

HISTORY OF SAFARI MOTOR HOME 1987 – 2001

By Brian Wigzell

THE TREK

I thought it best to assign the 'Trek' to a chapter on its own. Though its lineage is interwoven in the early Safari history and will be mentioned from time to time in other chapters, it deserves to stand alone, if for no other reason than its uniqueness. I am not sure that I can do the Trek coach justice here, but am not really concerned as the Trek clubs have produced more information for their members on their specific coaches than I could ever hope to do. So, Trek owners stick with your clubs! This article is primarily an overview for all Safari coach owners. If, perchance I please the Trek owners, then I am flattered.

My knowledge of the Trek coaches was very limited when I started this history & my first thought was to omit the Trek. That, of course, would have been a terrible mistake on my part. I then set about researching the Trek & in talking with a number of Trek owners, who offered me immense help in putting together this most important chapter in the Safari coach history. Specifically, I would like to thank Penny Braden who steered me to the NW Trek clubs website WWW.NWTFC.COM where I was able to extract so much information on the various Trek models & the excellent photos, many of which I reproduce in this article. I would recommend anyone reading this article that needs more information than I am giving here to go onto that website as it is a history on Trek coaches in itself. Also I owe thanks to the late Judy Yeast for her permission to reproduce the introduction to this chapter, "How the Bed Began". I also cannot forget to thank other Trek owners for their help.

The first Trek emerged from Harrisburg in 1991, as a 1992 model, however I received the information that told me it was Mat Perlot's intention to build the Trek back in 1987, before the first Safari coach was built ! The dealers of the time convinced Mat that the market wasn't ready for such a coach! I received from the late Judy Yeast in the following article she wrote titled "How the Bed Began", this, I think, explains a lot about Mat & his conceptual ideas about the Trek.

"HOW THE BED BEGAN"

" Mat Perlot, known for his "out of the box" thinking decided in the mid-1980's that there were lots of younger drivers who wanted smaller vehicles that included the high quality of larger RV's. He studied some of the space saving features of class C coaches. The flip down bed impressed him and it seemed the ceiling would be a great place to store it when it was not in use.

Mat felt so strongly his ideas would work that he started the Safari Motor Coach Corporation to implement them. Mat's first project was to build a small coach for weekend use that he could sell in high numbers.

The year was 1987 & the first Trek version had chrome poles to raise & lower the bed. It was a disappointment. Dealers did not support the idea because they could not see the value thus only two or three were sold.

Safari went on to build high quality regular RV's, but the engineers kept the idea of a bed in the ceiling alive. They prototyped linear activators, air & hydraulic cylinders, & thought about cables activated by cylinders, but nothing was quite right.

The breakthrough came from an unexpected place. Mat & his wife Connie took a few days vacation in Las Vegas. After checking into their hotel room, Mat idly picked up the TV remote & noticed two unusual buttons: TV UP, TV DOWN.?? What were these for?

He pushed TV UP...Rumm.. Up came the TV out of a credenza!

TV DOWN button...Rumm..Down went the TV into its hiding place.

This could be the kind of motor & design he needed! To test the motor, Mat had Connie move the TV up & down while he sat on it. It worked. Next, he had Connie push the UP button while he tried to hold the TV down. He couldn't hold it. The motor was strong enough to carry the load of a Trek bed! Finally, he opened up the back of the cabinet to find out who made the motor. Back in Harrisburg, he returned to his original concept. This time he had an idea for an improved design. Safari found Somfy, a company that made motors capable of lifting the bed. Then they contracted with Hurds, a fabricator in Harrisburg who could "build anything". Hurds helped solve the load carrying problems."

The new Trek coach was introduced in 1991 with the bed in the ceiling. Safari had a fresh new approach to an RV. They worked out new ideas for getting dealers behind the Trek concept. Treks started selling – but not exactly as the factory had foreseen.

