

How to Choose an RV Dealer

Choosing an RV dealer can be a daunting task since there is so many brands and so many dealers from which to choose.

It helps to know what you are looking for before you start to shop by doing a little research and talking to others who own the type of RV you are interested in purchasing.

By having a particular brand and style in mind before shopping for a dealer, you will save yourself a lot of time and be able to narrow the search for a dealer down to just a few. Are you looking for new or used? Do you need financing? What level of service do you require? There are just a few of the questions you can ask yourself before deciding on a dealer.

Most dealers offer both new and used RVs these days, ranging in price from very expensive to very affordable. RVs range in style from fold down to modern wonders that rival year-round homes in comfort and style.

Knowing whether you are going to use your RV for two vacations a year or live in it while touring the country helps you decide what style you want and which dealer to choose.

Does the dealer offer a range of special-order options for new RVs? Do they perform any factory warranty service at their location?

Do they provide incentives to buy from them, or attractive financing options? Do they have a wide variety of models on site?

Many dealers offer service right on their premises and also allow you to add customized features to used RVs.

It is difficult to compare used RVs from one dealer to another, as no two models will every have the same features or the same mileage. Every owner treats their RV differently, so while one may take perfect care of the details, another may have never changed the oil. This is why it's important to get to know your dealer before you buy. Trust is an important factor when it comes to buying used.

Buy locally. When you buy locally, not only are you helping your local economy, but chances are that you know someone that has done business with that dealer. Start asking around and get recommendations from others that have recently purchased an RV. It helps to talk to others who have bought RVs from a particular dealer before you do the same. Often the dealer can give you a list of happy local customers to talk to for a reference. Ask a couple of them about their experience with the dealer. Many dealers offer service incentives if you buy your RV from their dealership. It will be much more convenient and cost effective if it is a dealer near you.

Ask current RV owners where they have their RV serviced. Are they happy with the timeliness of the service and the quality of their work? How many years of experience does the service department have? The more experience and knowledge that the service department has, the less time it will take them to diagnose your problem and less you will spend on the hourly rate.

There are also many general business resources available to help with your decision. Groups like Consumer Reports rate various brands and models. The Better Business Bureau and local Chambers of Commerce also keep track of complaints about various businesses and are excellent resources.

There is often a lot of information on a dealer's Web site as well, and you can learn more information by visiting the dealership and speaking to the salespeople or management. Finding a dealer that fits your needs takes time, but it's worth it.

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