## TACOMA

magazine



DO YOU NEED A
ROOF TOP TENT?



FJT-CASE PART 2



WHEELING RAUSCH CREEK



#### SEPTEMBER 2011 VOLUME 1 | ISSUE 3

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#### **Editor Comments**

With Fall on the way and plans for exciting trail rides along with nice campsites, in this issue, you will find some great information on the following pages. We are one step closer to crawling with a manual, more reliable transfer case plus we'll tell you how to make your first generation Tacoma flex a little better on the trail with better ground clearance. We also have the scoop on whether a roof top tent should be on your upcoming modification list!

Sit back and enjoy!:)

#### - Tacoma Magazine

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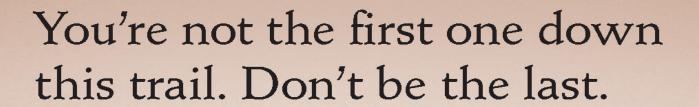
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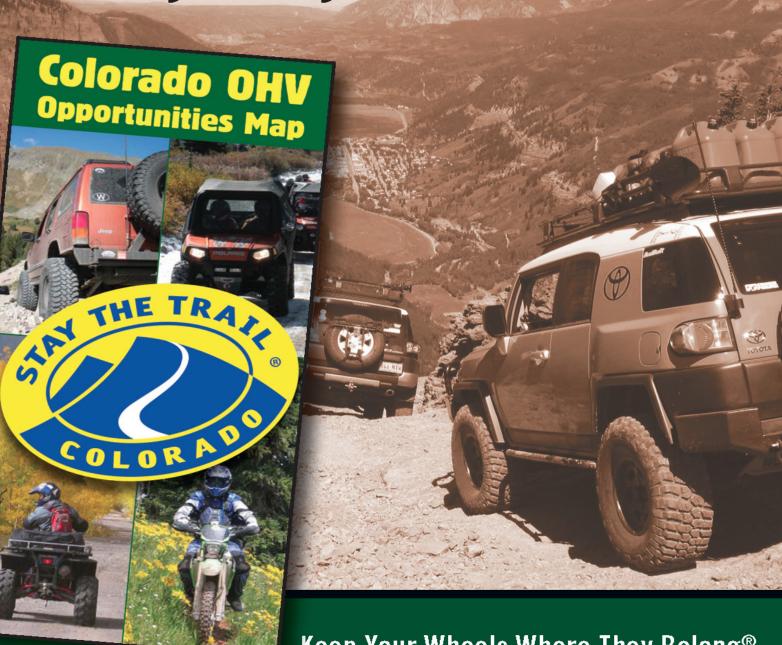








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### New

### and

#### ARB CKMTA12 Compressor

This compact vehicle mounted compressor has been designed to do everything! Activate your ARB Air Locking Differentials, air up a 35" tire in less than a minute and run air tools. This 100% duty cycle, 6.16 CFM compressor is built to support all of your compressed air needs.

#### Features:

- Available in 12V (CKMTA12) or 24V (CKMTA24) models.
- Constructed primarily of lightweight, high strength, engineering grade materials, including military and aerospace standard components.
- Pressure switch controlled air manifold system regulates pressure between 9.3Bar [135PSI] and 10.3Bar [150PSI] suited to air tools and all ARB Air Locker equipped vehicles.
- Highest airflow rate of any 12V compressor of its size on the market at 174LPM [6.16CFM].
- High efficiency design consumes only 56 Amps at maximum air flow.

Source: ARB USA, www.arbusa.com





# Noteworthy

FLYZEYE

The ultimate in console illumination for the 2005+ Toyota Tacoma.



FLYZEYE Designs, LLC was conceived in October of 2005 during an annual family get-together. In an effort to illuminate the center console of his 2005 Tacoma, Dennis LaFreniere fabricated a simple LED light out of some scrap plastic, 2 white LEDs, and a few coin cell batteries. The light was rather crude, but very functional. An idea was born. Nearly six years, thousands of hours in development, hundreds

of phone calls, and a few bloody fingers, we are proud to finally introduce our TCMA-0511 V1 LED Light. The TCMA-0511 fits ALL 2005 - 2011 TOYOTA Tacoma pick-ups.



