



Foretravel

The new 38 footer mounted on an Oshkosh diesel chassis with air ride suspension is a singular coach.

It's not hard to find superlatives to describe the Foretravel; words like plush, luxurious and elegant come quickly to mind. Perhaps the one word that best sums up the



Foretravel, though, is unique; for the Foretravel is a singular coach made for a singular buyer.

The fact is these rigs appeal





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to a specialized group of RVers, and Clarence Fore, president of Foretravel, is the first to admit that. "Our buyers," Fore observes, "are people who call their coach home; they either travel fulltime or spend a lot of time in their coach during the course of a year, and because of that they want to have many of the full-size comforts of home. They demand a special kind of coach." Fore adds, "And we try to give it to them."

Meeting those demands means producing big rigs with the emphasis on livability. Motorhomes with cavernous interiors that feature pluses such as full-size recliners, extra-large refrigerators, convenient kitchens, abundant storage, and comfortable, home-like sleeping accommodations. And, not incidentally, it also means turning out coaches that carry hefty sticker prices, such as the \$145,550 suggested retail on the new 38-footer mounted on the Oshkosh diesel chassis.

What do you get for that kind of money? Well, the list is almost limitless, but for starters there are the solid construction features for which the



Photos by Author

Spacious, attractive interior (below) includes modern galley with relatively low counter height. Opposite page: Instrument cluster, including AM/FM eight-track stereo, is within easy access of driver.

Foretravel has long been noted: 1½ inch tubular steel frame, sandwich panel walls, 1½ inch block foam insulation, aluminum underskin, fiberglass sidewalls and real wood paneling. Coach amenities we'll discuss at length in a bit; first we have to make note of the Oshkosh chassis.

Foretravel added the Oshkosh chassis to its Class A line back in 1979 and the company has continued to work with Oshkosh over the ensuing years in an effort to further define the chassis' motorhome application. While Oshkosh currently offers four differ-

ent Class A chassis, Foretravel is now using only two of the versions of the chassis: a 20,000 gvwr model utilizing the 3208 Caterpillar diesel and a 22,500 gvwr version with a turbocharged Detroit diesel with full air brakes and air ride.

It is this latter chassis that Foretravel is now using for its new 38-foot rig and one that we think offers major improvements in performance and handling over the unit we tested last year (see *TL Tests Foretravel's 35-foot Oshkosh Diesel—Trailer Life*, March 1981). In the area of performance we noticed



a marked increase in acceleration response from the 205-hp turbocharged V-8 diesel, as well as better performance on grades. As for handling, we found that the air ride suspension produced a superbly smooth ride and resulted in a considerable reduction in sway when cornering or navigating rough roads. A bonus of the smoother ride was the almost total lack of interior rattles due to road vibration.



That's not to say, however, that everything was perfect. Because our test rig was the first off the line using the air ride chassis, it still had a few bugs in the chassis that are now being worked out on subsequent production models. One of the most annoying problems resulted from the lack of an electric solenoid valve to cut off a leak down from the air tanks when the unit is parked for long periods. Since the air bleeds off, we found that we had to wait several minutes each morning after the engine was fired while the air pressure built up in the tanks. Our other criticism concerns the MT 643 Allison transmission which downshifted roughly.

A unique chassis feature that is worth noting is the "fail-safe" mechanism on the parking brakes. If the unit begins to lose air pressure, a condition which is signaled by a red light and warning buzzer on the dash, the parking brake will automatically activate and hold the motorhome, even if all air pressure is lost. A word of warning: the mechanism will activate even if the rig is traveling down the highway, so the driver is advised to find a spot to pull off immediately after the light and

buzzer come on.

Turning to the interior comforts we have to start with the decor which, as in all the Foretravel motorhomes, is unparalleled for luxury and elegance. As previously noted, a focal point of the interior is the real walnut paneling that compliments the rest of the appointments with its deep brown, richly grained finish. The floral-patterned fabric featured on the front sofa, captain's chairs, bedroom sidechair, swivel, recliner and bedspread is called Drilon, a synthetic blend of American and German technology that retails for \$30 a yard. The barrel chair and recliner in the living room are covered in a solid rust fabric that contrasts nicely with the brown/rust/beige/cream woven wood shades, brown velour curtains, light brown, deep-pile nylon carpet and burlled walnut Formica countertops and dash inserts.

The cab area is decked out with two swiveling and reclining captain's chairs, an overhead cabinet module with three tambour doors, two side fans and overhead map lights and control switches for the roof-mounted spotlight. The dash is packed with instrumentation for both the chassis and coach systems, as well as an AM/FM eight-track stereo console. The coach monitor panel houses the generator and pump switches and readouts for the battery, water, holding tanks and LP-gas tanks. The instrument cluster for chassis systems is arranged immediately in front of the driver so that all gauges—tachometer, speedometer, oil temp, oil pressure, battery level, water temperature, air pressure—can be read at a glance.

A unique feature in the cab area is the color TV with closed circuit monitor. This TV is a standard color set mounted in the center of the cab under the overhead cabinet. When the engine is turned on the set is automatically switched from the entertainment mode to closed circuit monitor so that the driver can see, via a rear-mounted camera, obstacles or automobiles immediately to the rear of the coach. We found this to be an invaluable addition for a coach this size, although we did have to learn to adjust to the distorted perspective of the wide angle lens in the camera which tended to give the mistaken impression that vehicles and obstacles were farther away than they really were.

