



# The Safari Trek

By LAZELLE D. JONES

Some RV enthusiasts are attracted to the idea of driving a smaller type A coach, but they don't want to sacrifice the comfort that comes with larger units. Recently I had the opportunity to test a Safari Trek 2810 model. At 28 feet 10 inches long and 100.5 inches wide, this Trek included all of the appointments and comforts typically associated with coaches that range from 32 to 43 feet. Safari, a division of Monaco Coach Corporation, continues to create a motorhome that is nothing short of ingenious.

The Trek does require RVers to revise their conventional mind-set a bit regarding type A motorhomes. This motorhome has no bedroom per se. That is how designers manage to squeeze in practically every available appointment.

This unusual design is made possible by the Electromajic bed, a patented device that originated with the Trek but is finding its way into other Monaco motorhomes. When not in use, the bed is stored in the ceiling of the living area and is very well disguised. When it's needed, it can be lowered at the touch of a button (via an AC electric motor) to the level desired or to the top of the sofa, whichever comes first.

The Electromajic bed features a 3-inch-thick foam mattress that measures 59 inches wide and 81 inches long. (The length of the bed nearly equals the entire width of the coach.) It yields an area that is large enough to sleep two adults comfortably, with room to spare. Should you want to use the sleeper sofa feature in the living area (below the bed), the Electromajic bed can be lowered to an appropriate height to allow this. You may need a small footstool to help you in and out of bed.

The bed moves on cog wheels that travel up and down on four tracks, with one track at each corner. Its AC power source can be the coach's 50-amp shore line; the 4-kilowatt LP-gas-powered

generator; or the 1,500-watt inverter, which draws from the four house batteries. Be especially careful to keep children's fingers (and your own) away from the four tracks while the bed is moving. To prevent the bed from being lowered unintentionally, locking pins are situated at each corner. And a hidden kill switch can be turned to the "off" position as an additional precaution.

I do think that the bed's control switch should be located in a more convenient place. Currently, whoever is pushing the switch has to hold his or her arm in between the bed and the wall as the bed is being lowered and raised.

The 2003 Trek is available in seven different floor plans, with lengths that vary from 26 feet 7 inches to 30 feet 9 inches. It is offered on either a Workhorse or a Ford chassis. My test model had the Workhorse P Series chassis, which includes an 8.1-liter Chevrolet Vortec engine coupled with a Hydra-matic transmission.

The curbside entry door separates the galley from the living area. The coach's living area is to your right as you enter. You'll notice that the interior of the coach is laced with warm, natural wood tones. The raised-panel cabinets in my test coach were made of alder hardwood stained to a golden cherry color; buyers can choose walnut or oak cabinets as an option.

Optional wood plank flooring was used in the galley food prep area and in the rear bathroom of my coach. Plush carpet covers the living and dining areas.

Four color and fabric décor packages are offered; the lambrequins and valances surrounding the windows are sculptured with complementing fabrics and textures. Two barrel-type chairs separated by a small table normally are located on the curbside wall facing the sleeper sofa, but my coach had the optional Soft Touch vinyl Euro recliner with a matching ottoman. The name Soft Touch is appropriate, for the fabric is extremely comfortable. Also on the curb side of the living area and directly in front of the recliner is a forward-

facing computer table and cabinet topped by a solid-surface material Safari calls Poured Marble. This material weighs much less than quarried stone, yet is every bit as elegant in appearance. It's also low-maintenance and resistant to scratching.

To the left of the entry door is a free-

Across the aisle from the entry door stands a two-door refrigerator-freezer with a smoked acrylic front. You can choose a four-door unit as an option, but in either case, your refrigerator will come with an ice maker as standard equipment.

Immediately aft of the refrigerator is



*Respectable fuel economy, easy handling, and ample living space are some of the benefits of traveling in this 28-foot motorhome built by a division of Monaco Coach Corporation.*

standing dinette fashioned from solid wood, along with two upholstered chairs. The dining area is next to a large window, creating a venue that accommodates a meal with ease, or simply serves as a nice spot to enjoy a cup of tea.

Aft of the dining area is a small, waist-high buffet that also features a solid-surface countertop. A beveled mirror serves as a low-maintenance splash panel and makes the area appear to be larger.

a three-burner cook top, which can be hidden beneath a foldable cover made of Poured Marble that matches the galley countertop. The galley work surface is long and deep enough to support even the most serious gourmet endeavors. The double sink consists of one large and one small tub, and is fabricated from the same material as the countertop. Other galley appointments include a microwave oven and a water filtration system.

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Below the kitchen counter are two sets of drawers. The three drawers beneath the cook top are large enough to hold cooking utensils. The set of drawers next to them are a bit smaller. A deep double-door cabinet provides storage below the sink.

