online directory at CoastResorts.com, as all GNPs will continue to have profiles and listings in our online directory and be included in our online maps. When you “check availability” for a GNP, you will be provided with a phone number to call the GNP directly to make your reservation. When you call, simply identify yourself as a Coast to Coast member, check availability of the dates you prefer, and confirm your discounted Coast member rate and your payment method with the GNP. Also be sure to bring your Coast membership card to show at check-in.

This change will not impact reservations for Classic, Deluxe, or Premier Resorts as these will continue to be booked through the Tripsetter Reservation System.

## Coast Magazine Story Wins A National Award

Congratulations to longtime Coast Magazine contributor Dave G. Houser, who won a Gold Award (first place) in the Destination Travel Online Publication category in the 2017 North American Travel Journalists Association (NATJA) Awards Competition. His winning feature, “Gateway to the Galaxies,” was published in the spring 2017 issue of Coast Magazine and provided a tour of several observatories and astro-related educational facilities around Tucson, Arizona. If you missed Dave’s award-winning travel feature, or want to reference features from any previous Coast Magazine digital edition, just log in at CoastResorts.com and under the Benefits tab click Digital Coast Magazines.

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# RESORT UPDATES

## ADDITIONS AND CHANGES TO THE 2017 DIRECTORY

The 2018 *Coast to Coast Resort Directory* is packed with everything you need to navigate the network of Coast to Coast Resorts and Coast Good Neighbor Parks. To keep members up-to-date, each issue of Coast magazine includes any updates that have occurred since the last issue.

### COAST DELUXE

#### TEXAS

**Bishop's Landing**, Willis, 77318 (page 174)  
Email: [watersedge.tthc@yahoo.com](mailto:watersedge.tthc@yahoo.com)

### COAST CLASSIC

#### UTAH

**Skyline Mountain Resort**, Fairview, UT (page 175)  
URL: [www.skylinemountainresort.com](http://www.skylinemountainresort.com)

### CLASSIC TERMINATIONS

#### TEXAS

**Lazy Palms Ranch**, Edinburg, 78541 (page 170)

### GOOD NEIGHBOR PARKS

#### GOOD NEIGHBOR PARK UPDATES

#### TEXAS

**Mill Creek Ranch RV & Cottage Resort**, Canton, 75103  
Reservation phone: (877) 927-3439

#### GOOD NEIGHBOR NEW

#### TENNESSEE

**Creekside RV Park**, 2475 Henderson Springs Road, Pigeon Forge, 37863  
Reservation phone: (865) 428-4801; Email: [www.creeksidervpark@yahoo.com](mailto:www.creeksidervpark@yahoo.com);  
URL: [creeksidervpark.com](http://creeksidervpark.com)

Directions: From Jct US-441 & US 321: SW 0.7 mi on US 321 to Henderson Springs Rd. R 0.2 mi. 2nd resort on R. From Parkway: W on Wears Valley Road at traffic light #3. Pass Krogers and Pigeon Forge Schools on R. At 2nd traffic light, turn R on Henderson Springs Rd. Approx 0.3 mi 2nd resort on R.

Latitude: 35.80174; Longitude: -83.58911; Check-in: 1:00 P.M. Check-out: 11:00 A.M. Max RV Length: 40 feet, Amps: 50.

Notations: Special discount rate for Coast members. Call resort directly. Rate includes 4 people. Additional charges: 50 amp \$2/night, add'l adult \$2/night, tax 12.75%. No tents.

Season: March 1 – May 31, August 1 – August 31, November 1 – December 31.

#### TEXAS

**Lazy Palms Ranch**, Edinburg, 78541 (page 170); From Classic to Good Neighbor Park

#### GOOD NEIGHBOR PARK TERMINATION

#### NEVADA

**Riviera RV Park**, Las Vegas, 89104





**RESORT TYPE**  
Coast Classic

**LOCATION**  
Gibson, Louisiana

**SEASON**  
Year-round

**WEBSITE**  
[www.oceancanyon.com](http://www.oceancanyon.com)

# Hideaway Ponds RV Resort – Ocean Canyon

A Gem of a Resort in Cajun Country

Ocean Canyon Properties, the Southeast’s largest private membership camping resort company, acquired Hideaway Ponds Resort in Gibson, Louisiana, in September 2017. Located only 70 miles from New Orleans, the resort gives visitors an option to visit the big city or relax onsite beneath 200-year-old oak trees.

Although the resort has multiple amenities, Ocean Canyon plans to make many upgrades to the resort, such as building additional RV sites, adding new amenities including a new playground and a new welcome center, adding additional staff, and completely renovating existing facilities.

Amenities onsite include a junior Olympic outdoor pool and an indoor heated pool and hot tub. Members can enjoy the 4,000-square-foot clubhouse for a variety of social activities. Go paddle boating, fish in the stocked fishing ponds (three to be exact), enjoy the playgrounds, and take advantage of scheduled recreational activities.

Hideaway Ponds also features two cabins, five park model cottages and RV sites with 30/50-amp electric and full hookups.

The resort is located in the heart of Louisiana Cajun Bayou country, near Morgan City, Houma, and Thibodaux. In Houma, visit Bayou Terrebonne Waterlife Museum. If you’re visiting Morgan City the last weekend of August, join in the Louisiana Shrimp and Petroleum Festival.

While in Thibodaux, take a swamp tour on Louisiana’s Cajun Bayou. Enjoy a walk along the Lockport Elevated Wetlands Boardwalk and a peek into the mysterious swamps full of moss-laden cypress trees, majestic eagles, egrets, and massive alligators.

Hideaway Ponds is a perfect complement to Abita Springs, Ocean Canyon’s other resort in southern Louisiana located across Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans.








**RESORT TYPE**  
Coast Classic

**LOCATION**  
Lockport, New York

**SEASON**  
May 1-October 31

**WEBSITE**  
[www.lazylakes.com](http://www.lazylakes.com)

# Niagara's Lazy Lakes Resort

## Enjoy family-owned hospitality in Niagara County

For more than 30 years, the Swift family has been welcoming visitors to their resort that's just 15 minutes from Niagara Falls. Lazy Lakes Resort is known as "Western New York's Best Kept Secret." Let it be a secret no more. It's not just the family aspect, but the amenities that abound at this spectacular resort.

Once on the 80-acre property, you'll first notice the two spring-fed lakes for boating and fishing. The largest pond is full of big bass for catch-and-release fishing. For no fee, take out the row boats, kayaks, canoes, or splash boats. Enjoy the two in-ground heated swimming pools with lifeguards on duty.

