

HARDLY BEEPING ITS HORN, Winnebago added a 20-foot motor home to its Brave series last summer, but first-time buyers and experienced rec vehicle owners soon discovered this to be one of the best buys on the market.

The 18-foot Brave is the bottom-dollar model at \$6700, but the D-20T offers far more than its additional 2 feet 8 inches for \$705 more. What appeals most to buyers is the straight aisle plan with twin gauchos in a rear lounge area. A table that folds into the rear wall can be extended with leaves to seat six to make a "family size" dinette. The gauchos, with back cushions removed, can be used as twin beds or can be converted to a king-size 7x7-foot bed. Large glass areas give the lounge a wide view.

The D-20T is built on the Dodge 125-

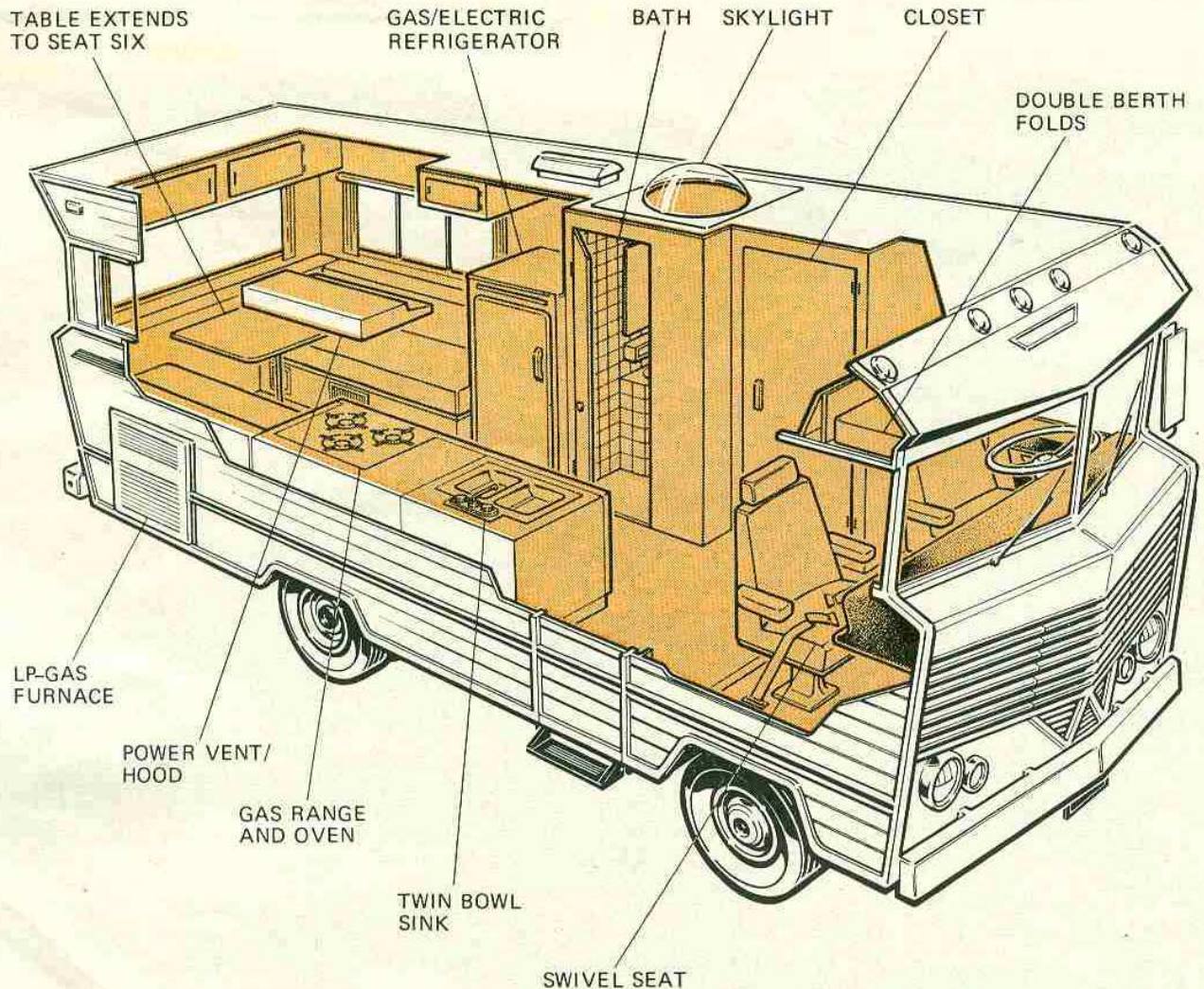
inch wheelbase; the D-18 on the 104. At 20 feet 11 inches overall, this "Winnie" is only slightly longer than a full-size station wagon, yet its 6-foot 4-inch interior height provides more full headroom than mini motor homes of the same length. The front bunk folds up; driver and copilot don't have to crouch to get into their seats.

