

2014 Open Range Light 274RLS

This is our latest RV. We did a lot of research prior to ordering and purchasing this as we expect it to be our final RV. We had decided to get a larger RV after a long trip in the R-Vision TC-23SB, worked fine, but a little more luxury was definitely desired.

Janet wanted something with large windows to get as much sun as possible, a walk around bed, king preferred, queen minimum, and not longer than 30 feet. I wanted something that was towable by a 1/2 ton pickup, so less than 10,000 lbs gross weight, preferred less than 9,000 GWV for a margin, plus as much electric jacks and such outside as I could get.

In looking, we had decided on either a Jayco or Arctic Fox, but were having trouble finding a floor plan we both liked. While putting my RV in storage in Phoenix, I saw an Open Range right across from me, upon closer review, it was very impressive. So we started researching Open Range RVs. Then while on the trip to AR in 2012, we stopped at a few OR dealers along the way and looked at different models. Once Janet saw the 274RLS, that was it, she was hooked. So then we started looking for who to get it from and trying to make a deal... The dealer in Phoenix would not come down to my price, so we shopped in TX, OK, and WA.. finally got the deal I wanted in WA. We ordered it from the factory with everything we wanted on it and I picked it up a week after arrival.

It is a little over 30 feet (31'5") and has dual slide outs in the living area, this makes for a very large and comfortable living space. We got the larger A/C, larger refrigerator, all dark work interior, entertainment center (32" tv), fireplace, electric awning, electric jacks all around, and a few other options I can't remember.



Here is a shot of it while camped at Ft Knox, KY on our trip from WA to Savannah, GA.

Pulling it with a 2006 Dodge Ram 2500, 5.9 Cummins Diesel, and its great. Getting about 13-14 mpg when towing.

[Specific Sheet and Floor Plan](#)

1976 Free Spirit 23' Class C

We flew out of Alaska to visit all the relatives in Arkansas. Bought this motorhome in Little Rock, AR and drove it back to Alaska. Kept it for a year and sold it for what we paid for it. RVs were reselling great in Alaska in those days.

It was great for camping and even better for getting around in the winter. We could take a lot of people downtown shopping or out to eat, keep the heater running while we were out and have a nice warm ride all evening.

A Class C is great for when you are driving, especially with kids. they love the overhead bunk. We have thought about getting another for taking the grandkids out, but a trailer seems to suit our style of camping better at this point. If we ever driving a lot again, we'll definitely be looking for another Class C.

1970 Terry 23' Travel Trailer

It have a pressurized water system, a large metal tank that you pressurized with air to provide water pressure. It had a compressor that operated automatically, or you could add air via a compressor at the gas station. A front gaucho that was a combination double and single bed, plus an overhead that could sleep two kids. Had a bath, kitchen, and a small refrigerator, nothing like the modern trailers of today, but adequate for the time.

In Arkansas, I installed the trailer hitch and got the car ready to go, installed air shocks (big mistake for Alaska, lost them the first winter) and WDH. I had a 1974 Chrysler Town and Country station wagon at that time, 440 cubic inch engine, plenty of car to tow a trailer. I started off from Arkansas heading for Yellowstone National Park, never having pulled a travel trailer in my life. I didn't get 25 miles down the road before I was stopping and making hitch adjustments. But other than that things seemed to go well and the learning curve was not too severe.

We did have an incident in Colorado, just outside Denver, in heavy winds and blowing rain, I lost my awning. while driving down the Interstate, I noticed my awning flapping out the driver side mirror. It had opened up and blown all the way over the trailer. I pulled over, but in the high winds and cold rain, along with the dodging flapping canvass and support poles, all I could do was cut it off and leave it beside the road. We continued the trip sans awning.

While camping at Yellowstone, I met a camper coming off the ALACAN. You knew them back then due to the 1-2 inches of dirt accumulated on the vehicle. He had manufactured a shield to protect the front of his truck from rocks and gravel during the trip. I talked to him about the trip and decided to copy his grille guard. When we stopped at Great Falls, Montana, just prior to crossing the border, I had a local welding shop

make me a grille protector based on his pattern. On top I mounted a piece of plexiglass about 6 inches high. the device used expanded steel grid to protect the grill and radiator from stones, the plexiglass created a wind dam that caused other debris to fly over the top of the car, rather than hit the windshield. It worked great. I covered the camper windows with either plywood or cardboard and we were ready for the trip up the longest gravel road in the world.

