

Airstream Trailers, 1958 to 1968



by Fred Coldwell, VAC Archive Historian

1957 was the last year for 13 panel front and rear end caps used since 1936.

**SENSATIONAL
NEW AIRSTREAM
TRAVEL TRAILER**

22 FT. FLYING CLOUD



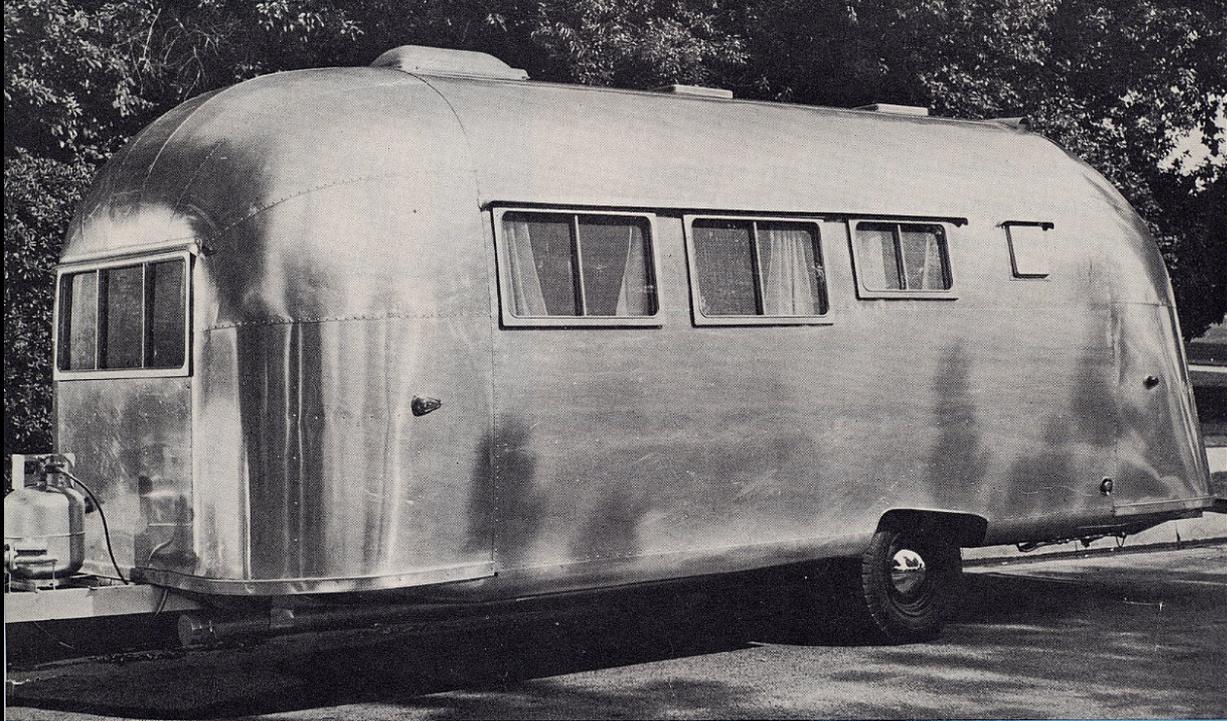
DESIGNED AND BUILT TO GO PLACES IN COMFORT

During 1956 and 1957, the number of “stretch-formed” end caps was reduced from 13 or 9 to just 7 panels front and rear, requiring less riveting and assembly work.

**SENSATIONAL
NEW AIRSTREAM
TRAVEL TRAILER**

RUTGERS MOBILE HOMES
119 Samish Highway, Pt. Regent 3-1422
Rutgers, N.J.

22 FT. FLYING CLOUD

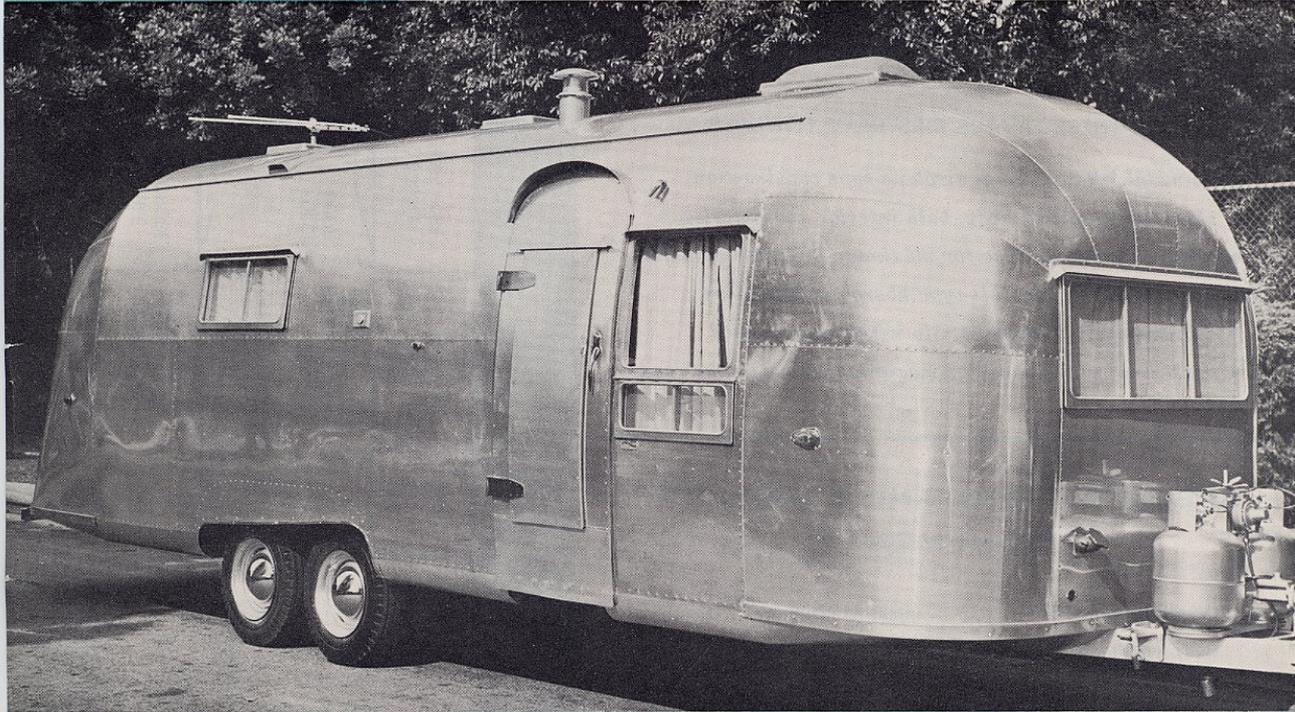


SPECIALLY DESIGNED ROOMY SLEEP-TWO MODEL

1957-58 Calif. built trailers often had teardrop shaped wheel wells.

**SENSATIONAL
NEW AIRSTREAM
TRAVEL TRAILER**

26 FT. OVERLANDER



SPECIALLY DESIGNED ROOMY SLEEP-TWO MODEL

7 panels on the rear with converging rivet lines, and one long side drip cap, gave 1958 Airstreams a sleek appearance.



1958 Airstreams featured a circular ceiling lamp with a “drizzle” design, very modern back then.



Enclosed
overhead
front end
cabinets first
appeared
around 1958.



In 1958, Airstream introduced self-contained trailers,
and named them “International” trailers.