For more information visit: http://www.flyzeyedesigns.com or them on YouTube:



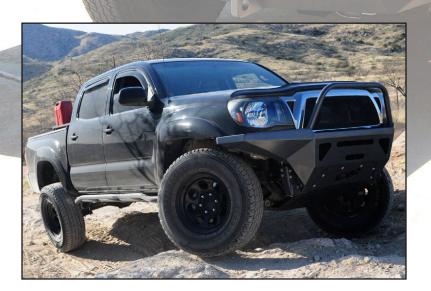
### reader rigs

This is my 2005 TRD Off Road. I got it in 2007 and left it stock for a year or two but after my first few excursions in Reddington Pass near Tucson AZ I soon caught the off road virus. First I focused on suspension; 3" lift up front and 1.5" in the rear to level it out.

By this point I was a fairly confident off road enthusiast, but to be a responsible one, I needed to be prepared for what might happen on the trail. A friend and I fabricated a bed basket to carry all of my off road and recovery gear. It bolts into the bed rails for a secure fit and can be easily removed when I need an uncovered bed. After getting some tow straps, shackles, a Hi-lift, and other miscellaneous things I was able to focus on armor. I upgraded to the Moab 2.0 front bumper built by CBI Off Road, powder coated gray just to be different.

At the same time I fabricated my own front IFS skid plate and a set of sliders so I could put that Hi-lift to use. It's great to have a friend with a tube bender! Soon after got a set of 8" lights to fill that light hoop and the truck was complete... well, almost. After getting a taste of the awesomeness the guys at CBI create, I went back for the Bushmaster 2.0 high clearance rear bumper. It's a super solid wrap around bumper that I've put to good use. It also let me cut off the section of a bedside I already damaged (bit of a double whammy).

For Christmas I got myself an expedition leaf pack to support that heavy bed basket and some Fox 2.0 shocks to keep those springs in line. I just recently added 33" Goodyear MT/







R's all around because the A/T's just couldn't keep up.

I'm very happy with the way everything has turned out and I make sure to put all these mods through their paces often! My future plans include a homemade t-case skid, All Pro long travel and their fiberglass fenders. A winch and on-board-air set up are also pretty high on the list. A GPS is in order as well because I hope to begin embarking on longer multi-day off road expedition trips and take full advantage of where this truck can take me.

Matt



I bought my truck brand new in 2004 with 18 miles on the odometer, since then it has gone through quite a few evolutions, from coil spacer lift to full blown desert Prerunner.

2004 Toyota Tacoma TRD Prerunner, 3.4 V6, e-locker, 2WD



Total Chaos 3.5" Long Travel Solo Motorsports 3" fully

fabricated lift spindles TC steering rack bush-

ings TC alignment cam gussets

TC heim steering
TC UCA gussets
Icon 9" coil-overs
Daystar EVS foam inverted bump stops (2 per side)

Glassworks Unlimited 4.5" fenders



AFE drop in air filter
Gibson muffler
Optima yellow top battery
Deck plate mod
Ammo cans
HF aluminum jack and mount/skid
After market CD deck w/ lpod jack

DDM Tuning HID headlights

3 Kragen HID aux lights Trail Gear boxed rear frame kit

Trail Gear outside rear frame rail gussets
Beefed Taco carrier bear-

ing drop bracket Prerunner Tube bumper built by Frontline Fab, Ventura, CA

#### Future plans, hopes and dreams:

Cage the entire truck front to rear, engine cross

brace, re-do bed cage with dual spare tire carrier

8" King 2.5 triple bypass front secondary shocks with Total Chaos shock hoops

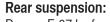
Tundra rear axle swap with 4:56 gearing

TRD supercharger w/ URD 7th injector and pulley

Corbeau or Beard racing seats

Behind the cab light bar with 4 HID aux. lights
Fuel cell

Matt N.



