

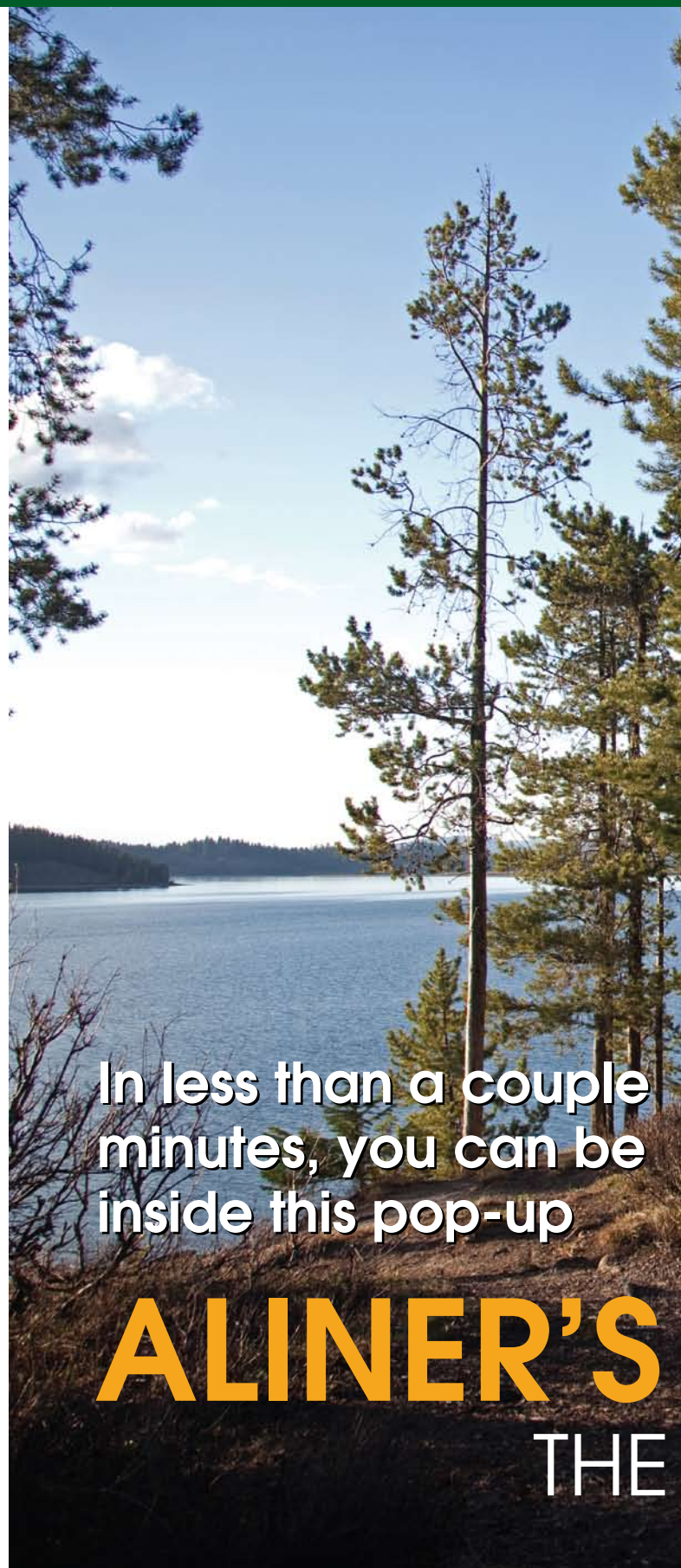
CAMPING in tents for two decades was great fun. However, my wife did try talking me into purchasing a camper for the second decade. When we were planning a family trip to drive around the U.S., she pushed hard again, so I figured I would give her a laundry list that no camper could possibly meet: Sleep two adults and four children, have a shower and toilet, air conditioning, furnace, hard sides, and be able to be pulled by our Dodge Grand Caravan. I was amazed when she introduced me to A-frame campers. We have not slept in a tent since.

It is a privilege to review the Aliner Classic, one of the most popular mid-sized A-frames. As experienced A-frame owners, we have a solid basis to compare brands and improvements over the past few years.

“COOL” is the most common word uttered when seeing an A-frame camper for the first time. We heard it again as we took the Aliner Classic on its maiden voyage to Mossyrock, Washington. The Classic is much more than a “tent on wheels”. Plenty of headroom, numerous windows, ample venting, and modern conveniences make it a great getaway. It’s simple to tow and easy to set up. The Classic even has handles on the front to aid in moving it by hand, which we did at the campground because the love of my life wanted it set up perpendicular to the pad.

COMFORTABLE is the feeling when you step into the trailer after it is set up. The curtains and cushions are a nice neutral color that will blend with most any bedding. The floor has a smooth surface, which makes cleaning a breeze. The 3.0 cubic foot refrigerator is as spacious as possible in a pop-up. The sink is easy to use, though we found doing the dishes at the outside shower was a superior alternative. The stove can be set up inside or outside, with LP gas connections provided at both places. We cooked outside, using a folding table we brought along for convenience. The Aliner has a mounting plate for hanging the stove on the outside, but it seemed high. An optional canopy is available to cover the entry area, though this particular model did not have it.