The galley has double stainless-steel sinks, 4-cu.-ft. gas/electric refrigerator, three-burner range and range hood with exhaust fan. The bath has marine toilet, shower, lavatory and medicine cabinet. The unit has a 46-gallon pressurized water system, 6-gallon water heater, 30-gallon holding tank, and a thermostatically controlled forced air furnace. Plenty of cabinet space helps to keep the vehicle shipshape.

After a six-month test of this model we rate it "Excellent" for livability. It can



Drivers' Report:



accommodate four adults with ease, or two adults and three or four small children—if the youngsters use the 7x7-foot bed.

We can give only a "Fair" performance rating to this unit which comes with the Dodge 318-cu.-in. engine. The 318 is a troublefree powerplant, but with a GVW of 11,000 pounds, the D-20's cruising speed, drops to a maximum of 40 on most long turnpike grades. If downshifting manually to second to maintain rpm doesn't bother you, you'll get your kicks from knowing that you have a durable powerplant. The 413-cu.-in. engine (optional at extra cost) is the answer if you want more power. Gas mileage, as any motor home owner knows, depends on what way the wind is blowing and how hard you want to push. Fully loaded and cruising at 50, the D-20 will get 7 mpg.

The ride—for passengers in the lounge area—is rough. The driver and copilot come off easier but they know they're on a truck chassis. But the stiff suspension has advantages: stability in turns and less buffeting from crosswinds and passing trucks.

D-20T owners we interviewed are generally well pleased with their '73 models.

"Much more stable in crosswinds than my previous motor home (another make)," says a highway engineer. "Well satisfied with the body construction and cabinetry," says a Pennsylvania carpenter, "but the 318 seems to be lugging on hills unless I downshift." "Enough room in the galley so we aren't squeezing past each other." "I'm 5-foot-7," says a retired postal worker,

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Winnebago D-20T By JIM LISTON, Editor



LARGE GLASS AREA gives rear lounge a three-way view. Our test vehicle had 4000-watt powerplant and 10,000 B.T.U. roof air conditioner (both optional). Cooler runs off powerplant on road, does excellent job without need for car air. Forced-air furnace keeps vehicle warm in coldest weather. Luggage rack and ladder proved to be useful options. Tire mount swings left to give access to compartment

WINDSHIELD and all windows are tinted for more efficient airconditioning. Two 70-amp. batteries are accessible on slide-out tray behind left front wheel. Twin 30-lb. LP-gas bottles are carried in left rear compartment. Floor plan (opposite) shows wide middle aisle that gives this model spaciousness found only in larger motor homes. Not shown are additional cabinets over sink and range



WINNEBAGO'S D-20T

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“and I can't reach the headlight dimmer switch. That will have to be changed. But the windows in the rear bedroom are wonderful. My wife and I lie in bed in the morning in the campground and watch the birds.”

For the birds is the front muffler clamp, according to a South Carolina rental agent. All three of his units (and our test vehicle) had loose mufflers. Dodge dealers offer an “improved” clamp, but the permanent cure is welding.

The gauchos—sofa beds—in most motor homes today seem to have been designed for Wilt the Stilt. Those in the D-20T make up into a king-size bed, but they leave a lot to be desired in seating comfort. The sofa seat height is 21 inches; the depth to the bolster cushion 26 inches. (Average chair height is 18 inches, depth 21 inches.) Most adults find their feet dangle above the floor if they want back-cushion support—the gauchos' dimensions were determined by the water tank under one and the furnace under the other.

We couldn't do anything about seat height, but in the test vehicle we cut seat depth to 18 inches by building top-opening wedge-shaped cabinets behind the bolster cushions. These are sloped at a comfortable angle, provide firm support and additional storage space.

Despite minor gripes, the D-20 model seems to be the ideal size for those who want the spaciousness of a full-size motor home in a length most mini motormakers must stretch to reach. It is currently Winnebago's best seller. ★★★