Deaver F-67 leaf springs
Giant 12" shackles
TC spring hangers, U-bolt plates, shock mounts
King 2.5 16" triple bypass shocks
King 2.0 4" air bumps
All Pro 1.5" wheel spacers
Glassworks Unlimited 4.5" bedsides
Custom bed saver bed cage build by
Frontline Fab, Ventura, CA

#### Wheels and tires:

American Racing Mojave Teflon wheels 16x8 (2 spares)
General Grabber 285/75/16 tires





#### Twin Sticks For Your FJ Case Conversion

#### By: Wyatt Scott

OK, I know in the last article we were going to show you how to install an FJ Cruiser Case into the 2nd Gen Tacoma's. Well, things change and now instead we are going to show you how to do a twins stick upgrade to that case first, then we'll show you how to install it.

As you know from the past series, the FJ Case is a manual case meaning it is shifted by a lever instead of

by a remote motor like our Tacoma case's are. Because of this, we are able to do a really nifty upgrade to the case that can save your CV's and provide 2wd low when and where you need it.

#### Lets get started.

First you need to find an FJ Case. That can be a chore all in it's own. Once you have found one it's time to take it apart. Now this is where you loose more than have of the crowd. There are parts in there that, if lost will make your case worthless and they are very small parts so pay attention.



The first thing your going to want to do is make sure the case is in 2wd. If not you'll be wishing you never took it apart. Next your going to take the front drive flange off. These nuts can be a bear to get off, so you'd better have a good impact wrench. Once that is off your going to turn your attention to the position sensors at the top of the case. There will be three of them, one on the passenger side of the case and two on the driver's side. Next, flip the case around and remove the twelve 12mm bolts that are holding the two halves of the case together.





Before you try to pry the case apart, make sure you have the shifter out as seen in the picture. Then you'll pry the two halves apart and nothing should fall out except for a cage bearing.



Here is the back half of the case after it has been pulled from the front half. Notice the two shift rods at the top of the case.

Now it's time to remove the Hi-lo shift rod. To do this you are going to need to remove the shifter spring at the rear of the case as well as the "pill" that keeps the two shift rods together.

In the picture below there is a small 6mm Allen bolt that holds in a spring and a ball bearing. That needs to be removed before you can pull the shift rod out.





















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After you have pulled the spring and the bearing out you can now pull the Hi-lo shift rod out. It is the one on the driver's side of the case. Carefully pull it out and set it aside. When you pull that out you are also taking out the Low gear set that goes into the planetary gears at the front of the case. We will be working with that in a minute.



In the next picture you will see a bunch of small pieces. The spring is the one that you pulled from the driver's side of the case along with the ball bearing. The pill looking thing is the key that keeps the two shift rods together. Get rid of that because you won't need it again. The little key things are parts that you should never see. If you do see them, that's another story all by itself. Those are the reason you kept your case in 2wd

when you took it apart. If you had it in 4wd then you'll hear these fall out and when you try to get them back in, you'll never wish you took this case apart. Now, lets move on shall we?

Once you have removed the Hi-lo shift rod from the case it's time to do some grinding. There is a small foot on this that you will grind off so that when installed back in the case the two will pass by each other freely. See the protruding piece of metal on the shift rod that is longer than the other one. You will grind that small part off and make it the same size as the other one.





Here you can see that we have ground off the extra metal and now the two can pass by each other freely

Now it's time to put it all back together again. It's really not that hard to put back together, just go in reverse of what we did previously. First, slide the Hi-lo shift rod and gear-set back in the case. Sometimes a cool head prevails here because this can be tricky lining up those splines.





Here you can see that the Hi-lo shift rod and fork are back in place. Next you will put the ball bearing back in the side of the case along with the shifter spring. RockSolidToys.com has a spring upgrade for this that makes the Hi-lo

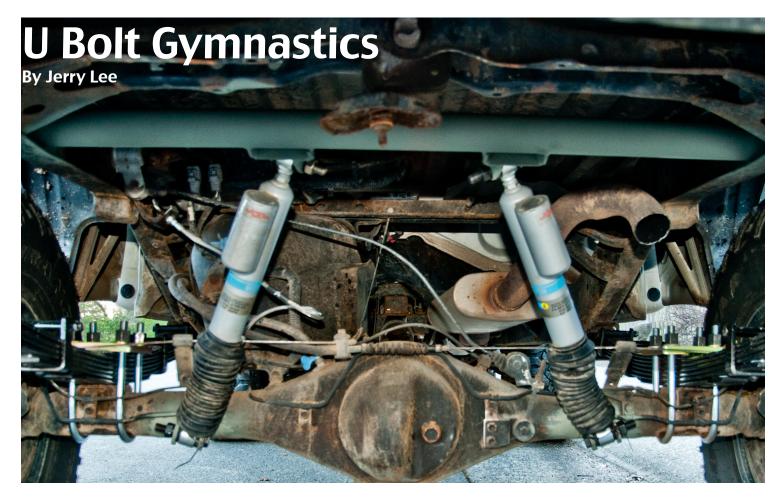
shifter stronger so that it will not pop out of gear on you while on the trail or tooling around town. You should check it out.