The 4,000 square-foot main lodge is available for numerous resort activities for all ages. Enjoy breakfast in the lodge on weekends as well as weekend barbeques in the outdoor pavillion.

All 275 campsites have city water, 30-amp or 50-amp electric hookups, picnic tables and fire rings for

campfires. The "Country Store" at Lazy Lakes is well stocked, and with four beautiful bathroom/shower facilities and two laundry rooms located throughout the resort, you're close to one of them.

If you travel without your rig, rent one of the nine fully-furnished cabins, including propane fireplaces, full bathrooms with shower, full kitchen with range, refrigerator, microwave, toaster, coffeemaker, pots and pans, dishes, silverware, TV, and more.

Offsite, visit nearby Lockport. According to Stewart Scott a Canadian traveler in 1826, "As Niagara Falls are the greatest natural wonder, so Lockport, its locks, and the portion of the Erie Canal adjacent, are considered to be the greatest artificial curiosity in this part of America." An engineering marvel when it was built, some called it the Eighth Wonder of the World. Start your visit at the Erie Canal Discovery Center, continue to the Lockport Cave and Underground Boat Ride and Lockport Locks and Erie Canal Cruises.



### RESORT PROFILES





**RESORT TYPE**  
Coast Classic

**LOCATION**  
Bullhead City, Arizona

**SEASON**  
Year-round

**WEBSITE**  
[www.coloradodriveradventures.com](http://www.coloradodriveradventures.com)

# Sunrise Adventures – Ridgeview

Sunshine 360 days a year

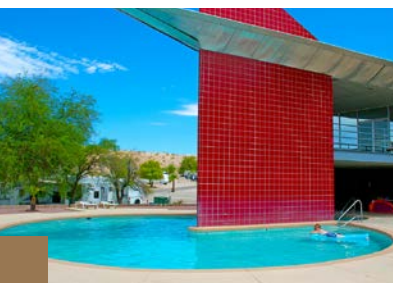
Sunrise Adventures – Ridgeview in Bullhead City, Arizona, is definitely a resort for all seasons. With 360 days of sunshine a year, numerous outdoor recreation activities can be enjoyed year-round. In addition, if water sports are your favorite activities, this is the place for you. Visit the Colorado River or nearby Lake Mohave for a wide variety of activities. Onsite, play in the heated swimming pool or relax in the hot tub. For exercise, join in the water aerobics.

The resort offers other amenities such as a large clubhouse where various family and fun activities are held. There's shuffleboard, hiking trails, and even vacation rentals.

Sunrise Adventures is directly across the border from Laughlin, Nevada, where ten casinos offer 24-hour gaming, restaurants, exciting entertainment, and much more. The resort is located less than two hours from Las Vegas, and one hour from the famous London Bridge in Lake Havasu City.

Bullhead City and Laughlin both offer some of the best shopping in the area with malls and various stores located minutes from the resort. If golf is a highlight of your Sunrise Adventures – Ridgeview vacation, then you'll be happy because there are numerous golf courses in the Bullhead City/Laughlin area. The resort is an ideal place to tee up for the perfect RV golf getaway.

Coursing more than a thousand miles from the Rockies to the Sea of Cortez, the Colorado River provides irrigation, public water, and hydroelectric power to parts of California, Nevada and Arizona. In Laughlin, the river also offers a wide spectrum of recreational activities. Enjoy boating, water skiing, jet skiing, and fishing, or a refreshing dip in the brisk water. Launch ramp facilities are plentiful along the river, as are a multitude of watercraft rental services. For a more relaxed pace, take a leisurely, scenic ride or enjoy a dinner cruise aboard paddlewheel steamship replicas.



## RESORT PROFILES





*Down East*  
**MAINE**  
An outdoor lover's paradise





*Waves crash on the shore at Acadia National Park.*



*Down East Maine makes for a wonderful RV trip.*

## Down East Maine

Story by Emily Fagan

Photos by Emily and Mark Fagan

A rich world of pungent woods, glittering blue ocean, craggy boulders, and jaunty lighthouses awaits RVers traveling to Down East Maine. Even though this special part of Maine is located in the farthest northeastern coastal corner of the state, it has been called “down east” since the earliest sailing days because boats voyaging from Boston and New York had to sail downwind in a largely eastward direction to get there.

We traveled through Maine overland in our 36-foot Hitchhiker fifth-wheel trailer—not by sailboat. And after a dash across the middle of the state, we began our Down East trek in the city of Bangor. We first swung by the longtime home of thriller writer Stephen King whose house is decorated with bats and gargoyles. Following this with a walk on the delightful Kenduskeag Stream Trail, we then quenched our thirst with a delicious craft beer on the deck of the Seadog Brewery overlooking the

Penobscot River.

Down East Maine is an outdoor lover’s paradise in the summertime, and one of our more unusual excursions was a stroll on the University of Maine’s Orono Bog Walk. Beginning with a pretty path that winds through the woods, we emerged onto an elevated wooden boardwalk that circles out across a bog. Plaques along the boardwalk explained the origins of this unique ecosystem, and we were treated to sightings of a spotted fawn and a vibrant black-throated green warbler.

Leaving Bangor and driving toward the coast, we were quickly immersed in the fun touristy flair of “Vacationland” that Mainers boast about on their license plates. Colorful lobster buoys and lobster pots decorated many homes and businesses, and lots of restaurants were marked by huge red lobster signs out front. We stopped at one for a lunchtime lobster roll, a tasty treat made of lobster meat mixed with mayonnaise and spread on a toasted hotdog bun. It’s a delicious way to savor Maine lobster without the complexities of a full-fledged traditional lobster dinner where you don a bib, crack the hard shell with a nutcracker, pick out the meat with a mini fork, and dip it in a dish of butter that’s melting over a low flame.





*A vintage Model A Ford climbs Cadillac Mountain in the heart of Acadia National Park.*



*Twin antique cannons point out into Bar Harbor, reminding visitors of America's revolutionary history.*

Just a few miles past the bridge onto Mount Desert Island lies the charming town of Bar Harbor, the gateway to Acadia National Park. High-end boutique shops, artists' galleries, and bistros lined the narrow streets, and we enjoyed a wonderful early morning walk, latte in hand, along the waterfront. Twin antique cannons perched high on a hill pointed out into the harbor, reminding us of America's struggles to secure and keep its independence centuries ago. Down in the harbor, small sailboats and elegant yachts moved slowly in the soft morning light, offering a glimpse of the summertime pleasures that have lured wealthy city dwellers to these shores since the turn of the last century.