We've all heard the stories of how a product's primary use ends up to be far different from what the designer planned. Edison thought his phonograph would only be used for business dictation & didn't think about recording music; IBM envisioned a worldwide market of between ten & twelve mainframe computers, then went on to sell thousands that today business could not function without.

So it was with the Trek. Safari thought that this small RV with its unique bed would be used mainly for weekend trips. However, right from the beginning, a surprising number of people started using the Trek full-time, & even more used it for extended time periods.

Trek ownership took on club-like status. Owners became "Trekkies", proud of their coaches, its quality construction, and the places it could take them. They had a 35 foot motor home in a 28 foot body. The Trek is unique in the industry & unique in its inception. Mat took a gamble when he built a coach with a fresh approach and the capital of gambling, Las Vegas, helped provide answers to critical design problems.

The photo below is of a 1992 TREK coach, it is built on an Isuzu chassis. Power comes from an Isuzu 3.9L turbo diesel coupled to a 4 speed auto transmission w/overdrive. It also has an exhaust brake & cruise control. Unfortunately, I have no interior views, but I assume that very little difference existed between the '92 & '93 models and we do have excellent interior photos of the latter. The 1992 model year Treks came in three lengths 24, 26 & 28 feet. The 26 & 28 foot coaches had double

or twin bed options, while the 24 & one model of the 28 foot relied solely on the 'Electro-Majic' bed as the main sleeping quarters.



1992 TREK

The 1993 Trek came on the same chassis etc. & in the three length floor plans 24, 26 & 28 feet as the previous 1992 model.



1993 TREK

The following pictures come from the 1993 Trek brochure.

You know it when you see it - the harmony of colors, the balance of space, the open feeling, the total livability of a TREK motorhome. First impressions are followed by the realization that here is a motorhome that is truly planned and designed for living - a motorhome that does not compromise on quality.



Space is finite - and in a motorhome none can be wasted. The art of design is truly tested - and TREK establishes new standards. More livability than ever before. Added to the craft of the space designer is the art of the interior decorator, with colors and balance that make the motorhome truly a home!

Our furniture is custom made for TREK. Strong metal frames are combined with top quality cushioning, and covers are chosen for durability. Most important, it is scaled and designed to provide the most in comfort and use. The couch converts into a comfortable bed. Storage is available underneath.

The Amazing Electro-Majic® bed!



Enjoy the evening in the plush living room. The driver and passenger chairs add additional seating. Ready to retire for the night? Just push a button for your Electro-Majic® bed to lower from its storage position. Ready-made with a color coordinated Trava-Sack for extra sleeping comfort. This bed features much more headroom than a mini home and you can sit up and move about in comfort. The Trava-Sack makes bed make-up a breeze! (Electro-Majic bed optional on some floor plans.)

Available on some floor plans, your choice of twins or a queen size bed. Color coordinated furnishings and bed covers.



A Kitchen - Not A Galley! TREK brings the KITCHEN to the motorhome. Spacious countertops, ample cupboards, huge drawers, Lazy Susans, double sinks . . . all the features of home!



The TREK kitchens feature all the conveniences! Deluxe microwave/convection ovens, large refrigerator/freezer, four-burner gas range tops, extra deep double sinks, large overhead cabinets with adjustable shelves. A powerful ceiling exhaust fan and a range hood control smoke and odors. This is truly a kitchen designed for the cook!



A table for two . . . or four with the folding decorator chairs that accompany the EXPANDING dining room table! This table seats four or more comfortably in its expanded position . . . or is perfect for two when stowed (facing dinettes also available in some models).



A house is not a home . . . without a luxury bath. Huge fiberglass showers. Big sinks with ample counter space, large wardrobes and storage space, and all color coordinated with bright, polished brass accessories! Roughing it in style!

Manufactured by:

SAFARI

Motor Coaches, Inc.
30725 Diamond Hill Rd. • P.O. Box 740
Harrisburg, OR 97446

Here you clearly see the same classic interior that Safari used on its other coaches.