Once the shift rod is back in and the spring has been put back in you can now close the case back up. Carefully clean the mating surfaces making sure there is no gear oil on it. Apply a thin coat of Ultra Grey sealant on the mating surfaces and carefully join the two halves together. Once you have them together you can bolt it back up and torque it down to the specified amounts. When that is done you can install the front output flange, put the two sensors you'll be using back in and your ready to put it in your Tacoma.



Next time, I promise we'll show you how to put an FJ Case into your Tacoma whether you have a crawler box or not.

Source: http://www.RockSolidToys.com



You don't see this install too often on 1st Gen Tacoma's due to the shock mount location. You can do it the way explained below or you can just use the shock upper mounts and weld new lower mounts to the axle if you like. At Tacoma Magazine, we like Jerry's approach.

#### Tools

- 1/2 drive socket wrench and a breaker bar (1/2" impact gun and air ratchet are helpful but not required)
- 17mm & 19mm sockets (Impact sockets if the Impact gun is used)
- Torque wrench
- Angle grinder with a wire wheel to clean the metal
- Angle locator
- 2 Jack stands
- Floor jack
- 220v Welder

#### Other Items Needed

- Lower shock mount tabs
- Primer & paint
- PB Blaster (Spray all bolts the day before the install)
- "Upper shock mounts and a cross-member if relocating the uppers"
- $^{14} \bullet$  U-bolt flip kit
  - Grade 8 bolts for the lower shock mounts

- **1.** Break lug nuts. Jack up the truck and support the frame with the jack stands
- 2. Take the floor jack and support the Diff (pumpkin) of the rear axle
- **3**. Remove wheels
- 4. Remove shocks on passenger and driver side by removing the top and bottom 17mm bolt. Also remove four 19mm U-bolt nuts on each side and remove old U-bolts.



shock location

5. Install the U-bolt flip kit as shown and snug down the bolts in a crisscross pattern. Then take the torque wrench and torque the bolts to 90ftlbs (Note: not all flip kits are alike so it might not be a 19mm nut. Also notice the new springs, this is a great time to swap out those old flat springs.)



U-bolt flip kit, crisscross pattern

**6.** Mounting shock mounts when using stock upper mounts - Grind off all paint and rust on the axle where you are going to mount your shock.

Mount the shock in the upper mounts and attach the lower tabs to the shock; hold the shock in place, keeping the left and right of the shock as close to 90 degrees as possible. Then tack the tabs into place. When both sides are tacked and you like the placement check your angles one more time, remove the shocks and burn in the welds. Paint the bare metal and reinstall your shocks.

#### **Custom mounting the upper shock mounts –** (This is the way as pictured.)

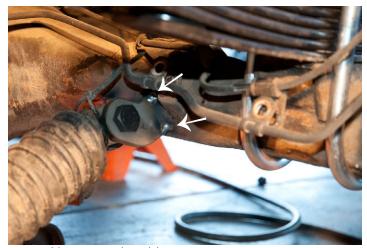
If you want to go this route do all five steps listed above and grind off all the paint from the 3" mark to the 5" mark to the inside your U-bolts. Then grind all the paint off the inside of the frame rails for the cross member install.