Airstream presents the ultimate in travel trailers

the **WALLY BYAM**
INTERNATIONAL

“I have waited 25 years to make this astonishing announcement...” “Here, at last, is a travel trailer with *total* self-containment—and I mean **TOTAL!** If you were willing to pay \$25,000 for these unique new Airstreams you couldn’t get more foresighted conveniences or perfected atomic-age comfort. Ladies and gentlemen—the all-new Wally Byam INTERNATIONAL Airstream Trailers!”

Wally Byam

Founder of Airstream, world’s largest manufacturer of travel trailers, Wally Byam has led his famous Caravans to Mexico, Central America, and Canada, as well as to 14 European countries. His travel exploits have been headlined in *LIFE*, *NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC*, *LOOK*, *TIME*, *NEWSWEEK*, and in hundreds of the world’s leading newspapers. On national television he is known as “The Modern Marco Polo.”



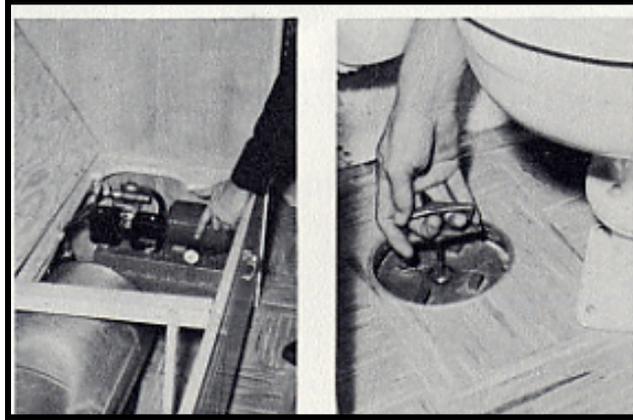
AIRSTREAM
TRAILERS, INC.

107 CHURCH ST., JACKSON CENTER, OHIO • 12804 E. FIRESTONE BLVD., NORWALK, CALIF.

International trailers were fully self-contained
and featured



a full bathroom,



a pressurized water
system and a
holding tank, and



a propane fridge
to keep drinks
cold.

Wally had a personal “test bed” International,
a 22’ tandem axle World Traveler.



Wally & Stella Byam's 1957 gold anodized 22' tandem axle World Traveler is in front of the Expo Center.



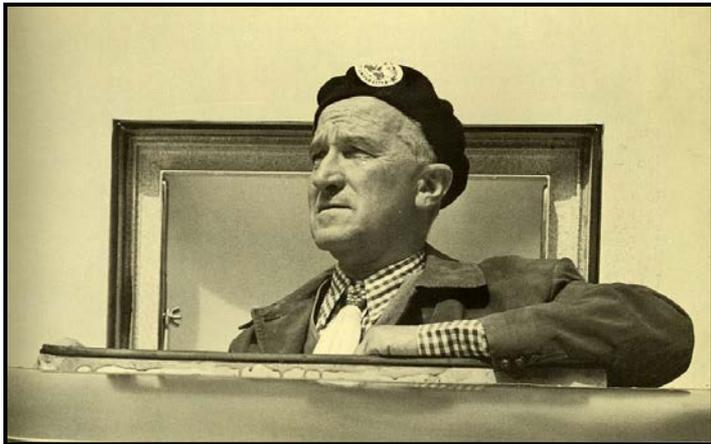
It has the long single drip rail found on 57-58 Airstreams.



At 22', it was the shortest tandem axle trailer made by Airstream until the 1992 Sovereign.



Wally's World
Traveler has a front
gaucho and street
side galley. His
famous pop-up
hatch is centered in
the ceiling.



A gas refrigerator, closet, vanity and single bed at the rear occupy the curb side interior.



A street side shower and toilet complete the rear interior.

Note how the overhead cabinets taper in at the bottom, a common 1950's feature.



After the show, check out Wally's gold
World Traveler in front of the Expo Center.



From 1958 to 1962, Airstream offered trailers in one of three trim levels:

Standard -120 volt a.c. appliances

Land Yacht -self contained + battery

International - self-contained + upgraded

1958-1960 “*Standard*” trailers had just the serial number plate and perhaps a name tag.



1958-1960 Airstreams with intermediate trim had one “*Land Yacht*” exterior plaque near the serial number plate.



1958-1960 Airstreams with top-of-the-line trim had 3 beautiful exterior International globe plaques and the “Land Yacht” trim plaque. Badging was cumulative.



This 1959 Overlander International has the “*Land Yacht*” plaque and the “*International*” globes.



The third
“International”
globe was
centered above
the rear
window.



By 1958, the Ohio plant had been added to the wave s/n plate. Ohio serial numbers still used an “O” prefix. Some model names tags appeared as early as 1956.



Custom built trailers had their own “name” tag.



The Norwalk, Calif. Factory has its own serial number tag. In 1958, the Calif. serial number format changed to indicate trailer length, along with the month and year built.



In 1958, the Norwalk, Calif. plant at 12804 E. Firestone Blvd. was reclassified as being in a new city, Santa Fe Springs, Calif. The plant did not move, but Santa Fe Springs was incorporated closer to it. The 1959-1960 wave serial number tag shows Santa Fe Springs as the factory location.



California built Airstreams became subject to the California Mobile Home Code in 1958. A separate black tag indicated compliance.



The Division of Housing black tag can be used to ID California trailers at a distance.



And again, note the Calif. black tag.



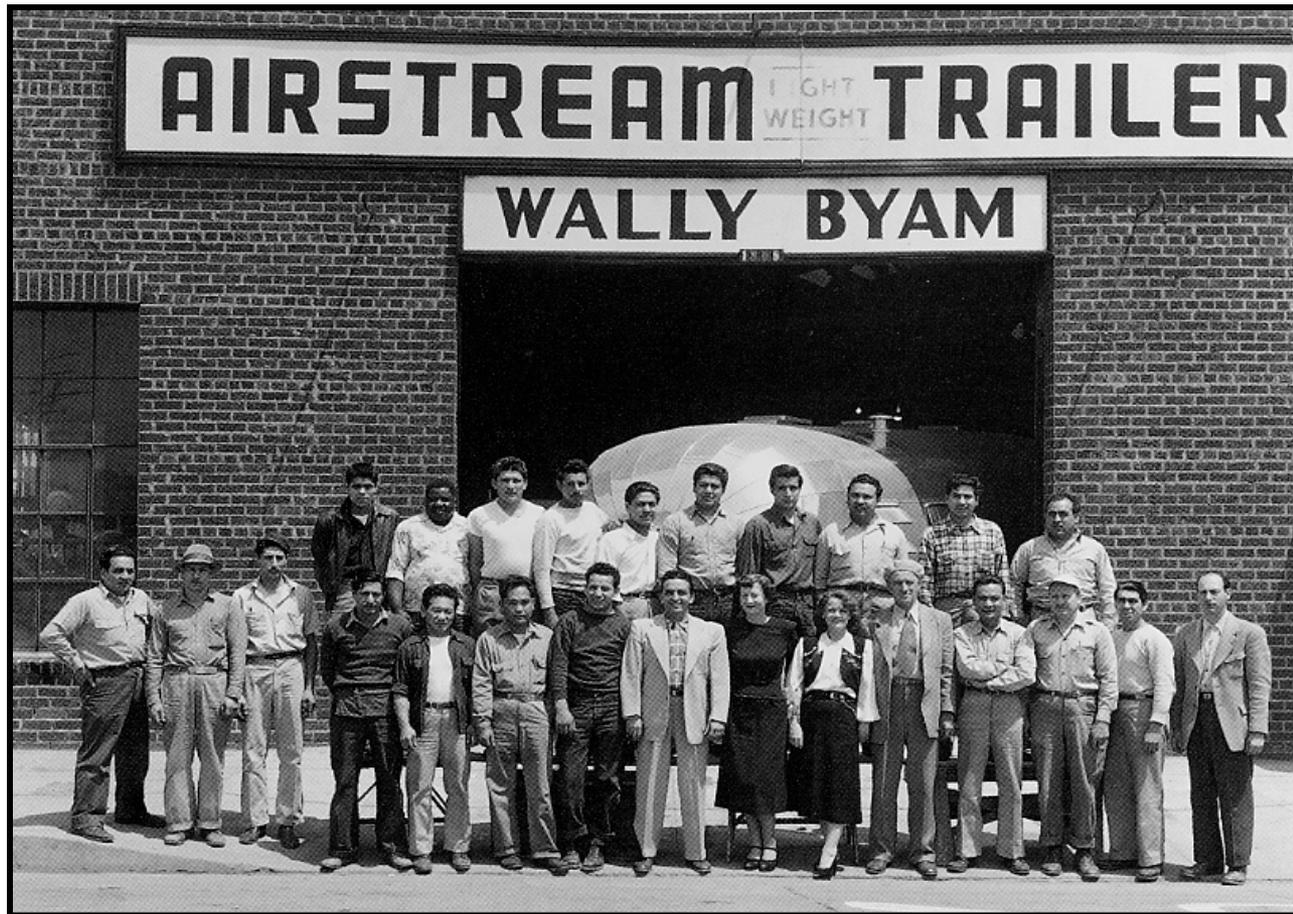
Ohio Airstreams
were built to
Mobile Home
Manufacturer's
Association
(MHMA) approved
standards for travel
trailers. A riveted
oval plaque
proclaimed that
industry standard
was met.