All cabinets throughout the coach, including the overhead cabinets, are lined with material that cushions the goods stored there and is excellent for abating noise when the coach is moving.

sink, on the curbside wall, is a massive floor-to-ceiling complex of closet space and drawers. This wardrobe is capable of keeping garments wrinkle-free, and can hold enough clothing for an extended vacation.

My test Trek had the optional dual-pane windows and day-night accordion-style shades. Fabric curtains can be pulled around the windshield to provide privacy at night.

The Trek's interior is 6 feet 6 inches

use them, you realize just how wonderful they are, especially in the morning or late afternoon. The driver's-side visor and the passenger's-side visor are separately controlled. Touch the bottom of the corresponding switch and the visor lowers; push the top of the switch and the visor rises.

The instrumentation cluster includes a minimum number of analog gauges; the speedometer and tachometer are in its center. Heated, power-



The floor-to-ceiling pantry, immediately forward of the refrigerator, incorporates four adjustable shelves that make it possible to configure the space as needed. The pantry offers enough room to add more shelves, too.

At the rear of the Safari Trek is a private bathroom with a pocket door. The porcelain toilet is on the street side, as is the rear corner shower with a frosted-glass surround and door. A skylight is situated above the shower. On the back wall is a sink with a Poured Marble countertop. To the left of the

high, except directly below the Electromajic bed, where the height is 6 feet 3 inches. The underside of the bed is dressed with padded vinyl that matches the rest of the ceiling. The walls are covered with low-maintenance vinyl that cleans up easily with a damp cloth, as does the urethane-finished wood plank flooring.

Safari has kept the cockpit simple to create an environment that is driver-friendly and comfortable. The Trek 2810 I reviewed had the optional power sun visors. When you get the chance to

adjustable exterior mirrors and a massive windshield with an unobtrusive center post afford excellent visibility.

I traveled for a week and covered 1,000 miles, and experienced no driver fatigue. With the cruise control in operation, we sailed down the long Central Valley of California as though it were a Sunday drive. The powerful Vortec engine and four-speed automatic transmission with overdrive handled the rural roads and mountain passes along the coastal route with ease. With its 178-inch wheelbase, the Trek took on



tight hairpin turns and handled city traffic without a problem.

Fuel economy was very respectable. I calculated it twice. The first time, which included city and highway travel, I reached a figure of 9.4 miles per gallon. The second, during which I drove steadily at 60 miles per hour, the figure was 10 mpg.

I was in for a bit of a surprise after the coach was weighed and I later considered the figures. With full tanks of fuel (60 gallons) and fresh water (62 gallons), its weight totaled 16,040 pounds. Afterward I discovered that approximately 300 pounds' worth of bottled water had been left in two of the exterior cargo bays located between the entry door and the front wheel. So, the coach's weight actually would have totaled 15,740 pounds instead. With a gross vehicle weight rating of 18,000 pounds, the Trek would thus have a payload of 2,260 pounds. This adjusted figure is reflected in the "Specifications" section.

Speaking of the Trek's cargo bays, they are made of polyethylene, and the forward bay offers coach-wide storage for long items. An optional electric

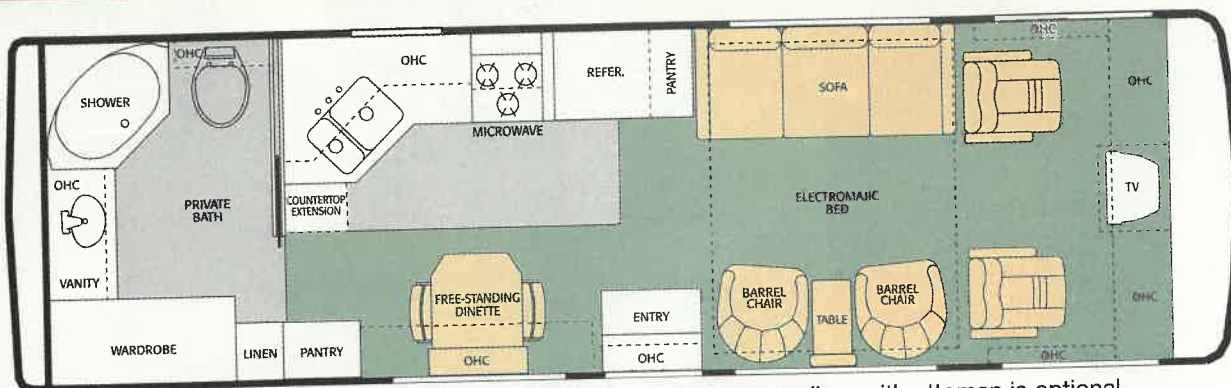


space heater warms one storage bay as well as the holding tanks, so the Trek can be enjoyed in cool weather.