Mount Desert Island (pronounced "dessert" by locals despite the spelling) is shaped a bit like a lobster claw facing down with its pincers made up of two large lobes of land separated by Somes Sound. Acadia National Park fills much of this land, and its Loop Road circles around the eastern half. This scenic drive wanders along the shoreline, providing occasional peeks at the ocean where lobster boats putt from buoy to buoy and trap to trap. At Thunder Hole the Atlantic Ocean's waves crashed into the granite shore. Loud thunderous booms filled the air each time a wave struck the cave below us, sending sprays of salt water sky high.

Acadia National Park offers much more than just coastal vistas, however. One of the most delightful ways to experience the Maine woods is to walk or ride on the 50 miles of carriage roads that wind throughout the interior of the park. These beautifully groomed dirt roads were built by John D. Rockefeller Jr. in the early part of the last century. At the time a feud had developed between the local Mainers, who wanted to drive from town to town in their newfangled automobiles as they went about their workaday lives, and the rich summer visitors from the big cities who wanted to travel for leisure by horse and buggy without sharing the road with loud and fast motorcars. While each town worked out its own local road laws, Rockefeller built the carriage roads across his vast land holdings for his wealthy friends to ride in their horse-drawn carriages. Later, he donated his land and roads to the National Park Service.

Today the carriage roads of Acadia National Park are ideal for a horse-drawn wagon ride or to explore by bicycle. The fragrance of the balsam fir in the Maine woods is like no other, and we breathed deeply as we rode our bikes over and under the lovely stone bridges that crisscross the roads. At Jordan Pond we stopped for a bite to eat and watched kayakers paddling across its depths. The ocean seemed a world away although it was just a few miles to the craggy shore.





*Acadia National Park offers wonderful glimpses of the craggy Down East Maine coast.*



*The Double B Mail Boat Ferry is a fun way to explore the Cranberry Islands.*



*A lobster boat pulls up to a jetty.*



*Wild lupine bring vibrant color to the coastal landscape.*

On another day we drove up Cadillac Mountain to the highest point in Acadia National Park. Wide views fanned out in every direction. On one side the vast ocean stretched to the distant horizon while on the other side Frenchman Bay lay dotted with small islands. At the top of the mountain, kids romped across big round boulders while parents spread out picnic blankets for lunch with a view.

At the time of the roadway disputes when Rockefeller built his carriage roads, the Ford Model A was common. Ironically, we happened to be visiting Acadia National Park during a national rally for Ford Model A owners. More than a hundred of these antique cars buzzed around the island, and everywhere we turned we saw them. Our big diesel truck was quite oversized for the small park roads, but the Model A cars were right at home and gave us a sense of what this area was like in those bygone days of early car travel to America's National Parks.

Down at the southern tip of Mount Desert Island's western lobe, we walked on a short trail through misty woods to reach the bluff where Bass Harbor Lighthouse has warned mariners of the rocky shoals for over a century. Fog filled the air and formed beautiful droplets on the ferns and wildflowers, and the ocean was a forbidding gray. How reassuring it must have been for sailors of

old with neither radar nor GPS to see the light piercing through the fog and night air.

Northeast Harbor is the launching point for the Double B mail boat and ferry that takes islanders and tourists between Mount Desert Island and the nearby Cranberry Islands. We stood in the back of the converted lobster boat next to a group of construction workers who were headed to Cranberry Island for a day of work. When they disembarked, we joined a group of school kids and teachers who were on their way to school in Islesford on Little Cranberry Island. We were surprised to learn that they all commute back and forth to school on this small boat every day, rain or shine—or blizzard. Each child wore a life jacket, and the conductor assured me that he had the phone number for every parent. The teachers wedged themselves between the kids, and we all bounced over the waves together as they headed to a day of school.

We spent the day strolling the tiny streets of Islesford on Cranberry Island. The tall wild lupines were in full bloom, and they turned the landscape shades of purple and pink. In Islesford, we stopped by Islesford Artists, an art gallery owned by Katy Fernald, which is partly housed in an attic room that used to be her husband's repair shop for his lobster pots, line, and buoys. Lobstering is in the





*Quaintness aside, the lobster industry has been an integral part of Down East Maine life for over a century.*





*West Quoddy Head Light--since 1808, there has been a lighthouse there to guide ships through the Quoddy Narrows.*



*A lobster boat putts from one trap to the next.*

blood of many Down East Mainers, and Katy's husband was a sixth-generation lobsterman.

The most unusual moment of the day came a few hours later when we returned on the mail boat ferry with the school kids and their teachers. As we waited at the dock for the kids to board, suddenly two teachers began loading a dozen or more large music drums onto the boat. As the boat began to bounce over the waves, I chatted with the music teacher, a locally known musician, and he explained that he was bringing the drums off the island after teaching the kids about West African music.

Back on the mainland, north and east of Mount Desert Island, the Schoodic Scenic Byway made for another beautiful day trip. This drive takes in a remote part of Acadia National Park at Schoodic Point as well as some stunning and classic coastal Maine vistas beyond that. The small town of Winter Harbor is home to just a few boats, but it was the area around Prospect Harbor that made us feel we were really getting Down East. As we photographed the little lighthouse and cluster of lobster boats, a weathered lobsterman in wet knee-high rubber boots came up the gangway from the dock and began to tell us about his life on the ocean. Eighty-two years old and very spry, his eyes twinkled as he described his first offshore fishing expedition with his grandfather on New

England's Grand Banks when he was only 9. He smiled broadly as he told us he still makes his living every day from the sea.

Traveling further Down East along coastal U.S. Highway 1, we arrived in Lubec, the easternmost town in America. This village hugs a tiny harbor and has a colorful main street. Nearby, we found the unusual red and white candy-striped West Quoddy Head Lighthouse standing proudly on a bluff. Taking a short bridge to Campobello Island, we left America behind for a few hours and explored the pretty Canadian island of Campobello (a passport is required). At the far end of the island, the East Quoddy Head Lighthouse marked the dangers of the craggy shore and one-upped its American candy-striped companion across the bay with a brilliant red cross emblazoned on the front. We learned that it is possible to walk out to the tiny lighthouse island at low tide, but the timing of high tide prevented us from going.