As we crossed the border and headed for Dawson Creek, I did not fully comprehend the adventures that were before me in the next 2 weeks, much less the next three years. See my story of the ALCAN in another post on this site.



2008 Trail Cruiser 23SB

We purchased the Trail Cruiser 23SB in June 2008. This was an upgrade from the Jayco Kiwi 17A hybrid. We were looking at getting a larger hybrid, but found the Trail Cruiser and liked the slide out rear queen bed. The TC23SB has large bunks in the front and the slide out queen in the rear. In addition, the sofa and the dining table all make into beds, so in a pinch it can sleep 10 people. Its an ultra-light, weighting 3790 empty with a gross vehicle weight of 5500 pounds.



We were looking for a trailer that would accomodate us and the grandkids. Janet wanted a larger bathroom than the Kiwi had, plus some walk around room in the trailer. I wanted something that the truck could pull, without any upgrading. So a lightweight trailer was necessary. We wanted less than 25 feet, so we could get into the forest service and smaller state park campgrounds. This one fit all of our needs. It pulls really well, even with the small V8 (4.6L) in the F150.

On our maiden voyage, we took it to Sequest State Park to view Mount Saint Helens. It went fine, no problems with the trailer at all, very happy with it. It was plenty comfortable and set up easy.







My tow vehicle is a 2001 Ford F150 Supercrew, 4.6L V8 engine, auto and 3.73 rear end. I have modified the air intake using the Gott's Mod, got information on this off the F150 forums. It uses an K&N filter and improves my horsepower. I use an ez-lift weight distribution hitch (WDH) and have ordered the friction anti-sway bar for it. It tows well and hardly any sway, except when you have 18 wheelers pass you on both sides at once.

1990 Oddessey

We owned this RV for about 3 years and really loved it. It was perfect for a weekend getaway for 2 but to small for anymore.

It is build on a Toyota chassis with a 6 cylinder engine, plenty of power. It had the rear lounge. That provided plenty of sitting and relaxing area, but when you used it for a bed, it was very uncomfortable. We slept on the bed over the cab and that was OK, but as we grew older, the climbing in and out was a pain. The major obstacle was the liquid capacities. It had a 17 gal capacity for water and holding, so a weekend, with careful showering was it.



1995 Alpenlite 5th Wheel

We owned this for over 5 years and it was a great RV. 31 feet long with 2 slide-outs, it had a lot of room. We originally got it to use after retirement, but landed a job in AZ and bought a house, so didn't need a tow around winter home anymore. Alpenlite builds a great RV and this one was solid, very well appointed on the inside and very comfortable. It has 100 gal of water, 50 gal grey water and 50 gal black water holding. Dual batteries and all the holding meant we could dry camp for 4-5 days without anything and not even worry about

showers or power. Pulled it with a Ford F250 diesel and that was a great truck combo for this trailer. Pulled it all over the western US, including a lot of mountains. I did add some stuff to the truck, especially an exhaust brake. I highly recommend this if you are running a diesel in the mountains.



2001 Jayco Kiwi 17A

We bought the 17A in 2006. After selling our 5th wheel a couple of years ago, my grandkids wanted to go camping. Camping to them meant 'go out in grandpa's RV'. So we started looking for another RV to replace the 5th wheel. We looked at Class Cs and pop-up trailers and then found the Kiwi. Its really small and easy to pull, with pop-out bunks on each end. Did I mention it was small? I feels more like tent camping than a full hard side trailer and adds a little sense of adventure. The grandkids love it, my wife on the other hand is still undecided. Did I mention it was small?

I added dual batteries, have a grey water storage system that goes in the back of my pickup and doubles the internal

capacity. A small solar battery charger and carry a full refill of fresh water in the pickup also. So we can stay out about 4 days dry camping. Most places we go have some hookups so its fine then. But with its small size I can also get into some of the high country national park and forest service areas I could not get the 5er into. This will be our first 'full' summer so time will tell. I think its great, but in 'iffy' weather staying inside with a couple of energetic grandkids can get to feeling cramped. Did I mention its small?