The 1994 model Treks made no changes in chassis, engine, etc. and had the same three lengths as previous years. They maintained the twin bed options on the 2600 & 2800 models. They also offered the same in a Pathmaker Edition that came with a patio awning, 1000 watt inverter, solar panel, hydraulic levelers, a 120 volt residential lighting package, and air horns.

Without a doubt, the Trek was a unique coach and could fully compete in the luxury coach market. Additionally, its characteristic Electro-Majic bed was used in another Safari coach, the Kalahari. This coach was introduced as a 1993 model lightweight coach and came in 30 & 33 foot lengths. It offered either a standard rear bed layout or Electro-Majic' bed option that was up front over the driver and co-pilot seats. I will deal with this coach in more detail in another part of this series and as

you may see, could be the reason for the major change in the Trek philosophy in adding longer rear bedroom and rear engine models.



Front cover of 1994 Trek brochure.

The Trek philosophical change came with the 1995 model year. This same year saw the end of the Isuzu chassis/engine configuration. This practical and philosophical change was probably driven by the new chassis options that had been introduced by Chevrolet. They unveiled the then new P30 & P72 chassis. With these chassis came the 454 V8 gas engines which generated 230HP and the 6.5 litre V8 diesel which developed 190HP. Both engines were coupled to the GM 4L80E , 4 speed w/OD transmission. The Treks built on the front engine P30 chassis came in three lengths, 24, 28, and 30 feet. The P72 chassis used the rear fitted 6.5L diesel engine, coupled to an Allison 542, 4 speed w/OD transmission giving coach lengths of 30 and 33 feet. Here we see a direct clash with the Kalahari coach models, both seeking the same market!

The 'Pathmaker Edition' was available again this year on all models, as well as an arctic package which consisted of dual-pane windows, heated, remote controlled mirrors, heated and insulated holding tanks plus auxiliary defrosting fans. I have often wondered how many of the rear engine Treks were made as they appear to be quite rare. Safari also gave this 1995 Trek a modified front cap with much wider radiator grill keeping the design very similar to its Serengeti/Sahara stable mates.

Breaking The Rules

There seems to be a rule in the motorhome industry - The smaller the coach, the poorer the quality. Too many people have been forced into making a choice: invest at least six digits in a big custom bus, or settle for a stripped-down, second-best, smaller RV. But there is an alternative: the TREK. A moderately sized, moderately priced, fully equipped, premium quality motor home.

The TREK is ready for the most demanding use. Even the smallest TREK model is unbelievably roomy. With the patented Electro-Majic® bed, there is no need for a separate bedroom - a genuine queen-size bed hides in the ceiling.



another 24' model that two people can easily use for full-timing. Imagine, the drivability of a 24' coach - and the living space of a 36' bus!

It's quick, convenient, and comfortable, and the TREK still retains great head room. And, it lets us build a 24' coach that has enough permanent beds to sleep four persons! We build

Safari's Exclusive Electro-Majic® Bed

The drivability of a 24' coach - the living space of a 36' bus!

Five years ago Safari revolutionized the RV industry with the introduction of the patented Electro-Majic® Bed. The idea is simple - hide the bed in the living room ceiling during the day. At night, press a button and an electric motor lowers the bed into place. In seconds you have a queen size bed ready for sleeping. We've redesigned the Electro-Majic Bed for 1995, and now it offers the following:

- A true Queen mattress and King-size sleeping space.
- A full 6'2" of headroom while retracted.
- An ultra-reliable aerospace motor.
- More convenience and privacy than ever before.



It's a big factory, but every coach gets individual attention. The key is teamwork.



It starts with people like Kim, our chief designer. One reason our coaches are so roomy and efficient is because Kim spends so much of her



time with the coaches. Her state of the art CAD system can't replace her intuition and experience. The Trek's easy handling comes from the light

Hi, to show you more about how the TREK is built, I'd like to give you a guided tour.



weight of the coach, made possible by the smart use of fiberglass and aluminum. Here Don is building a cap in our in house Fiberglass shop.