Ohio built Airstreams can be ID'd at a distance by the MHMA oval plaque.



The old California factory at 1755 No. Main Street, Los Angeles, Calif, closed in 1960. This left only one west coast factory in Santa Fe Springs, Calif.



1960 was the last year for the Airstream
“wave” serial number plate.



It was replaced by a new large rectangular serial number plate that also named the factory which built the trailer. Ohio is shown here.



International trim
Airstreams often
had raised trim
around their serial
number plates.



1960-1962 California script model names were often installed at a rakish angle....



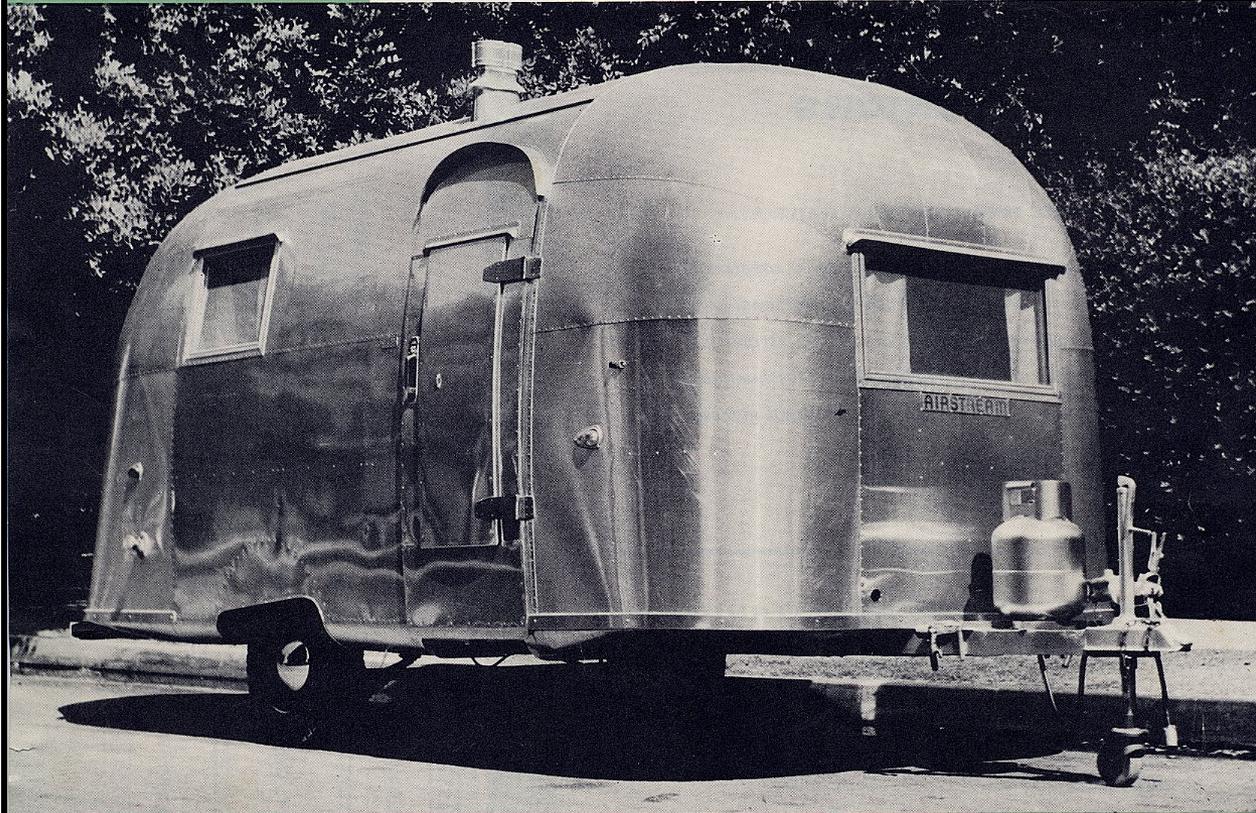
... yet another way to ID a California built trailer



Hehr 'Clear view' windows (no vertical braces blocking the view) became standard in 1959 on most trailers.

**SENSATIONAL
NEW AIRSTREAM
TRAVEL TRAILER**

18 FT. TRAVELER



THE NEW LIGHTWEIGHT GO-ANYWHERE TRAILER

... except for low cost trailers like the 1958 and this 1959 18' Pacer. Low cost models kept the less expensive Hehr standard stamped frame windows with vertical braces.



Low Moorish arch wheel wells were used on both California and Ohio built trailers. Here's a 1959 Calif. 18' Traveler.



AIRSTREAM 18 FT. TRAVELER

A propane refrigerator in 1959-1961 Calif. built trailer is indicated by an oblong roof vent behind the oval gas heater roof vent. The California Mobile Home Code required exterior venting of propane appliances, such as refrigerators.



Airstream's most popular model in the late 1950's was the 26' Overlander, seen here.



But short trailers were also manufactured.
For 1958 and 1959, the shortest trailer was the 18' Pacer.
A 1958 18' Pacer is pictured here.



In 1960, the Pacer was shortened to 16' long, seen here. This short Pacer was the forerunner to the 1961 Bambi.



The 1960 Pacer continued to use the Hehr standard stamped frame windows.



Although 1957 was the last year for Airstreams having 13 end panels, there was one exception...



... this 1960 Airstream s/n 220268C is a “Custom” built Airstream with 13 end panels.



It has many 1960 features, like the exterior front battery box and a pressurized water tank fill spout ...