Continuing our trek Down East along the coastal route, our last stop was the town of Eastport. Not many tourists make it this far Down East, and we were enchanted by the slow pace and authentic flavor of seaside village life in such a remote spot. Small homes built as much as a century ago lined the narrow roads around town, and in each of the small eateries we visited we were





*The small town of Bar Harbor is filled with cute boutiques, tourist shops and eateries.*



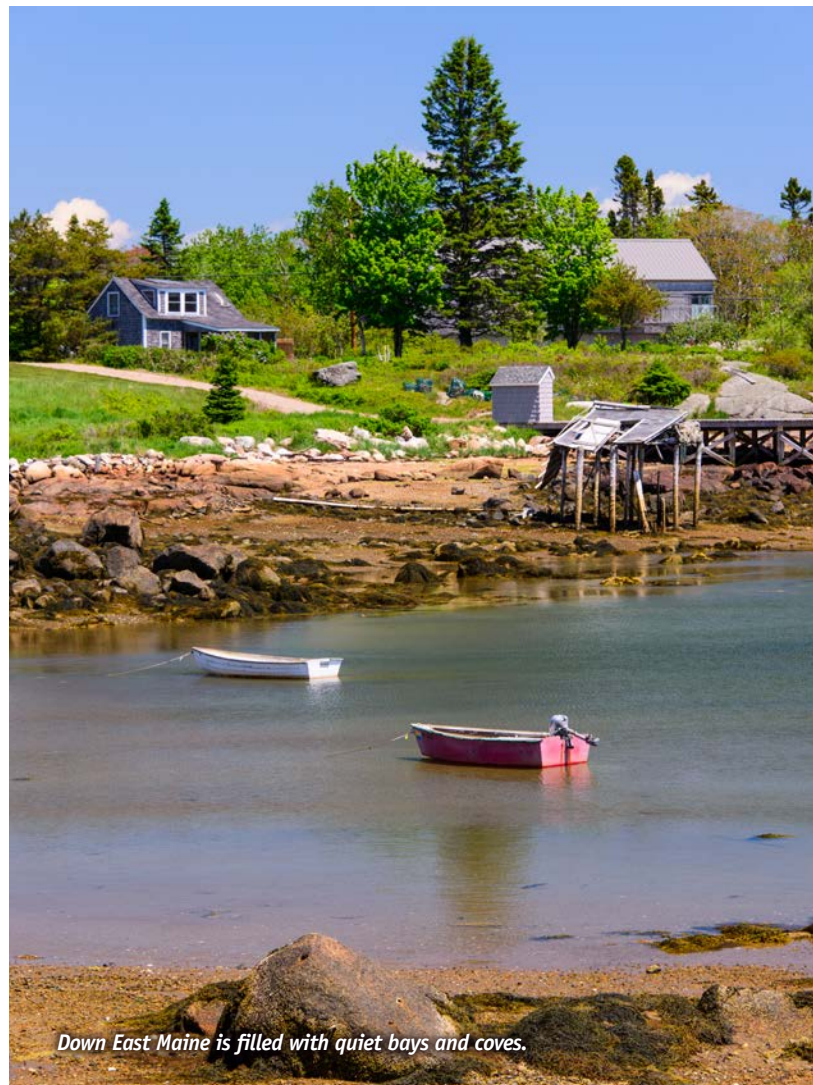
*The Carriage Roads wander throughout Acadia National Park and are fun to explore by bike or on a horse-drawn wagon ride.*

warmly welcomed by the locals. A few folks lamented that the collapse of a portion of the town pier in 2014 has reduced the number of large tourist boats that visit Eastport, negatively impacting their summer tourist season. But we were charmed by the quiet streets where seagulls' raucous cries were the loudest sound.

Down East Maine is a beautiful place to visit by RV, and our few fun-filled weeks there have whetted our appetites to return for more!

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

[www.visitmaine.com](http://www.visitmaine.com) • [www.downeast.com](http://www.downeast.com)  
[www.maine tourism.com](http://www.maine tourism.com) • [www.downeastacadia.com](http://www.downeastacadia.com)



*Down East Maine is filled with quiet bays and coves.*



*West Quoddy Head Lighthouse is candy-striped red and white.*

**DOWN EAST MAINE**



A vibrant scene in Mackinac Island, Michigan. A white wooden church with a tall, dark steeple topped with a cross stands prominently. In the foreground, a horse-drawn carriage with two white horses is moving along a paved street. People are walking on the sidewalk, and a sign with a butterfly logo is visible. The background is filled with lush green trees and a clear blue sky with scattered white clouds.

# TIMELESS MACKINAC ISLAND

Yooper Country and the Comeback City





Grand Hotel.



Lake view from lookout at Arch Rock, Mackinac Island.

## Great Lakes Memories

Story and photos by Richard Varr

The pace is exhilaratingly slow.

I can hear every step the horses take—clip-clop, clip-clop—as they trudge along the historic waterside village. Their names are Tarfoot and Ree, pulling the carriage in which I’ve snagged a ride as it meanders through an increasingly busy Main Street with its storefronts showcasing fudge shops, art galleries, ice-cream stands, and boutiques. “I love it in the mornings when all the people are out—it’s wonderful,” exults the carriage driver, a student who’s working—as so many seasonal workers here do—a summer job on Mackinac Island.

“And everyone is so happy here,” she adds. “There are no cars, definitely bringing you back to yesteryear. And that’s such a big part of Mackinac—stepping back in time.”

Just off the shores where Michigan’s Lower and Upper

peninsulas seemingly touch—in the deep blue Straits of Mackinac that link Lakes Michigan and Huron—Mackinac Island (pronounced Mackinaw) seems a world away. That’s because it still basks in its past colonial character and Victorian glory thanks to the preservation and restoration of its 18th-century fort and 19th-century buildings, most notably the iconic, columned Grand Hotel. Motorized vehicles have been banned since 1898, making horse carriages, bicycles, and walking the only way to get around. From May through October, thousands of overnights and day-trippers reach the island by ferry from either Mackinaw City or St. Ignace. Overnight RV parking arrangements for visiting RVers can be made at the ferry terminals.