Chassis Specs

CHEVROLET P-72 DIESEL POWER

- Base Engine Diesel
- 6.5L GM Turbocharged Diesel
- 190 HP @ 2600 RPM
- 385 lb-ft torque @ 1700 RPM
- Allison 4542 Transmission
- 4-Speed w/ Overdrive

CHEVROLET P-30 DIESEL

- Base Engine Diesel
- 6.5L GM Turbocharged Diesel
- 190 HP @ 2600 RPM
- 385 lb-ft torque @ 1700 RPM
- GM 40RSE Hydraulic Transmission
- 4-Speed w/ Overdrive

CHEVROLET P-30 GASOLINE

- Base Engine Gasoline
- Chevrolet 454CID
- 230 HP @ 3600 RPM
- 350 lb-ft torque @ 1400 RPM
- GM 40RSE Hydraulic Transmission
- 4-Speed w/ Overdrive

The same quality can be seen in every corner of the coach. The aircraft aluminum exterior is protected by the same Urethane paint system as most luxury cars. A great look that will last for years. Storage doors are double-sealed against the weather. And where our competitors are known to skimp, we use high-quality residential carpet and fabric throughout the coach. Every detail shows our commitment to quality.

Where is it written that you have to choose between a small coach and a quality coach? The TREK is smart in size, and uncompromised in quality. Fully equipped and reasonably priced, it really is a different kind of coach.



Specification Guide

	P-30			P-72		
Model	2420	2820	3060	3060	3330	3552
Floor Plans	2420, 2430	2820, 2830	3060	3060	3330	3552
Ext. Length	25' 7"	28' 7"	30' 5"	30' 5"	33' 3"	33' 3"
Ext. Height	11' 2"	11' 2"	11' 2"	11' 2"	11' 2"	11' 2"
GVWR	14000 lbs	16000 lbs	16000 lbs	16000 lbs	18000 lbs	18000 lbs
Freshwater	40 Gallons	40 Gallons	80 Gallons	80 Gallons	80 Gallons	80 Gallons
Wastewater	30 Gallons	30 Gallons	40 Gallons	40 Gallons	40 Gallons	40 Gallons
Graywater	30 Gallons	30 Gallons	45 Gallons	45 Gallons	45 Gallons	45 Gallons
Generator	3.6 kW Onan® MicroLite			6.3 kW Onan® Emerald		
Air Conditioners	1 DualTherm® 13,500 BTU			2 DualTherm® 13,500 BTU		
Fuel	80 Gallons	80 Gallons	80 Gallons	80 Gallons	80 Gallons	80 Gallons
LPG	25 Gallons	25 Gallons	25 Gallons	25 Gallons	25 Gallons	25 Gallons



The finest materials, the best techniques - but it's the people of Safari that really make the difference!

As you can see, we don't build this coach just to look good. From the inside paint job to the exterior, we use quality materials and workmanship to make a quality coach that will last for years.



But there is one thing that is just for show. Storage doors are double-sealed against the weather. And where our competitors are known to skimp, we use high-quality residential carpet and fabric throughout the coach. Every detail shows our commitment to quality.



We'd love to show you more, but you'll have to come to a Showing or maybe we can give you the whole tour.

Floor Plans



Model 2420
Bed, Queen or Twin
Front Entry Available w/ P-72 Chassis
Electro Majic® Bed Optional w/ Front Entry



Model 2820
Electro Majic® Bed
Rear Bath



Model 3060
Bed, Queen or Twin
Front Entry Available w/ P-72 Chassis
Electro Majic® Bed Optional w/ Front Entry



Model 3060
Electro Majic® Bed
Rear Bath



Model 3330
Bed, Queen or Twin
Side or Front Entry
Electro Majic® Bed Optional w/ Side Entry



Model 3330
Electro Majic® Bed
Rear Bath



Model 3552
Side or Front Entry
Electro Majic® Bed Optional w/ Side Entry



Model 3552
Electro Majic® Bed
Rear Bath

All Specifications and Floor Plans Are Subject to Change Without Notice or Liability

Chassis Specs

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These pictures are part of the multi-page brochure for the 1995 Trek.