One bit of discomfort we experienced is the shelf on the rear wall above the bed: While it provides a place to put a book or glasses, my wife bumped it several times while sleeping because the bed is slightly smaller than a queen bed. Dan Hyland,



In less than a couple minutes, you can be inside this pop-up

ALINER'S
THE



Background image © Stockphoto.com/Richard Stouffer, camper image by Gordon Fiddes

A-FRAME

by Gordon Fiddes

2010 CLASSIC REVEALED

the Aliner representative, told me that Aliner is making the rear bed 6 inches wider in the 2010 model year, which should solve that problem. Speaking of sleeping, the trailer had no unusual noises to interrupt sleep. I even went out to use the facilities at 2:30 in the morning, and was able to get in and out without disturbing anybody. The door latch is a natural, and the stabilizers work well.

Although the temperature got down to 54 degrees Fahrenheit, we slept cozy in the trailer with the vents slightly open, even though we left the furnace turned off. The hard walls insulate the living space well, and provide additional security from nocturnal creatures. The water heater also radiated a little heat, even though it was turned off.

CONVENIENCE is a priority to Aliner. The Dometic refrigerator has an auto-select feature that will choose 110 volt, gas, or battery. This is great for traveling because when stopping to shop, you just turn the gas on and the refrigerator will automatically switch to gas, ignite itself, and you don't even have to touch it. The water heater is also automatic: no lighting the pilot anymore! 110 volt electric plugs are everywhere you need them. The laptop worked well when I was seated on the rear sofa using one of the folding tables.

The water heater, pump, and fresh water tank are easily accessible in the event of a problem. They are located on the driver's side rear under the sofa. Storage space is generous, with ample access inside and outside to all of the three compartments. There also is storage under the sink and the microwave. Since the Classic is not equipped with a toilet, it provides storage space for a portable toilet near the entry door. There is no gray water tank, so the sink drain must flow into a bucket or portable gray water container when at most parks.

Setting up the A-frame took about a minute and a half to be able to walk into it. The biggest challenge is raising the roof. People that cannot raise their arms above five feet would find the process difficult because the spring assisted roof is manually tilted up, as are the sides. This model requires a little maneuvering to raise the passenger side because the door can scuff against the roof if it is not positioned properly, so it is part of the set up routine to hold the door. Other models have the door open differently, eliminating any clearance problem. Raising the roof and sides was easy for us.

COST is always a factor. Aliner has six models with diverse options to meet most any price point ranging from \$ 6171.00 to \$ 20,924.00 MSRP plus shipping. Dan told me this particular trailer we reviewed would have an MSRP of \$15,837.00 plus



(top) Road ready. (middle) Back of refrigerator. The white tube is the drain for the drip pan. What a convenience! (bottom) Water heater, pump, and fresh water tank. Notice the black pipe elbow to the left of the water heater going down into the floor: This is the low point water drain for the entire system.

shipping. I found it interesting that air conditioners are most popular in the eastern U.S., while furnaces are more popular in the western U.S. The options on our model included the 3000 pound axle (off road) package, Fantastic fan, 6 gallon water



(left) Fold down faucet works well. Thermostat is designed so you can brush against the face without messing the setting. Toggle switches are easy to push. (right) Front trailer jack wheel is pinned in place securely, but easy to remove.

heater and deluxe faucet, 16,000 BTU furnace, dual propane tanks, and a high wind kit. I was pleasantly surprised to see many features I considered to be “optional” come standard in the Classic.

COMPACTNESS is a trademark of pop-ups. The Aliner Classic does not disappoint. We towed it with our 2006 Dodge Grand Caravan. We did not use any type of sway stabilizer or load leveler. It pulled very easily. I was seldom aware of it unless we were climbing a moderately steep hill. It rides in the vehicle’s slipstream, so the loss in miles per gallon is negligible.

When unhitched from the tow vehicle, it’s not difficult to move the camper around by hand on hard surfaces, and it will fit into a garage. Part of the reason the camper is so light is because the hard walls are made with Fiberglas laminated over Styro-foam, so the walls are both insulated and rigid. This product is very durable, and has become the standard for all A-frames and many other campers.

COMPETITION is good for the A-frame camper industry. Aliner has been around the longest, but cannot rest on its laurels because others are also coming up with innovations. If you want to compare products, take a look at “www.aliner.com” or “www.chaletrv.com”. Australia also has an A-frame camper made by A’van: “www.avan.com.au/products_campers.html”. The similarities you find result from years of research and customer feedback. The people that design A-frames are passionate about the product and listen to their customers. A-frames are a practical alternative every camper should consider. Many models are available to fit just about any variety of needs. I am impressed with the comfortable convenience Aliner has built into the Classic. 🚐

2010 Aliner Classic prototype specifications

Length when towed	15 feet
Length when set up	15 feet
Width folded	78 inches
Width set up	78 inches
Height folded	57 inches
Height when set up	122 inches
Empty weight	1530 lbs
Max weight	3000 lbs
Exterior	entirely hard sides
Brake system	yes
Sink	single
Freshwater capacity	11 gallons
Gray water capacity	0 gallons
Toilet	no
Shower	no
Stove	movable
Microwave	yes
Hot water heater	self lighting 6 gallons
Air conditioner	no
Awning	no
Refrigerator .3.0 cu ft	intelligent elec-gas-battery