



## FOLD-UP BIKES For Convenience and Fun



down the road, the truck and trailer remained in control, and we stopped with mostly desired results; we experienced some minor slippage — as expected — while trying to maintain traction on the unpaved road.

Inside the truck, we had ample space and were comfortable in the cloth bucket seats. Our test vehicle had optional heated front seats (\$250), but the days were warm, so we opted to use the air conditioner instead. Collapsible and removable storage bins are under the 60/40 split-folding rear seats, where we could store snacks for the trip. We arrived at the campground near dusk and were lucky to score a campsite because the KCL campground runs on a first-come, first-served basis with no reservations taken.

### LIVING IT UP

The view from our campsite was spectacular as the sun was setting, but we wanted to get the trailer set up before it got too dark. With a push of a button, the trailer's roof raised in less than a minute using its lifetime-guaranteed hydraulic system, turning it into a livable height of just less than 6 feet 4 inches. This rear-entry trailer looks smart with its fiberglass exterior side walls and seemingly simple telescoping design (with the upper half slightly larger than the lower half). The inside of the walls are constructed of backer board, polystyrene foam and aluminum tubing, and the interior is plywood paneling.

Ever since we learned about Downtube's fold-up bikes several years ago, we've wanted to take one on a ride. We tested the 2008 models 8H and FS. The 8H is an eight-speed, 20-inch-wheel bike with front suspension and an internal hub, which means no external shifter and no gears, so there's no way to improperly shift. And with the drivetrain completely sealed, it stays clean and is maintenance-free. The FS (full-suspension) is a nine-speed, 20-inch-wheel bike with a preload adjustable transarch suspension fork, alloy and stainless frame and stem quickreleases. And it's the lowest priced nine-speed folder out there.

It took only five minutes to open the shipping package and put together each bike after receiving them in the mail. It took mere seconds to fold each one up into its travel bag and pack them in the trailer and only seconds more to unfold them at the campsite. After adjusting the bikes to fit our sizes and riding styles, we spent several pleasant hours tooling around and exploring every nook and cranny around our campsite, checking out the wildlife and wildflowers.

But before taking off on our RVing trip, we were sure to check out the bike-fitting instructions on the company's Web site ([www.downtube.com/Bicycle\\_Fitting](http://www.downtube.com/Bicycle_Fitting)), to make sure we would enjoy our ride when we arrived. This link helped us in simple terms to understand and diagnose common causes of discomfort while riding, so we could make the proper adjustments to optimize our comfort — a valuable tool for any rider.

With all this excitement, we were surprised at how affordable the line of Downtube bikes is, with prices ranging from \$299 to \$585. For more information, call (215) 245-4032 or visit [www.downtube.com](http://www.downtube.com).