Africa isn't the only place for a Safari

Africa is an exciting place for adventure. But so is America. And recreational possibilities are endless. Sight-seeing in the Appalachias, fishing in the Upper Mid-West, camping in the Pacific mountains. Problem is, you can't get to many of these places with a 35' coach. Narrow back roads and small campsites just aren't made for such a large vehicle.

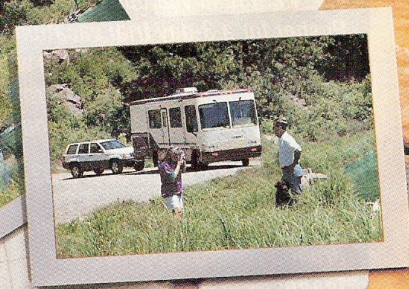
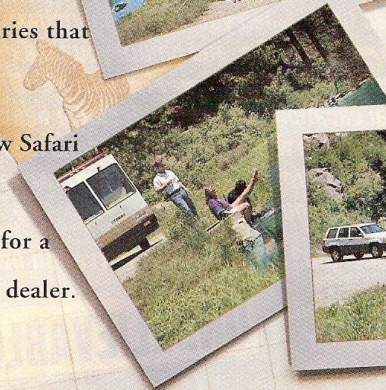
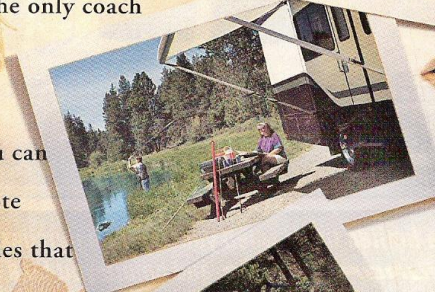
Which is why Safari builds the Trek. It's the only coach with all the living space of a 35' coach - including a queen-size bed and spacious galley - that still fits in a 24' space. So you can negotiate the back roads, park in the remote campgrounds, and still enjoy all the luxuries that come with every Safari motorhome.

If you would like to know more about how Safari fits so much livability into such a smart coach, call Samantha at [800] 458-TREK for a free brochure and the name of your local dealer.

SAFARI

P.O. Box 740
30725 Diamond Hill Road
Harrisburg, Oregon 97446
800-458-8735 • 503-995-8214

Safari Motor Coaches, Circle 186 on Reader Service Card



October 1994 advertisement carried in the FMCA magazine of the same month.

Apart from the interior & exterior colour changes, there were very few changes to the 1996 & 1997 Trek models

The December issue of the SMC magazine *Rendezvous*, published a review of the 1996 24 foot Trek, floor plan 2430. As usual the article was well written by Don Magary. Unfortunately, Don did not report on any road test that may have taken place. The test coach was powered by the front mounted GM 6.5L turbo diesel engine with the usual GM 4L80E Hydramatic transmission. Don confirms the various chassis/engine combinations, including the rear engine versions. The 1996 Treks were the first of their type to have contoured molded skirt doors giving the coach a more luxurious exterior look.

Though the 1996 and 1997 Trek brochures carried floor plans for the rear-bed coaches, all of the FMCA magazine Trek advertisements showed only the 24 foot & 28 foot models. I have not found any information regarding the longer, rear- engine Trek coaches.



1996 Trek. Photo taken from 1996 brochure.

The following full page advertisement of the 1996 Trek appeared in the November 1996 issue of the FMCA magazine.