I placed my cross member back just far enough so the mounting points of the upper shock mounts matched up with the stock rear putting my shock mounts at 30 degrees off the back of the axle. The cross member was constructed out of 2" .120 wall HREW tubing and the mounting locations were 3/16th plate steel four pieces cut 2"x1" and two cut to 2"x3". The 2x1's were welded to the 2x3 making a U shape then tacked to the cross member. I did not measure the location of the upper shock mounts. I used the angle locator to find my location. Take the shock tabs and mount them to the shocks, wedge the cross member in place and hold the shocks at the angle desired. I ended up mounting them 3 1/2" from the U-bolts on the lowers. And, the shocks at 30 degrees towards the rear of the axle and 20 degrees angled in. Tack everything in place and check your angles.



tack weld to hold in place

15



top and bottom tack welds to secure



burn after tack welds



shock mounts at 30°, cross member

(Note: with your axle at full droop when your tacking your shocks check the length of shock tube exposed. You should have at least **2 1/2**" of travel left in your shock or you will max them out when you flex.)

**7.** Once everything is tacked and you recheck all your angles go ahead and burn everything in.

After it cools prime and paint all bare metal and reinstall your shocks. Re-torque the u-bolts after 100 miles and again after about 500.



U-bolt and shock assembly



final installation



off road ready

16

### Clown Tails, Cheddar Brats, and a Jeep

By Nicholas Johnson

Southern Pennsylvania's Rausch Creek Off Road Park provides excellent terrain for the wheelers of the Northeast. Though opportunities to enjoy our trucks off road are limited in the Northeast, Rausch provides almost 3,000 acres and 30-plus miles of trails for us to get our fix when need be.

This July a group of Tacoma owners gathered at Rausch to enjoy a weekend of wheeling. The basic goal of the trip was the same a most, have fun and don't break anything. We managed to succeed at one.

The weekend was marked by several memorable moments, one no more appealing than the next. Matt cutting his muffler off his Red 01 X-tra Cab after he "got annoyed with it," Kobe polishing a tree with the quarter panel of his forest green 85 4runner, and Rich a former Tacoma owner in the Jeep taking a hit to the rear

driveshaft making his 6 hour drive home, 9 hours.

Saturday night was spent around the campfire sharing riveting stories about past life lessons while cooking our cheddar infused brats and cringing down swigs of cheap sake and Southern Comfort.

Couldn't have asked for a better group of guys or a better weekend. Thanks guys.











#### Is a Roof Top Tent for you? radical, thus I'm not attempting to break down the The RTT Conundrum

By Kurt Williams, Cruiser Outfitters in Sandy, Utah.

Where to begin? Well let's start with a brief description of what a 'Roof Top Tent' is? Simple, just as the name implies a roof top tent is designed, engineered and marketed for use as a tent mounted to the top of your vehicle. Their construction and design varies greatly from manufacturer to manufacturer but in general they are self-erecting as you remove the cover and unfold them. The tent requires a semi-permanent mounting to a rack or cradle setup and can be used either over the cab or more commonly over the bed or shell on the Tacoma platform. Through my travels I've had the opportunity to spend several hundred nights in roof top tents and closely examine many of the different brands and models on the market throughout the world. These manufacturers are from Italy, South Africa, Australia, Asia and South America with prices ranging from \$500 to over \$3000. As the prices would infer the range of tents and their individual specifications and features is absolutely

vast differences between them. This is often best done in person or in an entirely different subject article. Rather, the objective is to simply help you with some background and insight for a potential purchase in your future.

The roots of this article started as a dynamic conversation on a Utah 4x4 forum (RME4x4.com), I was seemingly getting asked about RTT's quite often, and still do. These inquiries come from customers, fellow 4x4 travelers or just randoms that wander into camp and peer at the strange device mounted over the bed of my Tacoma. Their question's varied about as much as the people asking but in general they all had the same train of thought, would it work for their needs? To respond I typed up a forum article, posted it and let the thread take a life of its own. To my surprise the article has received tens of thousands of views and dozens of links all over the Internet. When Tacoma Magazine asked me if I would help out with an article on RTT's I jumped at the opportunity. The original forum article was now several years old and I had spent another hundred or so nights in a couple of different tents since that time. I hope I'm



more prepped to help people form a decision by covering the basics of the tent.

