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FAMILY MOTOR COACHING

**A BUS-STYLE
UNICOACH
FROM
FORETRAVEL**



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Foretravel's Bus-Style **Unicoach**



Webster defines the word "palatial" as being "like a palace; large, magnificent, stately." Adjacent to this definition, Webster could easily have placed a picture of the U320C motorhome, for this new Foretravel coach embodies these attributes and more. With its monocoque infrastructure; the beauty and correctness of its exterior lines; and the luxury, comfort, and elegance that blend to create the ambience inside, the U320C Unicoach again puts Foretravel among the leaders. This time the

arena is the front-entry, bus-style motor coach marketplace.

The greatest difficulty encountered in conducting a review of the U320C Unicoach was getting my hands on one. On three different occasions, by the time a coach made its way from the factory in Nacogdoches, Texas, to Foretravel of California in Irvine, where I hoped to pick it up, it had been sold. Finally, and unexpectedly, a window of opportunity presented itself. I learned that a coach would be available over the Thanksgiving week-

end, but the owner was arriving to take delivery the following Monday. So, I dropped everything and immersed myself in this experience. I soon learned that the U320C motorhome has been designed and built to comply with Foretravel's long tradition of excellence.

To begin with, the U320C Unicoach is pushed by the new Cummins M11, a 400-horsepower turbocharged diesel engine that allows this coach, which has a gross vehicle weight rating of 32,000 pounds, to excel on hills, on-ramps,



This veteran manufacturer of upscale motorhomes has unveiled its U320C Unicoach, which combines Foretravel craftsmanship and quality with bus-type attributes.

By LAZELLE D. JONES

and freeways. It's fully capable of doing all of this and towing 6,000 pounds to boot. In conjunction with the Allison HD-4060R 6-speed World transmission, the U320C not only has power to spare, but it responds in a heartbeat to a broad spectrum of evolving torque requirements, as driving scenarios and operating conditions change. The coach boasts a state-of-the-art four-wheel disc brake system, including an antilock braking system, as well as a transmission retarding system that slows the forward progress of the coach without

the driver ever engaging the service brakes. All of this makes controlling this 40-foot-long, 102-inch-wide coach a casual and uncomplicated experience.

The massive, bus-style windshield affords excellent visibility for the driver. The steering wheel telescopes in and out simply by turning the center piece of the steering column, and the wheel also tilts, adding to driving comfort. The soft, leather-covered pilot and copilot seats feature power adjustments that make it possible to move the seats in several directions

to customize seat placement for individual needs.

The copilot seat is extra wide and includes a power adjustable foot and leg rest. This quickly becomes everyone's favorite easy chair. Further contributing to the copilot's comfort en route is an air-operated step-well cover that can be extended for travel and retracted at the touch of a button to expose the steps. A cleverly designed utility table slides out of the wraparound leather-covered dash when needed.

Honorable mention should be given to the layout of the dash, the instrumentation, and the controls. The simplicity of the arrangement contributes to user friendliness, and the balanced layout of the instrumentation immediately puts you at ease. No flight school is necessary to allow you to become the commander of this starship. To the left of the driver, integrated into the forward section of the armrest, are switches that toggle on and off to provide engine retarding, power boost, ICC courtesy lights, and exterior mirror heating. The power-adjustable side mirrors employ a system of independent adjustments for the split mirrors found on both sides of the coach. This is an excellent arrangement, for the optics of the larger top mirror and the optics provided by the bottom mirror are quite different, because they cover distinct areas of viewing. The push button panel for the transmission is placed vertically in front of these toggle switches, out of the way but easily reached and visible. To the right of the steering wheel are large, usable knobs that control the cockpit air conditioning, heater and defroster temperature, and the fan.