... and low Moorish arch wheel wells and a Bowden propane water heater. It's a real curiosity.



This 18' Caravel was the short trailer built in the first half of 1960.
It is not listed in the Airstream production records.
Two 1960 Caravels have been discovered to date.



By 1961, the small model name metal tag was replaced with raised script lettering. The small wave serial number plate was replaced by larger rectangular serial number plate. Base model “Standard” trailers listed only “AIRSTREAM”.



By 1961, the beautiful “Land Yacht” and “International” exterior trim level plaques were discontinued



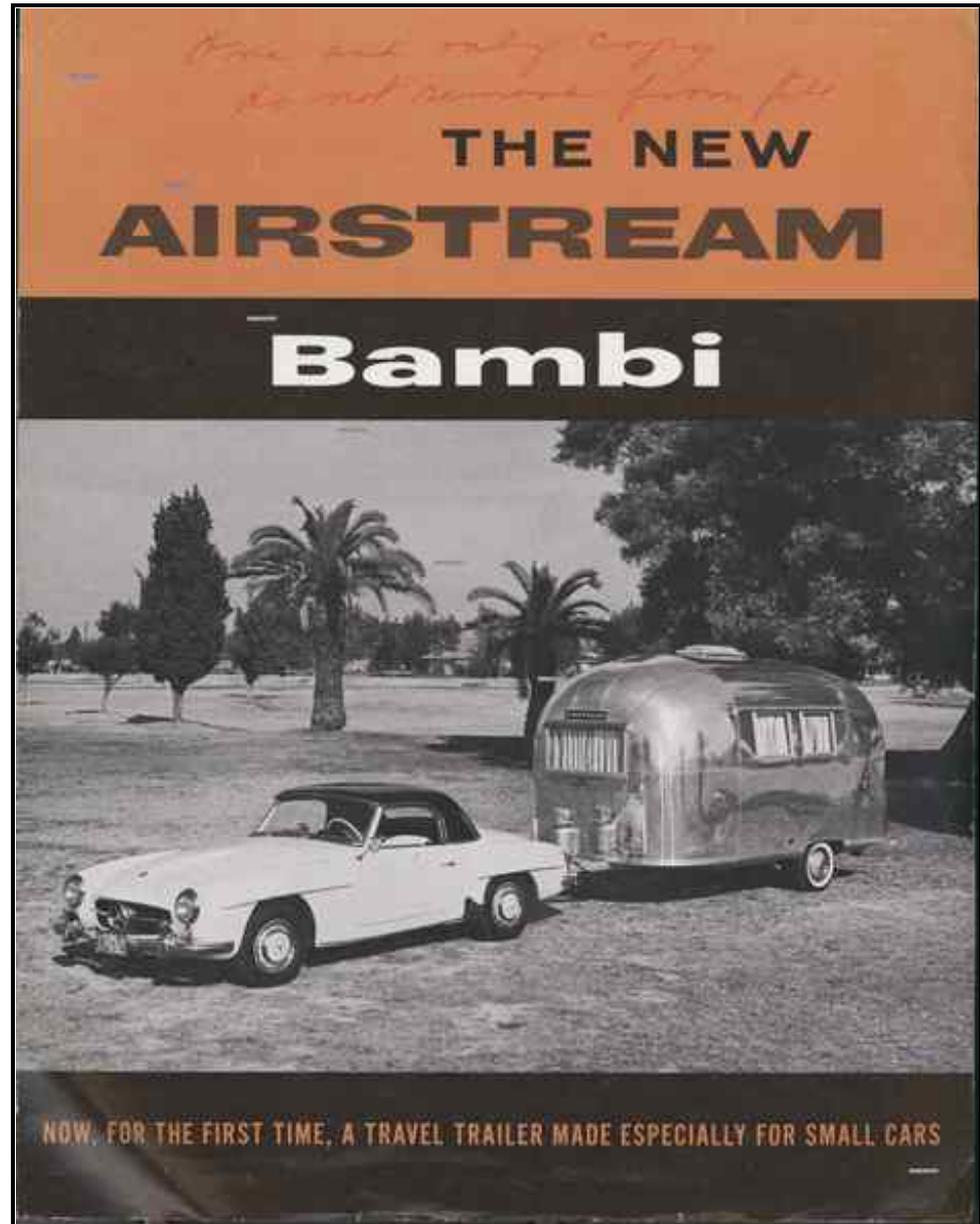
... and trim level was incorporated into the serial number plate.

This 1961 22' Safari has "Land Yacht" trim.

The large plate also identifies the factory that built the trailer.



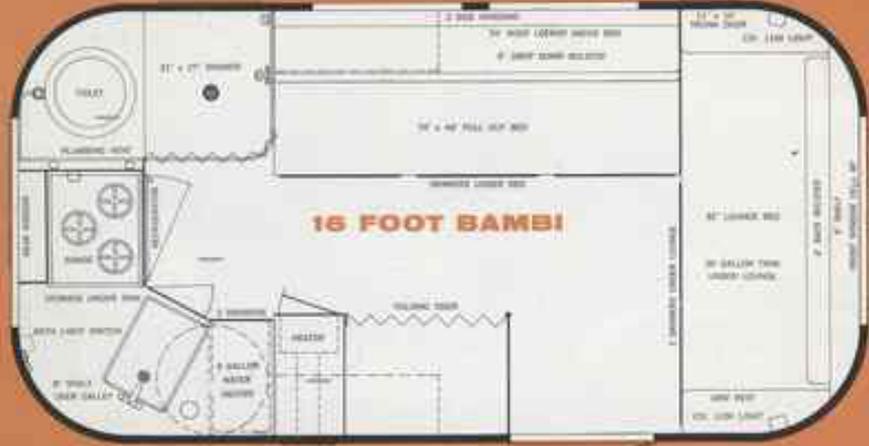
In the
Spring of
1961,
Airstream
introduced a
downsized
trailer for
compact
cars and
named it the
“Bambi”.



The 16' Bambi was a limited production model built from 1961 to 1963. Because it is small, cute and self-contained, it is highly sought after today.



The Bambi, like many early 1960's trailers, had its two gauchos arranged in a "L" configuration to simulate a conversation pit. Remember those?



16 FOOT BAMBI

SPECIFICATIONS AND STANDARD EQUIPMENT *

ALWAYS THESE FAMOUS AIRSTREAM FEATURES . . .

- all steel undercarriage
- structural alloy aluminum shell frame
- hand riveted double shell structural alloy aluminum body
- all-over 2" aircraft type fiberglass insulation
- aviation Duro-Torque axle
- vibration-proof fastenings

Overall length — 16'
 Body length — 13'
 Outside width at floor — 81"
 Overall weight — 1850 lbs.
 Hitch weight — 180 lbs.
 Height to top of hitch ball . . . 16 1/2"
 2 wheels 650 x 13 — 4 ply nylon white side wall tires
 Shock absorbers on wheels
 4 combination 12-110V lights
 20 ft. 110V electric service cord
 Foam lounge in front
 Foam lounge on side, convertible to double bed
 2 cu. ft. gas refrigerator
 Single sink with double faucet
 Sealed unit gas space heater
 Inlaid inlustrum tile floor

Firmica-covered folding table
 4 full-opening windows with removable screens
 1 roof vent
 12V electric brakes
 Steel bumper
 Marine type toilet
 Drainage drop-out cover cap & siphon
 20 gal. pressure water tank
 12V compressor
 Septic tank
 Shower
 Match-light gas water heater
 6" foam mattress on lounge beds
 Genuine hardwood furniture
 3 burner, surface mounted cooking unit
 2, 5-gal. gas bottles, rack & regulator
 6" sewing table

* Subject to change without notice



AIRSTREAM INC.