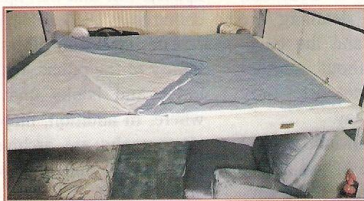


Dream of Space.

Dream Trek.



TREK's patented ELECTRO-MAJIC™ bed hides in the ceiling during the day (above) and lowers for sleeping at night (below).



Trek: the smaller coach without the small coach compromises.
Space: the patented Electro-Majic Bed allows the Trek to feature a full-size bath, galley, and living area in one of the smallest class A coaches built. **Quality:** premium hardwood cabinetry, designer interiors, and exceptional craftsmanship are features of every Trek. **Luxury:** items such as a power-smart inverter, large solar panel, and rear camera aren't options: they're standard features.

TREK - Big coach luxury in a smaller package.

For a free brochure call 1-800-458-8735



SAFARI MOTOR COACHES, INC.
 30725 Diamond Hill Road • Harrisburg, Oregon 97446

Though there were very few changes other than interior & exterior colors in the 1997 coaches I have shown below the eight floor plans, including two with optional front entry & the same model year spec sheet.



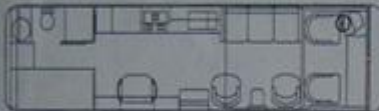
2420 Bunkhouse
Electro-Majic Bed



2430 Rear Bath
Electro-Majic Bed



2480 Rear Bath
Electro-Majic Bed



2820 Bunkhouse
Electro-Majic Bed



2830 Rear Bath
Electro-Majic Bed



3060 Center Bath
Electro-Majic Bed Available
Front Entry Available



3330 Center Bath
Front Entry Available



3352 Side Aisle
Front Entry Available

1997 Specification Guide



Chassis	Chevrolet P-30 Front Engine				Chevrolet P-72 Diesel Pusher	
Engine	6.5L GM Diesel or 454 CID Vortec Gasoline				6.5L GM Diesel	
Horsepower	Diesel - 190 HP @ 3000 RPM Vortec Gasoline - 290 HP @ 4000 RPM				190 HP @ 3000 RPM	
Torque	Diesel - 345 ft-lbs @ 1700 RPM Vortec Gasoline - 410 ft-lbs @ 1200 RPM				345 ft-lbs @ 1700 RPM	
Transmission	GM Hydramatic 4L80E 4-Speed Overdrive				Allison AT-542 Automatic 4-Speed	
Wheelbase	158.5"	178"	190"	208"	190"	208"
GVWR	14,800 lbs	16,500 lbs	16,500 lbs	16,500 lbs	18,000 lbs	18,000 lbs
GCWR	19,000 lbs	21,000 lbs	21,000 lbs	21,000 lbs	23,000 lbs	23,000 lbs
Floorplans Available	2420, 2430 2480	2820 2830	3060	3330 3352	3060	3330 3352
Exterior Height	11'2"	11'2"	11'2"	11'2"	11'2"	11'2"
Dry Weight (Approx.)	11,000 lbs	12,000 lbs	12,500 lbs	13,500 lbs	12,800 lbs	13,500 lbs
LP Gas Tank					55 gallon	
Fuel					60 gallon	
Fresh Water					80 gallon	
Gray Holding					45 gallon	
Black Holding					40 gallon	

Kitchen Features

Full-Power Micro-Convection Oven
3-Burner LPG Rangetop (2-Burner
in 3060)
Power Vent in Bath
8 cu.ft. Norcold Refrigerator
Fantastic Fan in Galley
120V Fluorescent Lighting in
Galley
Power Range Hood
Stainless Steel Double Sinks

Power Features

3.6kW LPG Onan Microlite™
Generator (24', 28' Models)
6.3kW LPG Onan Emerald™
Generator (30', 33' Models)
Freedom 10™ 1000W Inverter
50 Amp Charger
Solar System (25W Panel)
Residential Lighting System
DuoTherm 13,500 BTU Roof A/C
(24', 28' - Single, 30', 33' - Dual)