Safari builds the Trek to accommodate travelers who enjoy staying at full-service campsites as well as those who prefer primitive settings. The house utilities package makes this pos-

sible. The fresh water tank is ample, and the waste holding tanks (gray and black) each have 38-gallon capacities. The coach is wired for 50-amp shore power and equipped with a 4-kilowatt generator; all of the 110-volt appliances and electrical systems

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Floor plan depicts standard barrel chairs in living area. Euro recliner with ottoman is optional.

**Manufacturer** . . . Safari Division of Monaco Coach Corporation, 91320 Industrial Way, Coburg, OR 97408; (800) 634-0855; fax: (541) 681-8899; [www.safarimotorcoaches.com](http://www.safarimotorcoaches.com)

**Model** . . . 2003 Trek

**Floor plan** . . . 2810 Rear Bath

**Chassis** . . . Workhorse P Series

**Engine** . . . 8.1-liter Chevrolet Vortec; 340 horsepower @ 4,200 rpm

**Transmission** . . . 4L85E Hydramatic

**Axle ratio** . . . 4.63 to 1

**Tires** . . . Michelin XRV 225/70R 19.5 F

**Wheelbase** . . . 178 inches

**Brakes** . . . Hydraulic four-wheel antilock disc

**Suspension** . . . Front — wide track with auxiliary air springs, stabilizer bar, and Bilstein shocks; rear — parabolic taper multi-leaf with Bilstein shocks

**Alternator** . . . 145 amps

**Batteries** . . . chassis — (1) 12-volt deep-cycle; house — (4) 6-volt deep-cycle

**Steering** . . . Saginaw 708 14.1 power steering

**Inverter** . . . 1,500-watt

**Electrical service** . . . 50 amps

**Auxiliary generator** . . . 4-kilowatt Onan MicroLite; 5.5-kilowatt Onan Gold Marquis optional

**Exterior length** . . . 28 feet 10 inches

**Exterior width** . . . 100.5 inches

**Interior height** . . . 6 feet 6 inches

throughout; 6 feet 3 inches under bed

**Exterior height** . . . 11 feet 8 inches

**Gross combination weight rating (GCWR)** . . . 21,000 pounds

**Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR)** . . . 18,000 pounds

**Gross axle weight rating (GAWR)**

. . . front — 6,000 pounds; rear —

12,000 pounds

**Wet weight as tested** . . . (weighed with full water and fuel tanks, and 300 pounds of cargo in front bays)

front axle — 5,700 pounds; rear axle

— 10,300 pounds; total — 16,040

pounds

**Payload** . . . 2,260 pounds (adjusted for cargo)

**Frame construction** . . . tubular

aluminum; laminated and vacu-

bonded walls and floors; 9-layer

roof with 3-inch I-beam aluminum

frame in roof

**Insulation** . . . block foam in roof, walls, and floors; additional fiberglass insulation in roof

**Fresh water capacity** . . . 62 gallons

**Holding tank capacities** . . . gray water — 38 gallons; black water — 38 gallons

**Fuel capacity** . . . 60 gallons

**Fuel requirements** . . . unleaded gasoline

**Propane capacity** . . . 24 gallons

**Water heater** . . . 6-gallon LP-

gas/electric with electronic ignition;

10-gallon LP gas/electric, optional

**Water system** . . . demand

**Furnace** . . . 31,000-Btu electronic

ignition, forced air, ducted heat

**Air conditioner** . . . 13,500-Btu with

ducted air and wall thermostat

**Refrigerator** . . . 8-cubic-foot with

ice maker

**Toilet** . . . porcelain with sprayer

**Warranty** . . . chassis — 3 years,

36,000 miles; coach — 12-month,

24,000-mile basic limited warranty/5

years, 50,000 miles structural

**Base suggested retail price** . . .

\$97,328

**Price as tested** . . . \$115,531

function equally well from either source. The standard-equipment 1,500-watt inverter powers 110-volt equipment such as the microwave oven, the 25-inch television, and the Electromajic bed.

The 13,500-Btu roof air conditioner with optional heat pump is centrally ducted throughout the coach. Warm air from the 31,000-Btu forced-air furnace is delivered fore and aft through a system of floor registers.

The base suggested retail price of

the Trek 2810 is \$97,328. My test coach had the following options, which brought its price to \$115,531: hydraulic leveling jacks; full-body paint; power copilot seat; power sun visors; air horns; convection-microwave oven; VCR; curbside Euro-recliner with Soft Touch vinyl; plank flooring in kitchen and bath; computer table; 60-watt solar panel; 12-volt heater in wet bay; 10-gallon LP-gas/electric water heater; day-night shades with sleeping area black-outs;

dual-pane windows; patio awning; window awning; 13,500-Btu living room air conditioner with heat pump.

The Trek proved to me that a shorter motorhome can be equally as inviting as one that is much longer. If you would like to downsize, but don't want to sacrifice luxury and comfort, this coach is worth your consideration. And if you are shopping for your first entry-level type A motorhome, you'll want to consider the Trek as your step into the rewarding RV lifestyle. 