WRITE NEAREST FACTORY • 12004 E. FIRESTONE BLVD., SANTA FE SPRING, CALIFORNIA • JACKSON CENTER, SHELBY COUNTY, OHIO

In addition to the Bambi, Airstream's typical line up during the early 1960s consisted of:

19' Globe Trotter



22' Flying Cloud or
22' Safari



24' Trade Wind



26' Overlander



28' Ambassador



30' Sovereign



Why ID a trailer by it's factory? Because they were built differently.

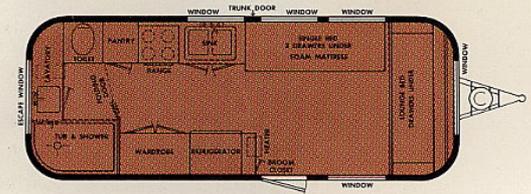
1959 to 1962 California trailers had the rear toilet on the street side.....

...perhaps due to vent stack requirements of the California Mobile Home Code.

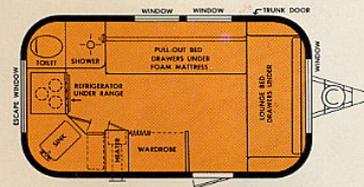
AIRSTREAM FLOOR PLANS

THE 1962 AIRSTREAM FLEET

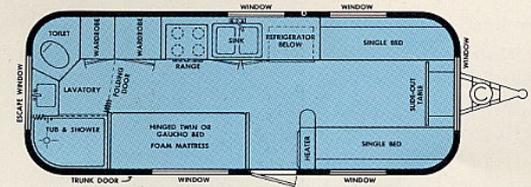
The Airstream 30th Anniversary Fleet offers you a wider selection than any other travel trailer... 13 exciting models, raring and daring to go. One of them is meant for you!



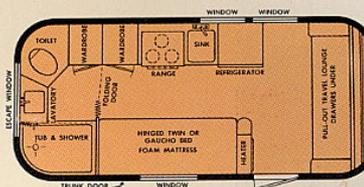
22 FOOT FLYING CLOUD
(Built for Two)



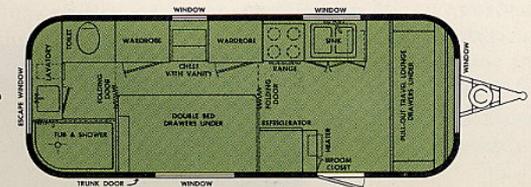
16 FOOT BAMBI



22 FOOT SAFARI TWIN



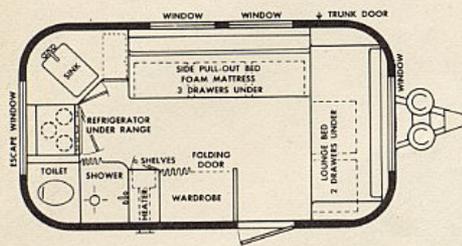
19 FOOT GLOBE TROTTER



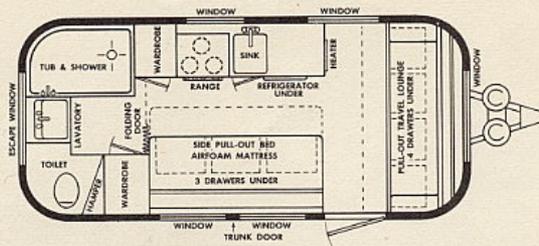
22 FOOT SAFARI DOUBLE

while 1959 to 1962 Ohio built trailers had the toilet on the curb side. Mirror image bathrooms, and in the Safari Double bedrooms and swapped appliances like the stove and sink, existed between the California and Ohio factories from 1959 to 1962.