Cabinetry and Fixtures

Hardwood Cabinetry
Large Shower w/ Skylight
Expanding Dinette

Chassis and Mechanical

Electric Power Step
Aluminum Skirts and Siding
Stainless Steel Wheel Liners
6 Gal. LPG Water Heater
Tow Hitch
Basement Storage
Enclosed Storage Tanks
Urethane Paint, Base & Clear Coats
Full Coverage Paint

Driving Comforts

Cruise Control
Automatic Transmission
6-Way Power Driver Seat
Delco Stereo System w/
Cassette Deck
Rear Camera and Monitor
Dash Air Conditioning and Heating

Entertainments and Luxuries

20" Color Television
13" Bedroom Television
(available in 3060, 3330, 3352)
Amplified Television Antenna
Cable TV Hookup
Phone Hookup

Pathmaker Package

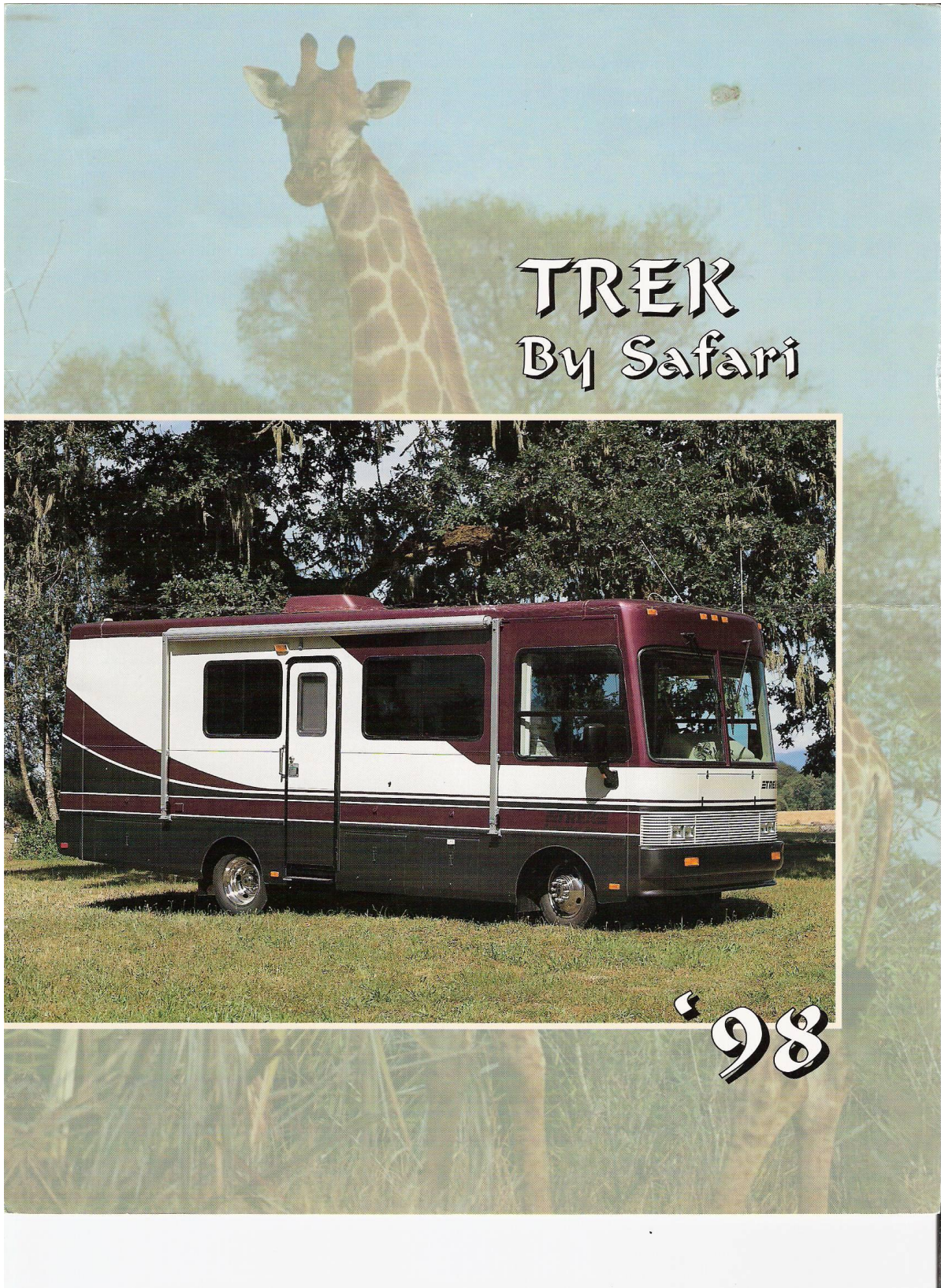
Hydraulic Leveling System
Patio Awning
Air Horns

