

**H**AVE LONG FANTASIZED about owning an Airstream. With a sunburst of rivets crowning the gleaming aluminum façade, it always seemed to be a distinctive paean to American craftsmanship, independence, and the open road. Founder Wally Byam's iconic travel trailer is a bit like Tiffany's little blue box: You immediately recognize it, it brings a smile to your face—and you want to know what is inside.

When Byam introduced the first Airstream in 1931, it was as an innovative way to allow the average Joe to fulfill his dreams of discovery in relative comfort. Now the Ohio-made trailers are enjoying a newfound status: They have gone from cult classic among nomadic retirees to chic design statement for the affluent. Sales doubled between 2003 and 2006, and 28% of the people who purchased an Airstream last year had never owned an RV before. Celebrities such as Tom Hanks, Matthew McConaughey, and Sandra Bullock use them as mo-

bile dressing rooms; corporations turn them into clever brand experiences on wheels—Pamela Anderson even transformed hers into a “Lovestream” (I’m not sure I want details). The moment was right to finally climb inside one myself.

The model I coveted, the 28-foot International Signature Series, wasn’t available, so I settled for an equally long Ocean Breeze; borrowers can’t be choosers. (Both are \$73,000, nicely equipped.) Instead of the SS’s sleek, minimalist, bachelor-pad interior, mine offered a cheap ‘n’ cheerful Hawaiian Ikea-esque décor. There were some good touches: kaleidoscope aluminum walls in the kitchen, a flat-screen TV, handsome spotlights throughout. And there were some less premium areas: white laminated cabinetry, bland flooring, utilitarian fabrics. Still, Airstream had clearly gone to some trouble to offer unusual details: novel drawer pulls, tiki-inspired wall lights, bamboo-embedded plastic sliders. The sum of this uneven reality, however, was quickly threatening my dream: Was

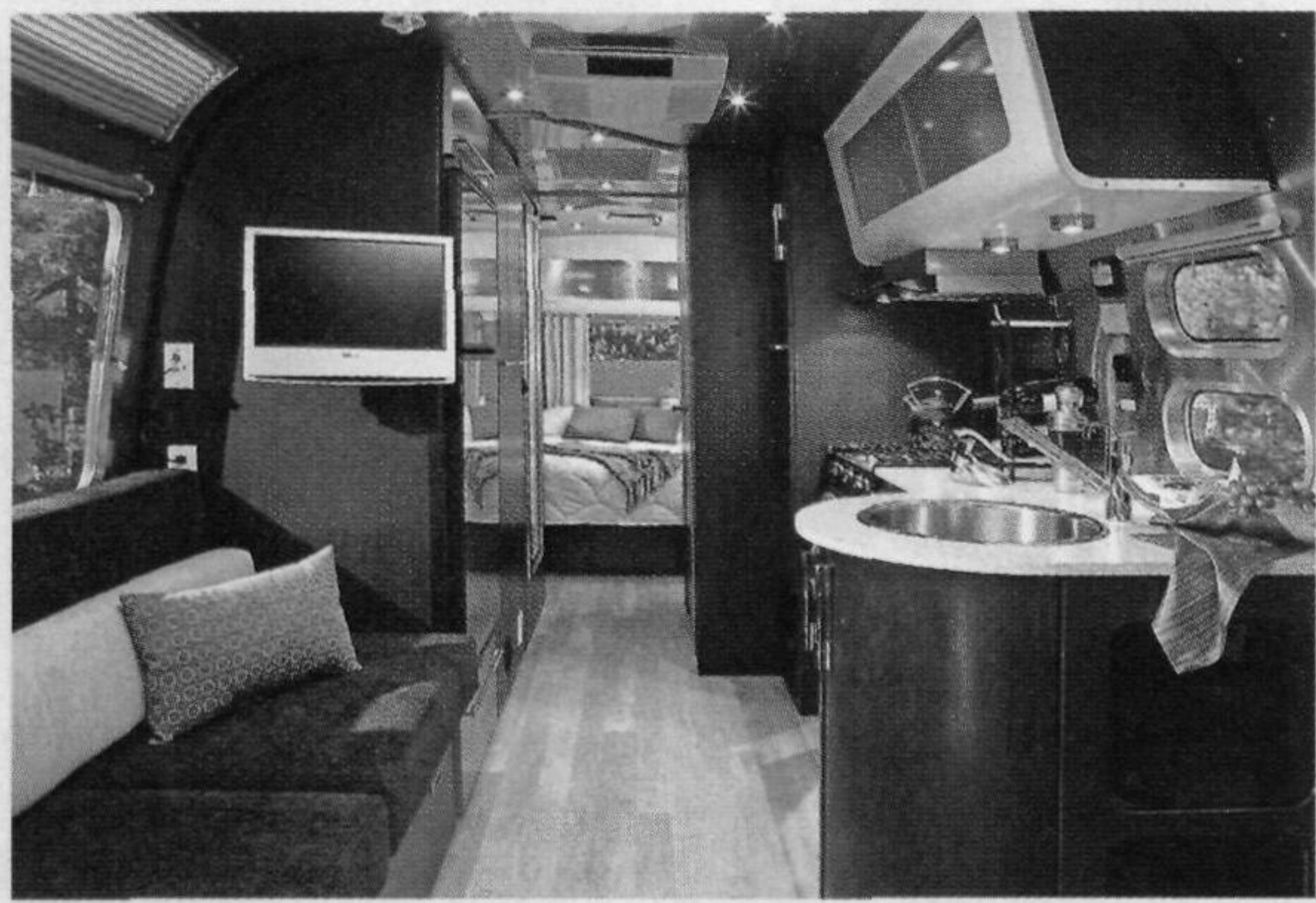
Airstream’s only silver lining on the outside? But as the sun poured through the unit’s panoramic windows, I felt bolstered by the promise of adventure.

All expeditions are, of course, exercises in the unexpected. I found towing the trailer surprisingly easy; most large SUVs can be equipped to handle it. But how could we have known that of the two

## INSIDE JOBS

*Moguls who aren’t interested in off-the-rack style send their Airstreams to this interior outfitter.*

**WHILE MANY** shops around the country specialize in Airstream customizations and restorations, one stands way out: Timeless Travel Trailers (timelesstraveltrailers.com) in Wheat Ridge, Colo. TTT can create any interior you desire—from leatherbound library to mod *Jetson* pod—using the best materials, highly experienced craftsmen, and the most up-to-date technologies. TTT’s clients tend to be Hollywood types and business moguls, who typically spend anywhere from \$45,000 to \$160,000 to personalize their trailer. Interestingly, 55% of those customers are single women in their 50s. “They like the smaller 16- to 18-foot trailers,” says founder Brett Hall. “There’s a cuteness factor to them, and they are manageable to tow.” —S.Z.C.



**MOD POD**  
The 28-foot International Signature Series Airstream has a modern vibe inside (above).

external valves marked “water inlet,” only one actually filled the water tanks? The other, which we innocently hooked a hose to, created an interior tsunami that shot straight up through the toilet (an unlucky friend was standing there when it crested).

Okay, so a little wet carpet never stopped me. As night fell we hauled in load after load of essentials and then my two little ones. They were so excited to