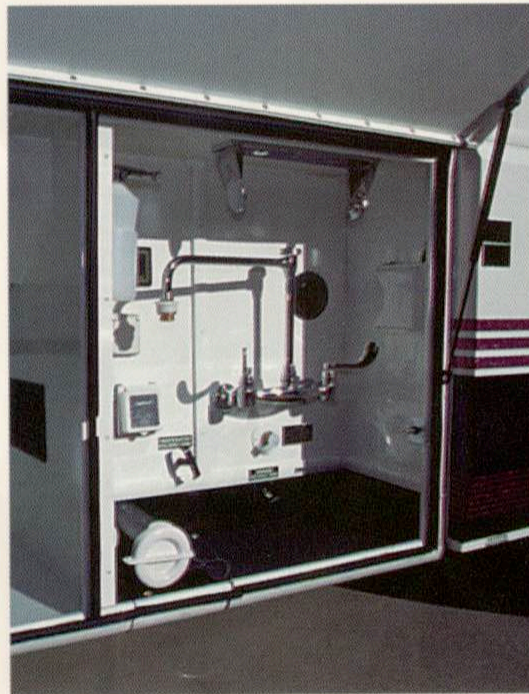
The U320C comes with a dash monitor that performs some unusual functions in addition to allowing the driver to see, via the rear-mounted video camera, what is going on behind the coach. On this monitor the coach owner can select a screen that provides real-time information regarding the status of the various systems on board the coach. The owner is not restricted to gathering data about tank levels, battery condition, etc. at a single status panel somewhere else in the coach. Furthermore, the coach owner can select a third screen that will display both the inside and outside ambient temperatures and indicate which direction the coach is heading. To the right of the monitor, in an out-of-the-way place, is a 40-channel CB radio, always a nice feature to have no matter where you travel.

The systems on this coach that aren't readily visible are as well thought out as those that are. For example, the U320C's computerized air ride suspension, which incorporates eight air bags, serves a dual function. When you've reached your destination, it becomes the leveling system. Powered by its own 12-volt-DC air compressor, this system even

includes an air hose for self-contained tire service.

Foretravel knows that when you're driving a coach this size, flexibility is important. Therefore, they have designed the U320C so that it can be refueled from either side of the coach — not that these stops will be needed all that frequently. The fuel tank has a capacity of 148 gallons, and based on the average 7.6 mpg fuel economy the coach achieved during our trip, the U320C can travel more than 1,100 miles between fill-ups.

In addition to many attributes that make the U320C Unicoach "operator friendly" on the road, it boasts many features that make life easier in camp, such as stowing and retrieving gear in the exterior storage bays. The two massive exterior storage bays in the center of the coach are accessible



The coach also includes a state-of-the-art dump and cleanup utility station. It features a hot and cold water faucet, a soap dispenser, a paper towel holder, a water pump switch, water and electrical hookups, dump valves, and hookups for the cable TV and telephone.

from either side of the vehicle. Together they create 206 cubic feet of storage space. One curbside bay includes a large slide-out tray that facilitates storing items and gaining access to them again when needed. This bay also houses the central vacuum system.

The coach also includes a state-of-the-art dump and cleanup utility station. It features a hot and cold water faucet, a soap dispenser, a paper towel holder, a water pump switch, water and electrical hookups, dump valves, and hookups for the cable TV and telephone. Adjacent to the cleanup station, but behind the same outside bay door, is a smaller but still

nice-sized storage area that is separated from the dump compartment by a solid wall. An unusual carrier for the dump hose is accessible via the street-side engine door. All of the bay doors feature gas struts, which makes opening and closing them almost effortless.

Another bay door conceals the 2,500-watt inverter and the 130-amp convertor/charger, as well as the gel-type batteries. These gel-type batteries are maintenance-free. The 10-kw slide-out diesel generator is located up front where it can be reached easily for service. This location also helps to keep generator noise inside the living area of the coach to a minimum.

At the rear of the coach is the main door to the engine compartment. It pulls out effortlessly and glides up, providing an unobstructed

view and access to the heart and soul of this coach — the Cummins M11 diesel engine.

The glistening white exterior gel-coat finish of the U320C, combined with the subtle but pleasing graphics that sweep up along the sides of the coach, make it appear sleek and lend it a sense of motion even when it's parked in camp. The attractive exterior is more than a facade; it presages that which is found inside. As one enters the coach via the hardwood steps of the entry stairwell and looks past the cockpit seats, one is greeted by a setting that could easily be mistaken for a suite at the Ritz-Carlton. Stand-out features include

rich, dark walnut cabinetry; soft, warm-to-the-touch leather chairs; a luxurious fabric-covered sofa; and plush carpeting. Not only are the cabinets solid walnut, but so are the wall panels. (Buyers may opt for oak cabinetry.)

A total of seven overhead cabinets line each side of the coach, from the living area back through the galley. These cabinets include sliding doors that have been cleverly designed to open by rolling into canisters hidden inside the cabinet. These doors eliminate the possibility of bumping one's head on an open cabinet door. The cabinets up front above the dash include gas struts that facilitate opening and closing them. Each of these cabinets, as well as others throughout the coach that require door pulls, feature a decorative porcelain and brass pull. The center

A brass decorator light fixture is mounted on the wall just above the table, lending atmosphere to the living area.