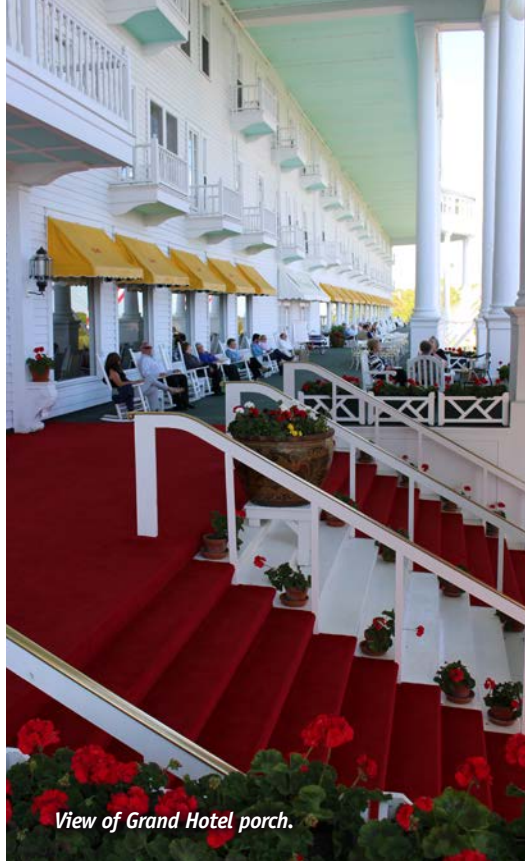
I first became enchanted with Mackinac after seeing the dreamy 1980 movie *Somewhere in Time* with Christopher Reeve and Jane Seymour, where the characters connect through time travel. Shot almost exclusively on the island, the 1887 Grand Hotel helps set the tone of yesteryear with its Victorian-era architecture and lushly furnished lobby and guest rooms, along with traditional rocking chairs lining the hotel’s 660-foot-long porch, the world’s longest.

“The movie has two elements, time travel and love as being eternal and unending,” explains Grand Hotel





The Movie "Somewhere in Time" poster at the Grand Hotel.



View of Grand Hotel porch.



Fudge in Ryba's Fudge Shop, Mackinac Island.

Resident Historian Bob Tagatz. "This is one of the few places where you can relive the movie as 95 percent was shot on Mackinac Island and 90 percent on our property, and all those things are still there."

Most of the island's inns, hotels, and shops sit within the so-called downtown area along the port and scenic waterfront. On Market Street, flowers hang from lampposts and galleries showcase paintings of orange-tinted sunsets. And on Main Street, I peer through a storefront window to see mounds of hot, sticky fudge pounded and shaped, as fudge-tasting is one of the island's favorite pastimes. "We pour it on a marble slab because it pulls the heat out of the candy and cools it," says Les Parrish of Ryba's Fudge Shop.

First settled by Native Americans and then French missionaries and fur traders, the island became a respite for the Gilded Age rich and famous who built hotels and summer cottages in the late 19th century to escape industrialized Great Lakes cities. Today the island of less than four square miles has become one of the Midwest's most popular resort destinations. Pointed church steeples and the rounded towers of Victorian homes bring to mind a New England town. Winding pathways twist through forested bluffs, now part of Mackinac Island State Park. And horses are at almost every turn.

"The island is slow-paced because of them, and thus people here take their time and enjoy it more," says Veronica Gough of Cindy's Riding Stable, a tour operator offering equestrian jaunts along the island's 83 miles of crisscrossing roads and trails.

A walk up a steep pathway leads to Fort Mackinac, built by the British in the early 1780s but falling to the Americans after the Revolutionary War. Interactive displays and period furnishings fill 14 original buildings, while reenactments and cannon firings reverberate within the stone ramparts. Impressive waterfront views can be seen from the fort's walls.

To explore the rest of the island, 80 percent of which is within the state park, I rent a bicycle and pedal along curvy roads and bike paths where unusual stone formations pierce the tree line. They include Arch Rock, a bridge-like span of eroded breccias carved out of a hillside 146 feet above Lake Michigan's shoreline; and Sugar Loaf Rock, another breccias mass shooting up 75 feet. Expansive island views can also be seen from nearby Point Lookout and the hilltop site of Fort Holmes.

At the end of the day, I enjoy the sunset while in a rocking chair on the Grand Hotel's elongated porch. "We sell a summer memory, a summer experience," says

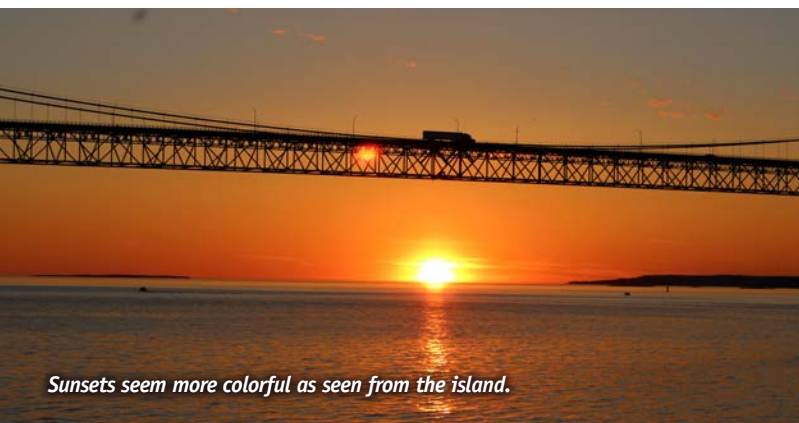




*Bicycling along the lakeshore on Mackinac Island.*



*Shipwreck exhibit inside the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum, Whitefish Point.*



*Sunsets seem more colorful as seen from the island.*



*Lighthouses off the shores of Mackinac Island.*

Tagatz. “I think the biggest thing is to come here and slow down.”

From Michigan’s Lower Peninsula, the Mackinac Bridge—clearly seen from the Grand Hotel’s porch—is the gateway to the eastern end of the Upper Peninsula, or U.P. as locals call it. Opened in 1957, 2017 marked the 60th anniversary of the five-mile-long bridge, the third longest in the world. Rich with hardwood maple forests, it’s no surprise that logging and mining remain among the area’s main industries, with boats still transporting wood, copper and iron ore to cities along the Great Lakes.

Pounded by harsh and long lake-effect snowy winters, local residents, many of Finnish descent and nicknamed “Yoopers” (rooted from U.P.-ers), have developed their own quirky culture. “We blame nine months of winter for making us the way we are,” jokes Fred Huffman of Marquette Country Tours. “It’s not so much that you were born in the Upper Peninsula, it’s a state of mind.” Favorite pastimes include ice fishing, and unique to the U.P. are so-called “pasties,” dough pockets filled with meat and vegetables. “Stick a pasty on a shovel over a fire and a miner would always have a warm lunch,” quips Huffman.

From the Mackinac Bridge we head north on State Hwy. 123, arriving at Whitefish Point along the southern shores of vast Lake Superior, the largest freshwater body in the world in area. Whitefish Point is home to the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum, the U.S. Coast Guard’s Life Boat and Light Station with keeper’s quarters, and Lake Superior’s oldest active lighthouse, built in 1861.

The Shipwreck Museum exhibits artifacts from 13 shipwrecks—freighters that sank just off the shores in Whitefish Bay. “Fog was a common occurrence particularly in the spring and fall,” notes Huffman. “Before modern navigational equipment, a lot of the accidents were caused by collisions between the boats, not so much rough or high seas.”