Specifications Foretravel 38' Diesel

Exterior length	38'
Exterior width	8'
Exterior height	10'5"
Interior height	6'5"
Frame construction	1½" tubular steel
Insulation	1½" block Styrofoam®
Water cap.	.80 gal.
Holding tank cap.	.44/55 gal.
Propane cap	193 lb.
Furnace	.40,000 BTU auto heat; 31,500 BTU ducted furnace.
Refrigerator	13-cu.-ft. Dometic
Electrical	Two 200 amp. hour batts; 7 kw gen.; two 13,500-BTU air-conditioners w/heat strips; 50 amp. convertor.

Chassis (Oshkosh V-715-1)

Engine	500 cid V-8 Detroit Diesel
Transmission	Allison MT 643, 4-speed auto.
Axle ratio	4.88-1
Tire size	8R-22.5 Michelin radials
Brakes	Bendix/Westinghouse air
Cooling system	HD, w/oil cooler standard
Fuel cap.	100 gal. diesel
Wheelbase	252"

Chassis Ratings

Front gawr	7500 lbs.
Rear gawr	15,000 lbs.
GVWR	22,500 lbs.

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Moving to the living room you'll find the familiar lounge configuration consisting of a streetside sofa with a side-chair and, in this case, a recliner opposite. The sofa provides exceptionally comfortable seating and converts to an equally comfortable 45 x 76-inch bed. Inserts in the floor in front of the sofa allow for setup of a pedestal table and a large 36 x 30-inch pullup table is located in the curbside wall. At the galley end of the sofa there is a small two-stool bar with a real brass rail and a bottle well inset into the galley counter.

In the past we have criticized the bar stool arrangement because the stools are bolted to the floor, making it awkward for the person seated on the inside to get in and out. We mentioned this to Fore and he assured us that he was aware of the awkwardness of the arrangement, but said that the stools were bolted down in the interests of safety. Fore did add, however, that the four bolts in each stool could be easily removed in minutes to provide more convenient seating.

Some buyers of this coach may also find that the front recliner presents some problems because it is so large that it creates a narrow passageway into the living room. Fore also admits that this could be seen as a shortcoming, but thinks that it is a small (no pun intended) price to pay to get the comforts of the full-size recliner. We agree.

In the galley you'll find all of the conveniences of home and then some. Appointments include a large double stainless-steel sink with water purifier and Dishmaster dishwasher, Magic Chef four-burner range with eyelevel oven, Thermador microwave, Roper trash compactor, Nutone food center, 13-cubic-foot Dometic refrigerator and ice maker. Galley storage is excellent with plenty of drawers and cabinets below the counter and spacious overhead cabinets above. Especially noteworthy is the large pantry cabinet handily located next to the refrigerator and just opposite the stove and the large cutting board that slides out of the counter L. Counter height has been kept deliberately low to comply with requests of women customers.

The side bath houses a large shower/tub combination, a spacious vanity with pullman sink and large mirror. There are also large full-length mirrors located on the inside of the door and on the wall behind the toilet. Storage both above and below the sink area is excellent.

Given all the excellent features of the bath, the one real standout is the optional steam bath unit that is new for '82 Foretravel models. To activate the steam bath the rig must first be plugged into shore power or must operate off the 7000-kw generator. Then, you simply turn the timer switch mounted on the cabinet below the sink, pull the shower curtain around the tub, and sit back and wait about 60 seconds until

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the steam comes out of the jet below the tub faucet.

In the rear bedroom you'll find a full-size island double bed, a large comfortable sidechair with a deep storage compartment underneath the seat and a five-drawer chest built into a corner at the foot of the bed. On top of the chest a console houses a color TV and an AM/FM eight-track stereo unit that is a duplicate of the one mounted in the dash.

Storage in the bedroom is excellent, as it is throughout the coach. There are large overhead cabinets, all with tambour doors, located in all areas of the coach interior as well as roomy cabinets built-in where space permits. In the hallway immediately adjacent to the bedroom there is a large cedar-lined, double-door wardrobe. That closet offers plenty of storage space for even the bulkiest of garments and is more than adequate for use by two people.

Lighting throughout the coach is also excellent with a number of double-bulb incandescent fixtures located throughout. Foretravel also included several double-tube Thin-Lite fluorescent fixtures in strategic areas in the coach. Complementing this lighting there are also swivel reading lights located under the overhead cabinets above the couch, chairs and bed. All in all, we would have to characterize the interior lighting of this coach as superior.

Looking at the exterior you'll find the familiar square body unchanged from previous years. It's an exterior styling that favors the spacious interior livability that is Foretravel's trademark and there seems to be little argument here for tampering with success. As for the cosmetics, the colors remain the familiar white with rust/brown/maroon accent stripes.

While the Foretravel's market is undeniably limited by its sticker price and intended use, there is not a question that this coach represents solid value. In fact, the price of this coach is highly competitive when compared with other luxury rigs in its class. And apparently a lot of prospective buyers have already recognized that fact because Clarence Fore reports the company is already working under a backlog of orders. **TL—Bob Longsdorf**

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