In addition to walnut, another material that has been used liberally throughout the coach is Corian. The spacious L-shaped galley counter is one example. Another is the large, round dining table, which consists of a single, finely milled piece of Corian, truly an ingenious design. The table fastens mechanically to the wall. By releasing a latch located below the table, it can be slid away from the wall to allow the beautifully upholstered chairs to be placed around it for dining. The dining area is crowned from above by a brass designer light fixture.

The china hutch that sits aft of the dining table is quite elegant. Four raised-panel walnut doors, set above

Across from the dinette, on the street side of the coach, is the business section of the galley. The state-of-the-art setting includes gorgeous walnut cabinets, the aforementioned Corian countertop, a double sink, a four-burner cook top and oven, a microwave-convection oven, and a water filter. The cabinets below the counter include a giant roll-out drawer under the oven that is perfect for stowing pots and pans. The double-door cabinet under the sink includes a pull-out tray on the bottom shelf that provides instant access to whatever you have stored there. Below the shorter section of the counter are four deep drawers. Above the galley counter hang cabinets with doors that slide open, along with a china cabinet with a mirrored door that pulls open.

The splash plate behind the cook top consists of a large, single sheet of mirror that cleans up easily. It also creates the illusion of an even larger galley area. Adjacent to the cook top stands the double-door refrigerator-freezer, which has a built-in ice maker. Below this is a double-door cabinet that provides additional storage space.

Subtle, indirect lighting is created through the use of recessed canister lights that run down both sides of the coach, from the cab back through the galley. These same lights are found above the pantry and hutch. They soften the warm quality already found inside the coach.

With the exception of the galley window, which is covered by a mini blind, the windows in the U320C are surrounded by fabric-covered window boxes and covered by day-night pleated shades.

Entering the bath of the U320C Unicoach is like entering another world. The extensive use of mirrors and raised-panel walnut cabinets, the angular Corian lavatory, and the skylights are among the many accoutrements that embellish this setting. Unicoach designers have found room in the coach for a water closet. This is not a small, cramped space. Quite the opposite. The wall behind the porcelain toilet is lined with floor-to-ceiling walnut cabinets that include large, deep, adjustable shelves. The lavatory and cabinet area, located just outside the toilet area, is U-shaped and incorporates a spacious countertop. The three U-

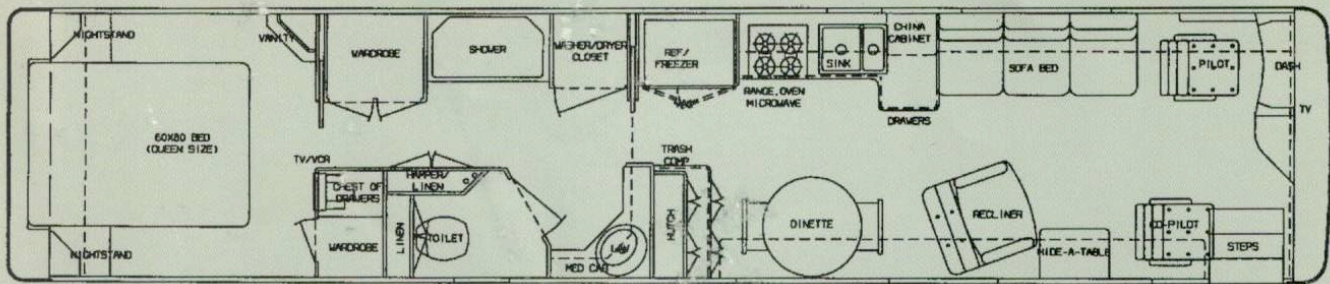


cabinet over the dash houses the VCR. A 19-inch color television is positioned directly above the driver's seat and is set at an angle that makes it visible from anywhere in the living and galley areas.

In addition to the aforementioned sofa, which folds out to become a bed, the living area includes a leather recliner. The recliner swivels to face a walnut utility table with a Corian top that can be pulled out when additional table space is needed. This small table is located just behind the copilot's seat, which swivels 180 degrees to face this table as well. Thus, two people can have tea, enjoy a snack, or play cards here.

a Corian countertop, open to reveal three adjustable shelves and copious amounts of storage space. Below the hutch's countertop are dual cabinets, also with raised-panel doors, that conceal a total of five adjustable shelves. A mirrored panel hangs above the countertop.

At the end of the hutch's counter, facing the center aisle, is a trash compactor with a smoked-glass designer panel front. At the end of the upper hutch cabinet, also facing the center aisle, is a glass door that houses the coach electrical systems monitoring panel. This tastefully done, low-profile monitoring panel is easily accessible yet unobtrusive.



SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer . . . Foretravel Inc., 1221 N.W. Stallings Drive, Nacogdoches, TX 75964; (800) 955-6226
Model . . . U320C Unicoach
Floor plan . . . Center aisle, island bed (CAI)
Chassis . . . Foretravel Unicoach
Engine . . . Cummins M11, 400 horsepower, turbocharged diesel
Transmission . . . Allison HD-4060R World
Axle ratio . . . 3.91 to 1
Tires . . . Michelin 275/80R 22.5 PXZA
Wheelbase . . . 276 inches
Brakes . . . air disc brakes, front and rear
Suspension . . . air ride with eight air bags
Alternator . . . 190 amps
Batteries . . . house — (2) gel-type, 816 reserve minutes; chassis — (3) Optima, 800 cca each
Steering . . . Sheppard
Convertor . . . 130 amp
Electrical service . . . 50 amps
Auxiliary generator . . . 10-kw

Power Tech diesel
Exterior length . . . 40 feet
Exterior width . . . 102 inches
Interior height . . . 6 feet 8 inches at center
Exterior height . . . 11 feet 4.5 inches
Gross combination weight rating (GCWR) . . . 38,000 pounds
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . 32,000 pounds
Gross axle weight rating (GAWR) . . . front — 12,000 pounds; rear — 20,000 pounds
Wet weight . . . front axle — 10,140 pounds; rear axle — 17,440 pounds; total pounds 27,740
Payload . . . 4,260 pounds
Frame construction . . . 1½-inch tubular steel sidewalls and floor; 1½-inch tubular aluminum roof frame
Insulation . . . 1½-inch Dow Styrofoam
Fresh water capacity . . . 102 gallons
Holding tank capacities . . . gray water — 110 gallons; black water — 54 gallons

Fuel capacity . . . 148 gallons
Fuel requirements . . . diesel
Fuel economy . . . 7.6 mpg
Propane capacity . . . 270 pounds
Water heater . . . 10-gallon capacity, electronic ignition, three-way
Furnace . . . (2) forced air — (1) 16,000 Btu, (1) 35,000 Btu
Water system . . . demand
Air conditioning . . . (2) 13,500-Btu roof air with heat strips and wall-mounted thermostats
Refrigerator . . . 10 cubic foot, Dometic side-by-side, two-way (LP gas, 110-volt electric)
Toilet . . . ceramic with sprayer
Warranty . . . Foretravel chassis modules — 36 months/36,000 miles; engine — 60 months/unlimited miles; transmission — 24 months/unlimited miles; Foretravel structure and systems — 24 months/24,000 miles; generator — 36 months/36,000 miles; components — 12 months/12,000 miles
Base suggested retail price . . . \$368,000
Price as tested . . . \$370,540

shaped cabinets above the counter and the ones below include adjustable shelves.

On the opposite side of the coach is a cedar-lined closet that includes plumbing for a washer-dryer unit. The coach features three other large cedar-lined wardrobes, the largest at the end of the bathroom. In between this wardrobe and the washer-dryer closet stands a super-large shower that comes complete with a sliding frosted glass door, a skylight, and a towel rack. Across from the shower and wardrobe are more cabinets and a clothes hamper, a convenient feature. Two three-speed, high-volume fans help to evacuate the air in this area — one in the water closet and the other in the center of the bathroom.

Foretravel designers have done a first-rate job with the bedroom. Not

only is it a place of luxury, but it's also a place where you are guaranteed a good night's rest, a place where you can renew yourself no matter how long your journey may be. This is a sanctuary inside a sanctuary. The 60-inch-by-80-inch queen-size bed is just the beginning. Amenities include a padded, and mirrored headboard, decorator lamps on either side of the head of the bed, and walnut cabinets above and on both sides of the bed. These features are matched only by the massive floor-to-ceiling cabinets, closet, and television at the foot of the bed. In addition to all of this, in one corner stands a vanity surrounded by makeup lights. This floor-to-ceiling arrangement incorporates a compartment with a mirrored door above the counter and a cabinet that includes three shelves below.

Indirect canister lighting is used to create a soft, restful setting in the bedroom. A pocket door separates the bedroom from the bath, and a second pocket door separates the bathroom from the front of the coach. The entire length of the coach ceiling is crowned, adding more interior height throughout. Headroom in the center of the ceiling measures 6 feet 8 inches.

The U320C carries a base suggested retail price of \$368,000. The coach we tested also included a full set of optional Zip Dee awnings. That brings the total price, as tested, to \$370,540.

If the subtle but powerful lines of bus-style motor coaches have caught your eye, and you're ready for some real-time, hands-on experience, then you're ready to check out the Foretravel U320C Unicoach. 