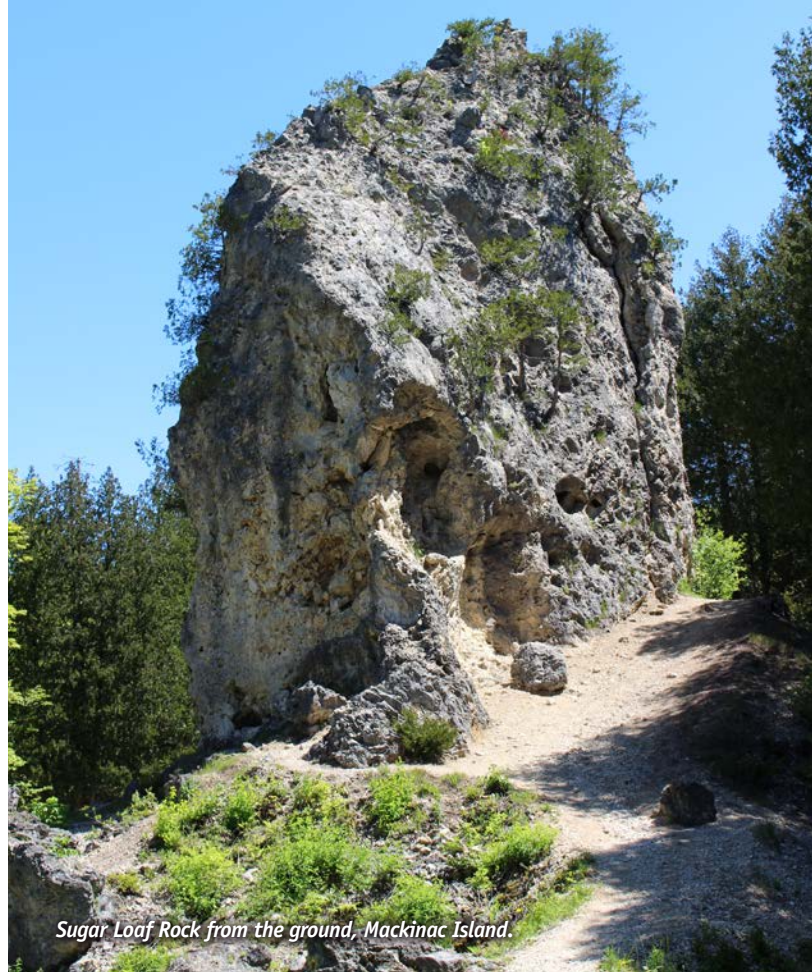
An exception to that was the *SS Edmund Fitzgerald*, plummeting to the lake’s cold depths during a storm in November 1975. Hauling 29,000 tons of iron ore to Detroit steel mills, the freighter’s sheer weight apparently took it down after it was slammed by fierce 20 to 35-foot waves. A day later, Canadian singer Gordon Lightfoot wrote the “The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald,” practically immortalizing the tragedy.

The museum pays tribute to the 29 crewmembers that perished that day. Divers retrieved the *Fitzgerald*’s bell





*Arch Rock.*



*Sugar Loaf Rock from the ground, Mackinac Island.*



*Waterfalls at Tahquamenon Falls State Park, Upper Michigan.*





*Riding a Model T Ford in Greenfield Village, adjacent to the Henry Ford Museum.*



*Views of the "Downtown" from Fort Mackinac.*

in 1995—a centerpiece exhibit—and replaced it on the wreckage with a bell engraved with the names of the lost crewmembers.

Returning south along Hwy. 123 we stop at Tahquamenon Falls State Park (Tahquamenon rhymes with phenomenon), centered by multi-tiered falls deluged with streaks of rust-colored water trails clearly seen against the frothy white turbulence. “The hemlock trees are about 500-600 years old and you can see some are starting to decompose,” explains park guide Theresa Neal. “Hemlock, cedar and oak trees are filled with brown tannic acid and that’s the reason the water is the color it is—not because of copper or minerals.”

To see the falls we hike a third of a mile or so from the park’s Visitor Center, passing chirping verios, redstarts, and other birds perched in American beech and sugar maple trees. More than 50,000 gallons of water per second can tumble over the 50-foot-high Upper Falls from melting snow in the spring, continuing over the smaller and tiered Lower Falls.

On the U.P.’s easternmost edges at Sault Ste. Marie, the Soo Locks control the dramatic 21-foot water level drop from Lake Superior to Lake Huron. More than 11,000 vessels pass through Soo’s four locks every year, with the

largest Poe Lock able to accommodate 1,000-foot-long cargo ships. Watching ships slowly rise and fall as the locks fill and drain can be seen from three observation platforms. The Visitor Center showcases exhibits with lock models, video presentations and history.

South of the Mackinac Bridge, another scenic tour stretches along coastal Lake Michigan via U.S. Route 31 from Mackinaw City to Traverse City. Upscale Petoskey is where favorite son and writer Ernest Hemingway spent much of his youth after his father built a cottage on nearby Walloon Lake. The area is also home to the official Michigan state stone known as Petoskey Stones—shiny, 350-million-year-old fossilized colony coral found along the shores of Little Traverse Bay.

Unique mushroom-like stone houses are must-see sights in the charming marina town of Charlevoix. With cedar-thatched and rounded roofs, many of the gnome-like homes date back to the 1920s and 1930s. Farther along a road sign reads “45th Parallel, Halfway between Equator & North Pole.” And in the Traverse City area dotted with rolling cherry orchards, what might be some of the country’s steepest and largest sand dunes are in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, a national park skirting Lake Michigan.





*Mushroom-like homes, Charlevoix, Lower Peninsula.*



*Tiger statues at Comerica Baseball Park, Detroit.*

If traveling downstate, a visit to Detroit is well worth the effort as the city has been undergoing a dramatic comeback. “Businesses pop up overnight; it’s crazy,” says tour guide Kim Rusinow with Destination Detroit Group Tours and Services.

Clusters of fresh produce, homemade pies, cheeses and Italian seasonings fill tables and vendor stalls at bustling Eastern Market. Alongside the multi-towered General Motors Renaissance Center, the Detroit RiverWalk stretches 3.5 miles along the river with benches, public art, parks, and a lighthouse. Shops, cafes, and residential units now occupy what was once an industrial area.