Other Options

Electro-Magic Bed
Electro-Magic Bed Sleep Sack
CB Radio
Double Pane Windows
Wood Plank Floor in Galley
Wood Plank Floor in Bath
Full Plank Floor
Window Awning(s)
Mural

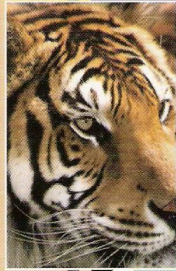
Revision 12-12-96.
All specifications subject to change
without notification or obligation.

We now arrive at the 1998 model year Treks where we see a number of changes. It was here that Safari reduced the Trek line back to three floor plans, two 24 foot and one 28 foot. Gone are the rear engine and rear bedroom coaches. We have arrived where we began with the 1992 models, albeit with one extra 24 foot model. The big difference of course is in the chassis where the Trek now uses the Chevrolet P-32 exclusively. One does have a choice of the 454 CID Vortec gasoline engine or the 6.5L GM diesel. Both of the engines use the GM Hydromantic 4L80E four speed w/OD transmissions. To the layman, the Trek coach wasn't really changing from year to year. Safari was adding various options each year. This year, 1998, a Datron Mobile Satellite System & a Delco Telepath GPS Navigator system were offered.



Cover photo of 1998 Trek brochure.

'99 ETREKE



The Smart Coach



Cover photo of 1999 Trek brochure.

The chassis specifications for the 1999 Trek did not change, neither did the number and length of models. However, there was considerable change made on the

exterior. Gone was the usual riveted aluminum skin. In its place was a very smooth laminated skin that was still aluminum. There were interior décor changes, a lower profile, and engine covers were used.

Unfortunately I do not have any pictures or information on the 2000 model year Trek coaches. Though, I believe, other than exterior and interior colors, there were minimal changes.

I cannot say the same for the 2001 model Trek, for as you see below, a major exterior change had taken place.



2001 Trek, photo from 2001 brochure.

The most noticeable change is, of course, the front cap, now streamlined and very much updated. I am not sure whether or not the same rear cap was used. The smooth aluminum skin was laminated, as is now the norm on Trek coaches. Four different interior décor selections were available. The 20 inch front television was now centered above the dash instead off to the left side. The usual two 24 foot and one 28 foot floor plans were available as was the P32 chassis. Now the Workhorse name becomes attached. The engine options were also as in previous Treks. Tank capacities were the same as was wheelbases and GVWR.

This was the last Trek model year to be built by SMC because in July 2001 the merger of SMC and Monaco took place. This was not the end of the Trek story. As of April 2008 the coach continues to be built by Monaco Coach. I sincerely hope that this unique motor home continues to satisfy its owners & remains in production,

proving once again, that Mat Perlot's vision of this niche market coach was accurate. A good picture to end the Trek article:



This picture is from the last SMC Trek in 2001.