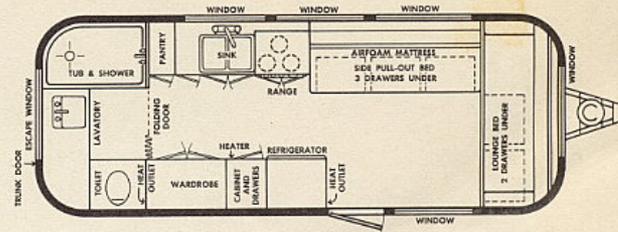
THE 1962 AIRSTREAM FLEET



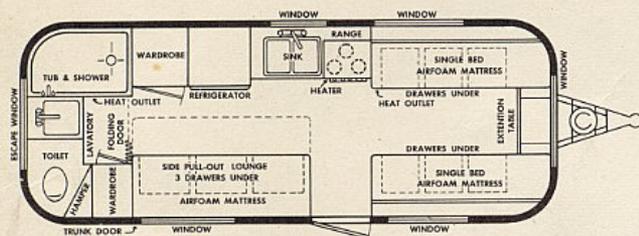
16 FT. BAMBI



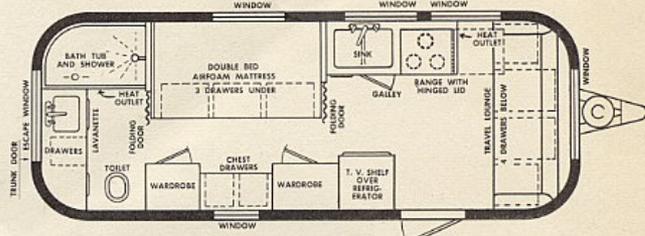
19 FT. GLOBE TROTTER



22 FT. FLYING CLOUD
(Built for Two)



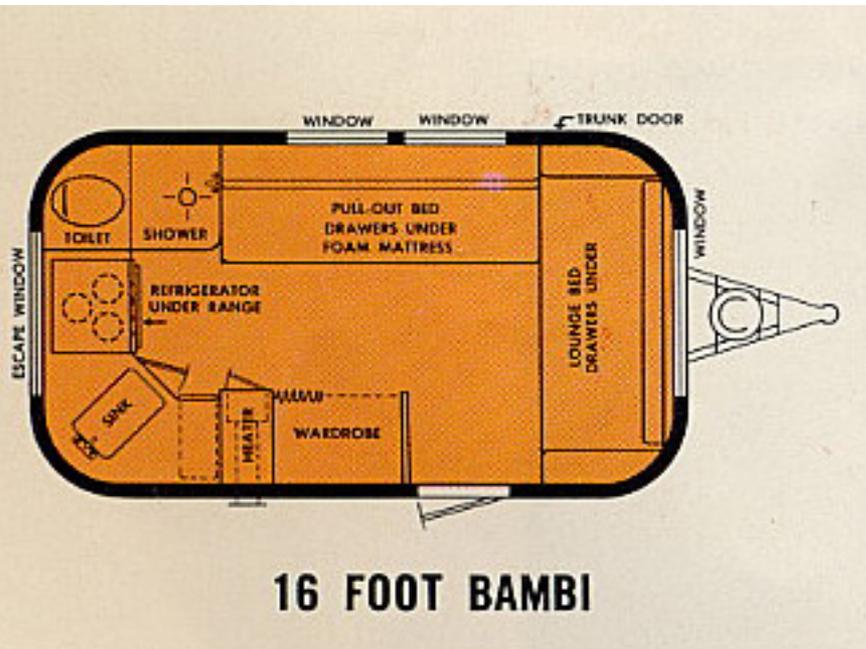
22 FT. SAFARI TWIN



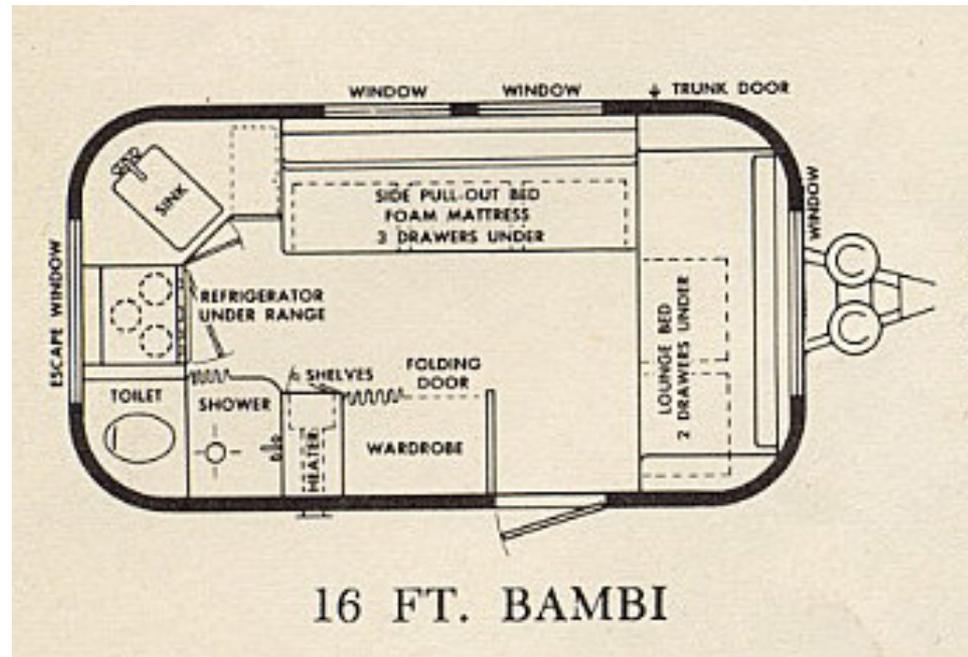
22 FT. SAFARI DOUBLE

TURNER MOBILE HOMES
501 LINCOLN HWY WEST
IRWIN, PA. UN. 3-9210

Compare bathroom location in the California and Ohio 1962 Bambi floor plans:

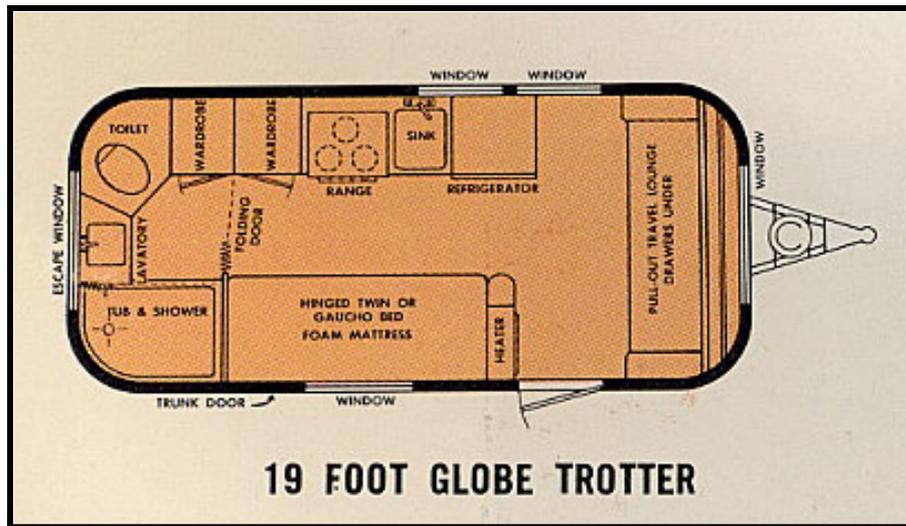


California - street side
toilet and shower

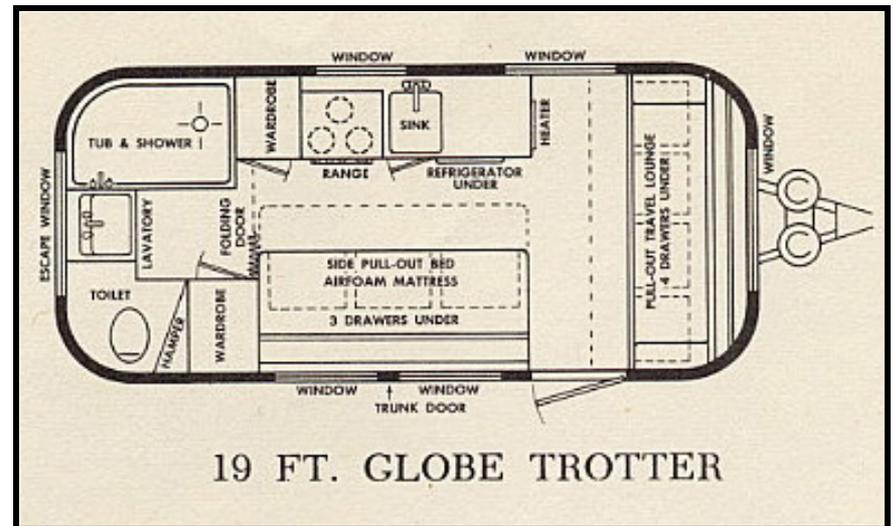


Ohio - curbside
toilet and shower

... and in the California and Ohio built
1962 19' Globe Trotter floor plans:



Calif. - street side toilet,
curb side shower.



Ohio - curb side toilet,
street side shower.

Also note different number and locations of side windows.

Propane refrigerators in 1959-63 Ohio built trailers often vented inside the trailer.