The Stadium District has marked downtown’s resurgence. Statues of clawing tigers hover over the entrances to Comerica Park, home of the Detroit Tigers baseball team, just across the street from football’s Detroit Lions’ Ford Field. The area’s yet greatest expansion comes with the \$1 billion-plus, 50-block redevelopment project known as The District Detroit, which includes the new Little Caesars Arena, now home to the Detroit Red Wings hockey team and Pistons basketball.

Detroit’s institutions and museums seem to be better than ever. The Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation houses prototype and original early 20th-century cars,

planes, and locomotives. Key exhibits include the refurbished bus in which civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat and former presidents’ cars, including the very ones in which President Kennedy was shot and in which President Reagan was driven to the hospital after his gunshot wound.

Other must-see museums include the Detroit Institute of Arts with its wall-sized Diego Rivera industrial murals in a central atrium. The Motown Museum in two adjacent neighborhood homes offers a close-up look at the small studio where Motown greats like the Supremes and Four Tops got their start.

While much has been done in Detroit, challenges remain. In the 1950s, the population was close to 2 million, down to about 700,000 now. More than 40 percent of the city’s 140 square miles is vacant land with 80,000 abandoned homes.

“There’s no denying we’ve been slammed pretty hard,” says Rusinow. “We have some challenges to overcome, but we are an amazing comeback city.”

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*Sanibel beaches feature transparent turquoise water.*



*Manatee wall sculpture at Ding Darling NWR.*

## Sanibel

Story and photos by Paula Loehr

Where's the top spot for sea shell collectors? Sanibel, an offshore island near Fort Myers on Florida's southwest coast, is a major contender. Sanibel's shelling prospects are legendary. A large continental shelf that extends into the Gulf of Mexico borders the island. When winter storms produce big waves, nearly 300 species of piled up shells are swept from the ledge onto Sanibel's sandy shores. Whether you explore the tide line on foot, arrange a guided tour, or hire a boat captain to transport you to secluded coves brimming with shells, the creative process of seeking and discovering sea shells at Sanibel is always delightful.

In addition to exquisite shells, Sanibel welcomes visitors with miles of sandy beaches, mangrove-fringed bays, and sparkling turquoise waters. Pine forests, palm trees, and tropical flowers brighten Sanibel's biking and hiking paths, kayak trails, and fishing spots.

What's so extraordinary about this 12-by-3-mile Gulf retreat is the local community's solid commitment to environmental education and conservation. Municipal and commercial concerns have worked cooperatively for decades to promote many eco-friendly experiences for residents and visitors alike. Although Sanibel boasts a grand array of restaurants, shops, and galleries, there's no doubt that the island's fabulous natural assets are its primary tourist attractions.

Sanibel's history is nearly as colorful as the shells, vibrant blooms, and soaring birds that make the island so lovely today. After a 2000-year occupation by the Calusa Indians, the mid-1800s brought an influx of Spanish and English explorers and settlers. Commercial fishing, ranching, and farming of crops like citrus, tomatoes, and pineapples shaped the island's economy. After a fierce 1926 hurricane wiped out agricultural efforts, the launching of an auto ferry operation helped establish Sanibel as a vacation destination. Subsequent construction of causeway bridges provided easier island access from the mainland.

When you first cross the bridges into Sanibel, be sure to stop at the Chamber of Commerce's Visitor Center to pick up maps and guidebooks. The center is a charming pastel-colored cottage on the right side of Periwinkle





*The colorful, welcoming Sanibel-Captiva Chamber Visitor Center is on the right side of Causeway Road as you drive onto Sanibel Island.*



*Just some of the types of shells you can find while searching.*

Way, just past the causeway as you arrive on the island.

Moving from east to west across Sanibel, here's our list of recommendations for best nature-oriented places and activities.

The circa 1884 Sanibel Lighthouse at the eastern tip of the island (on Periwinkle Way) marks the convergence of the Gulf of Mexico with San Carlos Bay. The light originally signaled cattle-carrying ships when they sailed from the bay to the Florida Keys or Cuba. Today's lighthouse visitors can cast a line from the fishing dock, build a sandcastle on the beach, enjoy a picnic, or view coastal wonders from a nature trail.

Just west of the lighthouse on Sanibel-Captiva (San-Cap) Road, Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum is the only natural history museum in North America that's devoted to sea shells. Displays showcase all sizes, shapes, and colors of shells from around the world plus artistic renderings such as a shell bouquet and sailor's valentines—intricate floral and heart-shaped designs made completely with sea shells. There's even a special learning lab just for kids. At Tank Talks, led by museum naturalists, you can learn practical shelling tips. And in hands-on craft sessions, you can create shell animals or jewelry.

After departing the museum, continue west on San-Cap Road, turning right at J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). On Sanibel, where 67 percent of the acreage is protected, Ding Darling is the centerpiece of long-standing conservation efforts. The refuge encompasses 7,608 acres of mangroves, sea grass beds, marshes, and hardwood hammocks—safe spaces for migratory birds, land mammals, and marine life. Established in 1945, the original Sanibel Refuge was dedicated to Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling in 1978. Darling, a Pulitzer prize-winning political cartoonist and director of the U.S. Biological Survey, was a winter resident of Sanibel. He was also a steadfast environmentalist during the 1930s, long before most people were concerned with ecology.

The walls of the Visitor Center feature lively 3-D murals of sea turtles, manatees, and such. Topics like bird migrations and nesting patterns, the fragile refuge ecosystem, and J.N. Ding Darling's conservation work are represented through interactive exhibits and films.

Ding Darling NWR harbors 272 bird species including ospreys, swooping pelicans, great blue herons, and wood storks. Raccoons and river otters are two of 35 kinds of mammals that live within the refuge. Among 60 types of amphibians and reptiles, you might spot a gopher tortoise digging or an occasional toothy American crocodile.





*The bridges leading to Sanibel Island introduce incoming travelers to island-style views.*



*Blue water views are everywhere on Ding Darling NWR's Wildlife Drive.*



*National Shell Museum.*



*Sanibel lighthouse is located at the eastern tip of the island.*

Wildlife Drive is a one-way 4-mile NWR loop road that winds along Sanibel's pristine bay side. You can walk, ride a bike, drive your car or RV, or board a tram for a narrated tour of the loop. The drive begins and ends on San-Cap Road. Venture onto the drive in the early morning or late afternoon for optimal wildlife sightings. The observation tower affords sweeping views of refuge lands and waters. On bright winter days, alligators soak up sunshine at the bay's edge. Spring and autumn are the seasons for colorful migrating songbirds. Early summer is a good time to spot a bright pink roseate spoonbill in flight.