### "Keeping you out of the food chain" seems to be the first thing many tent salesmen will jestingly recite.

First, before we continue I think a brief history on RTT's is in order. As best as anyone can reasonably decipher, the first units were likely home built or low production models built in the late 40's and early 50's when auto 'touring' started to gain popularity in both the United States and overseas. However, it would have been more common at the time to see the tent adorned on a family station wagon or sedan than a 4x4 like the modern trend. By the late 50's Italian manufacturer Autohome was building production tents. Fast forward to the late seventies/early eighties and South African companies like Eezi-Awn, Hannibal, and Howling Moon had started mass production for their local markets and later for international export sales. Regions in Africa and Australia absolutely live by them, you don't camp on the ground there like you would here. "Keeping you out of the food chain" seems to be the first thing many tent salesmen will



jestingly recite. Fast forward to the current trend and they are gaining popularity all over the globe, especially here in the United States. There was once only 2 or 3 companies importing them to the states just 5 years ago, now just about every major RTT manufacture in the world has a distribution infrastructure here in the states and we are seeing existing designs popping up under new re-badged names on a regular basis.

Now to the true grit, will the RTT work for you? I think one of the most effective ways to help form a decision is a run down of the basic pro's and con's associated with ownership and use of the RTT versus a standard high-quality ground tent. They are in no particular order; users will weight them differently based on their personal needs.

#### Pro's

- They do a good job of keeping you up out of the food chain. While lions, tigers and bears might not be a worry for your camping locale, they are for others. Obviously a tent isn't going to bearproof your camp in the least bit, but it does provide an added sense of security particularly against smaller animals and insects.
- They stay cleaner and bug free in comparison to a ground tent. Take off your boots and hang them from the ladder, no mess inside. With the elevated platform it's easy to sweep the dust and dirt out and continually have a clean tent on an extended camping trip.



• **Hard mounted.** Ideal for the "set it and forget it" mentality. It's one less thing to load in the back of the rig and in many cases uses previously unused room up on the roof. More than the space it saves, it removes the possibility of forgetting the crucially needed tent on a rainy camping trip.



- No need for level ground, it's far easier to toss a couple rocks under a tire to level out your vehicle than it is to try and find a level flat spot for a ground tent. No more scouring the woods for a plot of real estate void of rocks, tree stumps and anthills. The tents platform assures you a nights rest without a rock jabbing into your side.
- Built in mattress in most models. Some allow you to leave sleeping bags and pillows stowed with the tent, thus saving even more precious space in your cab, all the meanwhile being protected from dust & moisture. Some RTT users skip the sleeping bag outright and instead opt for fitted sheets and a down comforter to shield off the nights cold.

rocks on the corner of your tent or watching your rain fly sailing away.

- All season camping. Some better than others in this regard, they can be equipped with winter hoods, tent heaters, electric blankets, etc. While a ground tent has its obvious place in the cold weather there is some appeal to not setting up your tent in a foot of fresh powder.
- Fast setup. Some as quick as a minute, most under 10 minutes from the time you turn off the ignition to the time you're zipping up the door and slipping into your bag. I've got mine down to a couple of minutes start to finish, I'm generally cooking my dinner while most are still bending stakes as they maul them into rocky soil.
- They are quite comfortable and roomy; depending on the model they can be well suited for 2-3 adults or 2 adults and some children. In the standard RTT size, my wife and I often share the bed space with our 100 lb German shepherd. I wouldn't exactly call it roomy but it's completely workable for a comfortable night of sleep.
- Can be mounted over a pickup bed, over a flatbed, on a trailer or the conventional roof top setup over the cab of the vehicle. They will literally mount to any custom rack and even your standard Yakima and Thule options, so if a road trip in your wife's Rav4 is in the works, the tent

could mount right up.

Con's

put, they are expensive. For a good reason, they

Cost. Simply



 No stakes, guy wires or ground covers to deal with. While some models do in fact have guy wires for vestibules and stakes for optional annex units under the tent, generally speaking RTT's are free standing with the exception of a ladder to the ground. A night on the beach or the slabs of Southern Utah's sandstone won't leave you piling have a remarkable amount of engineering, fabrication and assembly, far more than the average ground tent. That is not to say the price is proportionally fair compared to a ground tent, but given the radical market ratio of the two options, it's easy to see why RTT manufacturers have to demand a higher price to turn any kind of profit with their relatively limited production.