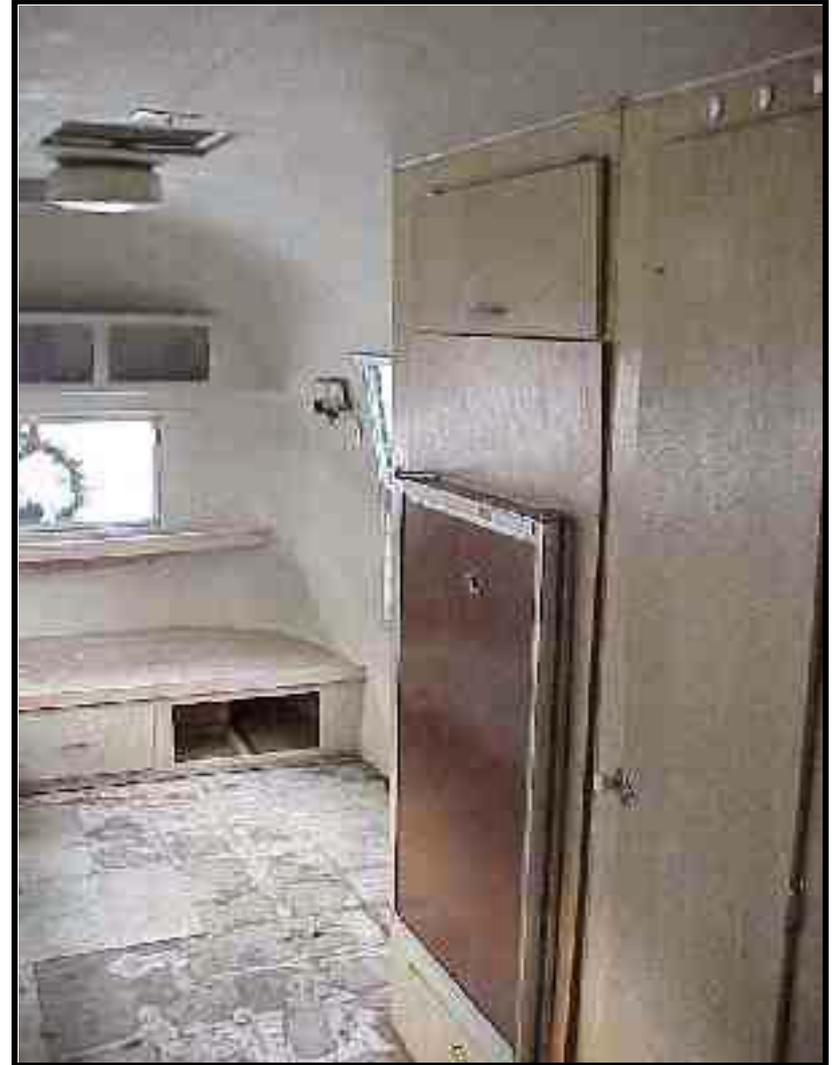


1959 Ohio 26' Overlander



1962 Ohio 24' Trade Wind

While refrigerators in California built 1959 -1962 trailers vented to the outside, due to Calif. Mobile Home Code.



1961 - 1963 California built trailers had their rear Bargman 99 tail lights mounted on the curved sides, while Ohio's were centered on the flat rear panel.



California - curve



Ohio - flat

In 1963, the “Standard” 120 base model volt a.c. trailer was discontinued. The self-contained Land Yacht became the new base model for 22’ and larger trailers, so “Land Yacht” appeared on all 1963-65 serial number plates for 22’ and longer trailers.

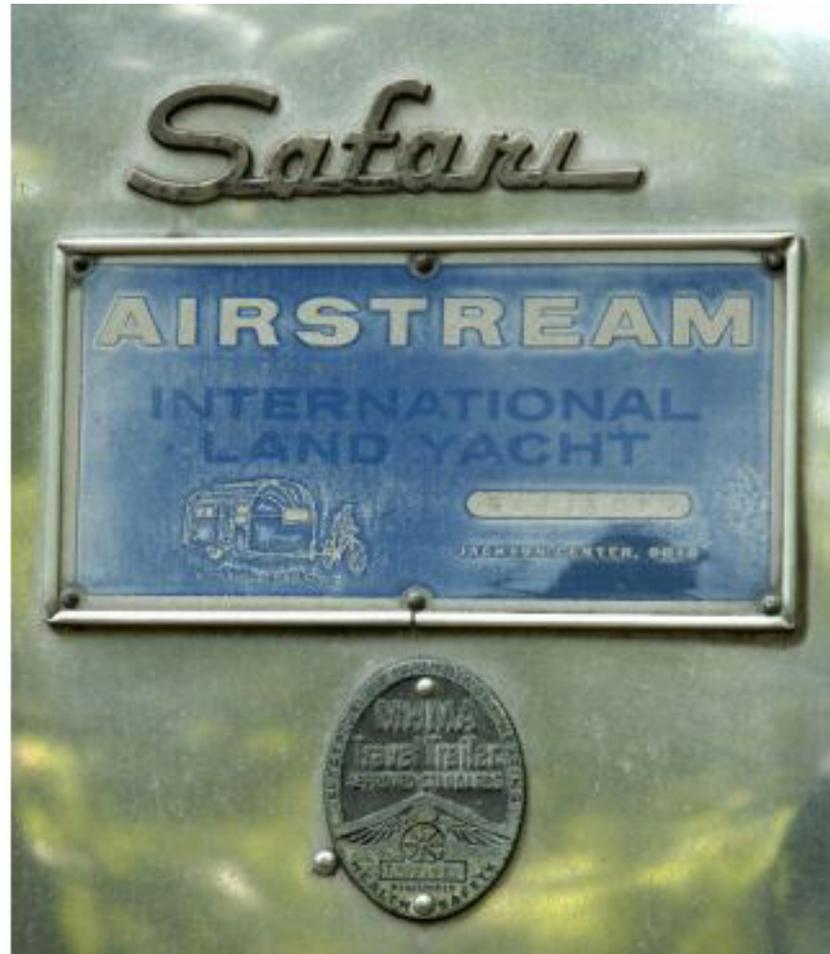


Bathroom layouts and floor plans were standardized at both factories in 1963, with all toilets now street side.



1963 Ohio built 24' Trade Wind

“International” trailers included the basic “Land Yacht” trim, so both trim names appear on 1961 - 1965 International serial number plates.



1964 was a transitional year for Airstream trailers.



First year for 5 panel
“stretch formed” end
caps front and rear.

Last year for door-
within-a-door, used
since 1947.

1964 trailers featured lots of oiled wood ...

