



At Home in the Sierra Nevada

BY BILL FINK

In the shadows of towering pine trees near Yosemite National Park, my small campfire reflected waves of flickering yellow and red light onto the silver exterior of my family's rented Airstream trailer. Up in the Sierra Nevada, it was a classic scene: Fellow visitors chatted at picnic tables while burgers and hot dogs sizzled on grills. On my family's plates was a cornucopia of fresh fruits and vegetables, produce we had picked up at roadside

stands. For dessert, roasted marshmallows and messy s'mores. To top it all off, one of my neighbors at the RV resort came by to share a Mason jar half-filled with a refreshing beverage.

RV camping is one of the numerous ways to enjoy the Sierra Nevada. Whether your taste runs to a basic tent and sleeping bag in the deep woods or to a luxury mountainside hotel, there are many ways to enjoy a trip into the nearly 40,000-square-mile

mountain range, with its peaks to climb, rivers to cross and fish to catch.

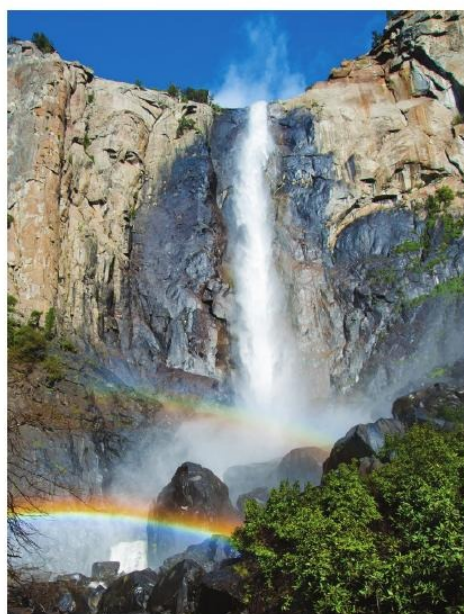
My family and I were en route to Yosemite in the well-equipped Airstream, a \$100,000 limited-edition National Parks model, complete with full kitchen, comfy bed, air conditioning, TV—the works. But what really mattered was outside.

Sitting back in my camp chair and sipping from the Mason jar beneath the Airstream's awning, *continued on page 82*



Left: A calm reflection of the Cathedral Spires as seen from the valley floor in Yosemite Valley in Yosemite National Park.

Upper right: Relaxing outside an Airstream trailer. **Right:** Bridalveil Fall in Yosemite.



Luxury Lodging

Want to experience the woods but not sleep in them? Here are some options in Mammoth Lakes.

» **Sierra Nevada Resort & Spa:** Fireplace suites, three restaurants, massages and minigolf.

» **Snowcreek Resort:** Large athletic club, great golf and fun for all seasons.

» **8050 Mammoth:** Private-residence club with rooftop lounge, village gondola access and climate-controlled wine storage.

» **The Village Lodge:** Heated pools, direct ski-trail access and nearby mountain-bike rentals.

» **The Westin Monache Resort:** Mountainside views, luxury suites and year-round hot tubs.

» **Juniper Springs Resort:** Mountain-framed landscape, ski access and condo comfort.

Go "Glamping"

For many people, RV-based trips are a great middle ground between tent camping and a hotel. But there are plenty of ways to have a glamorous camping experience in the Sierra Nevada. Here are two venues.

» **Inn Town Campground, Nevada City:** With easy access to hiking trails and the South Fork of the Yuba River, this new spot has the usual tent campsites and RV hookups, but also a well-designed commons area, and stylish canvas tents for rent with wood floors, comfy beds and fresh linens.

» **Yosemite Lakes RV Resort:** A large and friendly RV campground with a community feel, it provides easy access to Yosemite National Park, and immediate access to the South Fork of the Tuolumne River. There are also a variety of cabin and yurt rentals available. —*B.F.*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: SERGIO BALLIVIAN / TANDEMSTOCK.COM; AIRSTREAM: BRAD BEK / TANDEMSTOCK.COM



Adventure in Camping, Mammoth Lakes

This company not only rents out a full range of RVs, but it also equips and delivers them to 75 Mammoth Lakes-area campgrounds. Just show up and start to explore. —B.F.

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I felt truly at home in the hills.

My front yard featured the South Fork of the Tuolumne River, the flow coming down from high mountain springs and snowmelt in Yosemite. In the morning, a group of kids frolicked in a swimming hole in a river eddy while couples paddled canoes downstream.

My neighborhood was Yosemite itself, the massive national park with the iconic Half Dome peak and Bridalveil Fall, and near endless meadows of wildflowers.

Following a few days in the park, it was Sierra Nevada decision time: Go north to Lake Tahoe or go south to Mammoth Lakes. Either way, we couldn't go wrong. ▲

Bill Fink writes from Oakland. For more information on the Sierra Nevada: visitcalifornia.com/region/discover-high-sierra.

Attractions in the Mammoth Lakes Area

» **June Mountain** is a worthwhile add-on in winter to the popular **Mammoth Mountain** resort, and in the nonsnowy seasons, the **June Lake Loop** offers good kayaking and fishing and multiple RV parks.

» **Devils Postpile National Monument**, with a unique collection of geometric basalt rock columns, is worth a trip from Mammoth Lakes. Continue walking about another 2 miles down a trail from the Devils Postpile formation to see the heavenly **Rainbow Falls**.

» The Mammoth Lakes area is famed for its fishing, because you don't have to go far to access great spots. **Mammoth Lakes Basin**, the **San Joaquin River** and the **Hot Creek** fishery are all easily accessible.

» The **Sierra Star Golf Course** is an 18-hole championship track featuring mountain views and pristine lakes.

The *Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)* is an efficient and economical way to get around. For more on Mammoth Lakes: visitmammoth.com. —B.F.



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