The NWR's Tarpon Bay Recreation Area is tops for exploring Sanibel's freshwater marshes. Rental kayaks, canoes, stand up paddleboards, pontoon boats, and bikes are available. Nature & Sea Life Cruises help you scout out manatees and dolphins. Fishing charter participants reel in the likes of sea trout, snook, and redfish. At the Bailey Tract on Tarpon Bay Road, you might catch glimpses of alligators lurking, bobcats slinking, or marsh rabbits hopping.

After exiting J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge onto San-Cap Road, continue northwest for a short distance and make an easy left turn toward Bowman's Beach, an area preferred for swimming, shelling and

observing nesting shorebirds and sea turtles. Bowman's offers sandy shores, clear waters, Australian pines, and shady walking trails lined with yellow blooming cacti, sea grapes, and palms. Westerly strolls down the beach lead to seashell mounds that accumulate during stormy winter seasons. Shell caches at Bowman's tend to dazzle even experienced shellers.

Blind Pass Beach and Captiva's Turner Beach are just west of Bowman's at the northern tip of Sanibel—where the glorious Gulf of Mexico and southern end of Captiva Island are visible. After you cross the panoramic Blind Pass Bridge, the road becomes Captiva Drive. Public beach parks on both sides of the bridge are popular stops for surf fishing, shell hunting, bird watching, and photographing Florida's splendid West Coast sunsets.

From the vintage lighthouse on its eastern edge to scenic Blind Pass Beach on its western end, Sanibel Island is a nature lover's paradise that's too good to miss.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
[www.sanibel-captiva.org](http://www.sanibel-captiva.org)





# RV REVIEW

BY HOWARD J. ELMER

## Keystone Bullet Colt 172RBC Lightweight and ready for adventure

Keystone advertises its new 2018 Bullet Colt as being “ready for adventure.” A marketing tagline? Sure. But it’s also a clue as to its intended purpose—which is giving you a complete, but smaller base camp. One you can tow right to where you want to do something.

The Colt is one of new wave of lightweight travel trailers that are aimed at an active, adventuresome RVing demographic. So my first impression of the Bullet Colt is that it would make a useful companion for whatever outdoor passion I choose to pursue.

Weighing in at a GVWR of 3,900 pounds (which includes 1,100 pounds of cargo) the Colt can be towed by a wide variety of today’s vehicles. A truck is not necessary and this frees up many potential buyers from having to change their daily driver to accommodate the weight of the trailer. The growth of the mid-size SUV market increases the number of models that would serve as a good tow vehicle for this trailer every year.

The first look at the trailer shows off the classic teardrop shape of the shell—a design feature that equals strength and maximum space. You’ll also note that the wheels are mounted outboard of the body. This makes the trailer more stable, saves space otherwise needed for inside wheel wells and lifts the body—all the better to traverse rougher terrain. The 15-inch radial tires are attached to

independent torsion-bar axles, super lube hubs and they ride on aluminum wheels. Considering where this trailer might go, the drain pipes are reasonably high under the body; my only concern is with the spare tire that hangs below the A-frame tongue. That I find too low.

Construction of the trailer is mostly welded aluminum walls on a steel frame. The wall covering is two-tone gelcoat fiberglass with a one-piece seamless fiberglass roof above. The windows are tinted and large with an automotive frameless look. The door is radiused and features rubber seals. This unit is built for three-season usage—with R-7 insulation in the sidewalls and R-9 in the roof and floor. However the water and waste tanks are not heated so that precludes camping in consistent freezing temps; but with a 20K Btu furnace, it will be comfortable in the shoulder seasons. For the summer heat, there is a powered vent fan and a roof-mounted 13.5K AC unit.

So I’ve said this is a smaller trailer that is also lightweight—but it does have a single slideout which it uses to great interior benefit. This flush-floor slide uses what’s called the Schwintek-slideout system. It’s built by Lippert Components and uses rail-mounted gears with electric motors, as you’d expect—however all the aluminum components are mounted in the slide-out itself. This saves space and lets the box be secured at all four corners to prevent leaks.

The entire kitchen is nicely cubed into this slide, making it accessible when closed. When open, though, it makes





for a central galley and offers up good floor space. The kitchen has a deep counter with a glass-topped two-burner stove next to a deep stainless-steel sink with a gooseneck faucet. A sliding window with mini-blind sheds light on the food-prep area. All this sits on top of the storage drawers and a large cabinet. The two-way, three-cubic-foot refrigerator is also stainless steel as is the built-in convection microwave above it. Turn 180 degrees and you're facing the two-seat dinette. By the way—the interior height is 6 feet 6 inches. That dinette table also doubles as the base for a single bed—or take it outside to set up, it does that too.

In fact, the designers of the Colt assume you'll spend considerable time outside of the trailer and so have provided a number of features for that purpose, such as exterior LED lights, an LP quick-connect for the barbecue, exterior speakers that run off a Bluetooth stereo, an outdoor shower, 120V plug and a Thule awning to cover that alfresco living space. There is also a pass-through storage at the front of the trailer accessible from either side. This is below the 60x74-inch Queen Bed.

It's worth mentioning that the Colt has two different floorplans with two very different intentions. They both fit in the same shell and use the same single slide-out. The best way to label the difference between the two though is to state that one model (the one I tested) would be home to two people, while the other would support four. The key difference between is the bathroom size. This bath space in my tester is large, particularly

for a trailer of just 20 feet. It has a full corner shower stall, plenty of room around the Thetford toilet and a freestanding cabinet and sink. The other floorplan setup creates a "wet" bath design. This much smaller space has features that can get wet when the smaller shower is in use. However, in this floorplan the dinette seats four, not two—it also moves the kitchen to the rear of the trailer where the counter space is doubled.

The trailer is equipped with a 55-amp charger. All the key appliances are two-way, including the water heater, so being plugged in is no problem. But then we have been talking about adventure and that often takes you off the grid. The Colt has a solar prep package that accepts a Go power solar charging system. Its flexible panels fit flush on the roof. But for more traditional camping there is a pair of 12V house batteries, 20-pound propane tank and plenty of water, perfect for weekend boondocking.

With its natural appeal to first-timers, a trailer like the Colt is a great way to get you started on a lifetime of outdoor wonder.

### 2018 KEYSTONE BULLET COLT 172RBCT

**DRY WEIGHT:** 2890 pounds

**FRESHWATER:** 36 gallons

**CARRYING CAPACITY:** 1010 pounds

**BLACK WATER:** 30 gallons

**GVWR:** 3900 pounds

**GREY WATER:** 30 gallons

**LENGTH:** 20 feet

**LPG:** 20 pounds

**HEIGHT:** 9 feet 6 inches



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