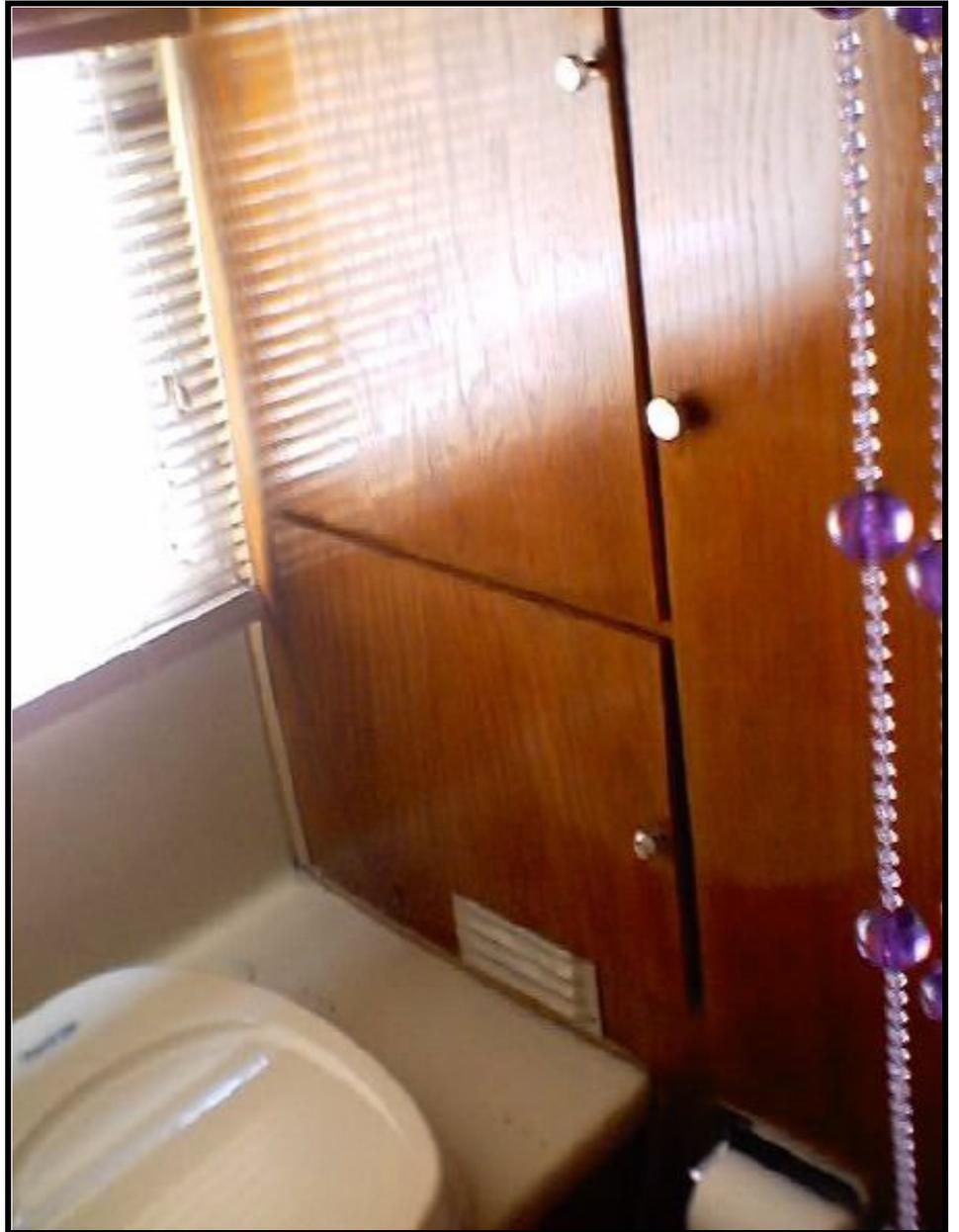


... and a standard bathroom only 2/3 rd's wide ...



used by both the California and Ohio factories ...

... allowing
streetside
bathroom
closets and
greater
standardization
in trailer
production.



Beginning in 1964, both factories vented refrigerators to the outside.



1964 Ohio 24' Trade Wind w/ double bed.

In 1965, Airstream introduced separate doors, a solid outside door and a full screen door inside.



1965 Airstreams had tail lights in raised bezels.



In 1965,
Airstream
lightened interiors
by using a white
vinyl covering on
the faces of
overhead
cabinets.



Beginning in 1965, Airstream partially enclosed the front end of the kitchen cabinets with a “C” shaped end piece, increasing structural support for overhead cabinets.



1965 trailers used beautiful woods, like Walnut and Honduras Mahogany seen here, for stunning interiors.



1965 was the last year for the rectangular serial number plates and script model names.



In 1966, Airstream adopted a new style serial number plate that was common to both factories. Trim level appeared in the center of the plate and the model name to the right.



In 1966 -1967, Airstream used frameless Corning tempered glass windows on all trailers.



These Corning windows produced a very sleek and slippery exterior appearance.



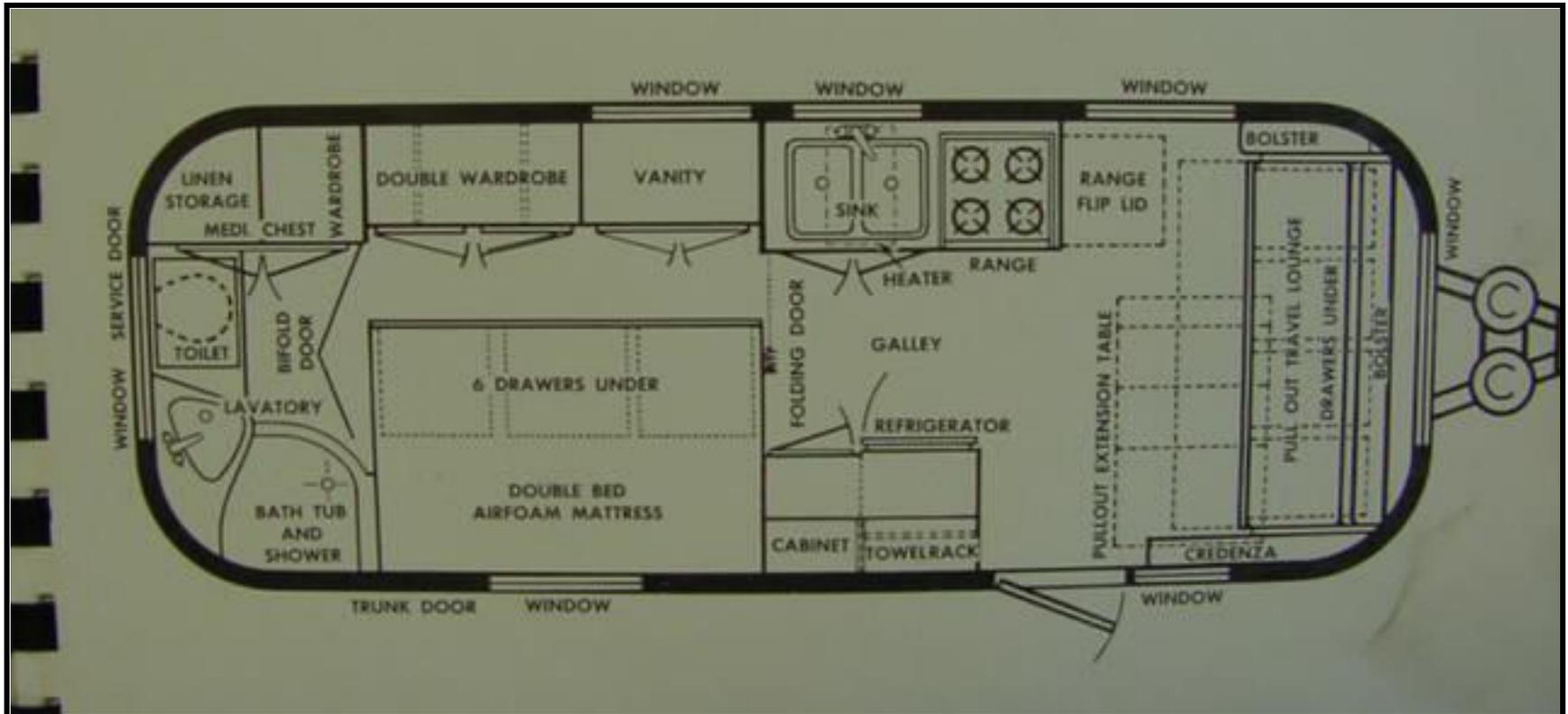
Larger 1966 - 1967 trailers kept the rear utility service center access door first used in 1964.



An innovative fold away table introduced in 1965 combined the practicality of a front dinette with the comfort of a front couch.



The new folding table made a front dinette option unnecessary and provided greater standardization among trailer interiors.



Floor plan for 1966 25' Trade Wind

By 1968, International Airstreams featured a utility central control panel.



During 1968, Airstream added frames to the Corning windows.



1968 was the last year for the bread loaf profile of all of Airstreams, with a vertical front and a sloped rear end.



The New Generation Airstreams were introduced in 1969, with a new body shape that tapered up and down from the middle belt line.



The new wide
belt line shape
is apparent
from a rear
view.

But 1969 and
later trailers are
a topic for
another year...



...so this is

THE END

Thank you
for watching
the Show!

Fred Coldwell
Denver, Colorado
WBCCI #1510
VAC Archive Historian



Vintage Airstream trailers are
pictured by year and length on
R.J. Dial's web site:

www.vintageairstream.com/

Go to “Archives”, enjoy the
photos, and bookmark the
Archives web site.