- Must have a way to safely mount to vehicle. Over the cab of the Tacoma doesn't lend itself too well for tent mounting. The Tacoma is faced with limited roof rack options on the cab and wind drag, overall height and aesthetics should all be considered. More commonly a RTT is mounted over the bed or on a bed shell or tonneau when used on the Tacoma platform. All these additional mounting systems, load bars or tent compatible roof racks will result in more costs to an already expensive purchase.
- You're tied to your vehicle. Where you can get your vehicle will dictate where you camp. So if you're camping at a state park or improved campground, you'll likely be setting up your tent in the parking area while the ground tent guys are in the soft grass.
- put or pack it up daily. This is one of the bigger deal breakers for most. Unless your style of travel has you on the move each day, the RTT might be a pain. You would have to unload, stow and cover the tent each morning, just to redeploy that night. A deal breaker? Maybe. While it's just a few minutes to setup the tent, all the gear that would normally be left in a ground tent (clothes bags, blankets, etc) has to go back in the rig or left in the open at camp.
- Constant weight and clearance on top of your vehicle. A RTT can weigh anywhere from 50 to 150 lbs and stand an additional 12" or more above the standard roofline. A run-in with a tree or scuff against a rock could result in an expensive repair or replacement. Along with that they can affect the aerodynamics of your rig and result in lower fuel mileage. Tent covers can be replaced and spare parts are available but if your truck shows the battle scars of many run-ins, tent repairs could sink the idea fast.
- Can be uncomfortable or dangerous with children. With a typical on the roof mount, you could be dealing with a tent that is six feet off the ground. The middle of the night bathroom breaks could be more of a pain. That said, children have an instant affinity to RTT's and it becomes almost an instant attraction to climb up and down the ladder.
- Size issues. For a larger family or even a small family that packs a bunch of stuff, a RTT

may not work to your satisfaction or at a minimum it will feel very claustrophobic. Larger sizes are available, but with the larger size come a larger cost and limited options.



Ultimately they are just another piece of camping gear, another option that can potentially make your camping experience that much better. Some feel that having a mounted RTT will allow them to camp and get out more often. Perhaps, but that hasn't always proven to be the case, and I would not recommend buying one based solely on that line of thinking. Others have wives and kids that "may" camp more often if they had a RTT. I would challenge you to really decide if that is truly the case, it very well could be, or it could be an expensive trial.

At the end of the day they are just a place to sleep. Beyond the ease of use and setup time, RTT's can't really guarantee to offer any better sleeping experience than that of a ground tent.

How about my answer? Yes, the RTT is absolutely for me. The RTT saves me time & effort and is a comfortable solution to boot. I'm fortunate to get out and camp regularly, I host customer runs for my business (Cruiser Outfitters), I host and guide runs for 4x4 events and I guide customers from all over the world through Utah's back county as a weekend tour guide for a local motor sports training facility. For my trips the RTT is ideal. Setup is easy, there's room for the wife & dog, it saves room in the cab for passengers, and I can leave it loaded nearly year-round. For me personally, the benefit comes in terms of that extra time I save at camp, the place I'm able to camp comfortably. Additionally I like to leave as much stuff loaded in between trips, so not having to worry about packing the tent, sleeping bags and pillows does the trick.

Your results may vary.





So after reading this I would ask you the question, is a roof top tent for you?

#### Common Roof Top Rent Brands:

African Outback: http://www.africanoutback.co.za

ARB: http://www.arbusa.com

Autohome: http://www.autohomeus.com Camping Lab: http://www.campinglab.com

Eezi-Awn: http://www.eeziawn.com Hannibal: http://www.hannibal.co.za

Howling Moon: http://www.howlingmoon.co.za Mare: http://www.mare.com.ve/carpas.htm Mombasa: http://www.car-top-tent.com MyWay: http://www.mywaytents.co.za

(These are just the common names, there are literally dozens of other smaller, re-badged or out of business manufactures/brands throughout the world)



\*For nearly 20 years Cruiser Outfitters has been selling high quality parts and accessories for all model Toyota 4x4's. If you find yourself in the market for an ARB or Eezi-Awn roof top tent, give us a call. Please see cruiseroutfitters.com for pricing, application information and specifications.







From Bob Holliday

From Ryan Benfield



**From Anthony Norris** 





**Uniquely for Toyota Tacoma Trucks** 

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