

RV News

The Voice of the RV Industry

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Forecast Shows Type C Growth



A Closer Look at Stromberg Strong **P20**
Graphics Suppliers See Colorful Future **P32**

Shower Solution Heating Up Interest **P38**
Inside a Newmar Exclusive Dealership **P44**

The 40 Percent Pitch

By redirecting unheated water back to the freshwater tank before it flows out of a faucet, Aqua View has significantly reduced water waste.

By RV News Staff | Photos by Stillson Studio

Showering in an RV is far from steamy, at least at first. Unused freshwater spirals down the drain as bathers await bearable water temperatures. With each trickling ounce, an RV's limited water tank capacity inches campers toward the inevitable an RV dump station and freshwater refill.

New RVers quickly learn the on-again/off-again showering ritual that conserves the precious liquid. Shutting off the water when lathering up is ingrained in the RV lifestyle but does little to salvage sacrificial water at a shower's start. When turning the water back on to rinse, consumers rush to quickly adjust the water dials to find the perfect hot and cold proportion.

Even robust RV water heating systems cannot overcome those first few seconds of rejected H2O lacking sufficient sizzle. Those initial seconds of unworthy water start as ounces but become wasted gallons as days in the campsite trickle by.

Some unheated wasted water, known as structural waste, sits in waterlines between the water heater

tank and showerhead or sink. Other unheated water flows over an endless hot water system's heating block as the appliance ramps up to an impactful level. Consumers concede that endless hot water systems are not instant hot water systems, which ultimately add to the waste.

To some degree, RVers have long mourned wasted water, but boondockers feel the anguish acutely. With recent limited campground availability, freshwater is a precious backcountry commodity for the growing masses dry camping.

Gus Searcy, president of Temecula, California-based Aqua View Inc., has become an ambassador for freshwater unnecessarily sacrificed to the drain. His mission is to eradicate those first few cold-water seconds when the shower or sink is running.

Searcy invented the Showermi\$er and Sinkmi\$er products to reroute cold freshwater back to the water heater to achieve balmy temperatures. When consumers flip the Showermi\$er's hand lever, the water continually circumvents the shower head/faucet, flowing back into the RV water heating system's nonpressurized



waterline (before the water pump). Perfectly lathered bathers flip the lever again, and the previously cold water cascades out fully heated.

Showermi\$er also eradicates the initial shocking cold or scalding hot blast from the shower on-again/off-again ritual. Clever consumers can mark the hot/cold water dials at predetermined points to create personalized, perfect temperatures from the get-go.



AquaView owner Gus Searcy and his dog, Lalo, hit the road in Searcy's motorhome to tout the benefits of AquaView's Showermi\$er product.

Freshwater Reclamation System

Water from the hot and cold lines is mixed before traveling through either a color-changing tube or decorative mushroom-shaped button (depending on the RV model) that indicates to the consumer when the water is hot. The patented injection-molded tube/mushroom is impregnated with a heat-sensitive thermochromic pigment that changes color from blue

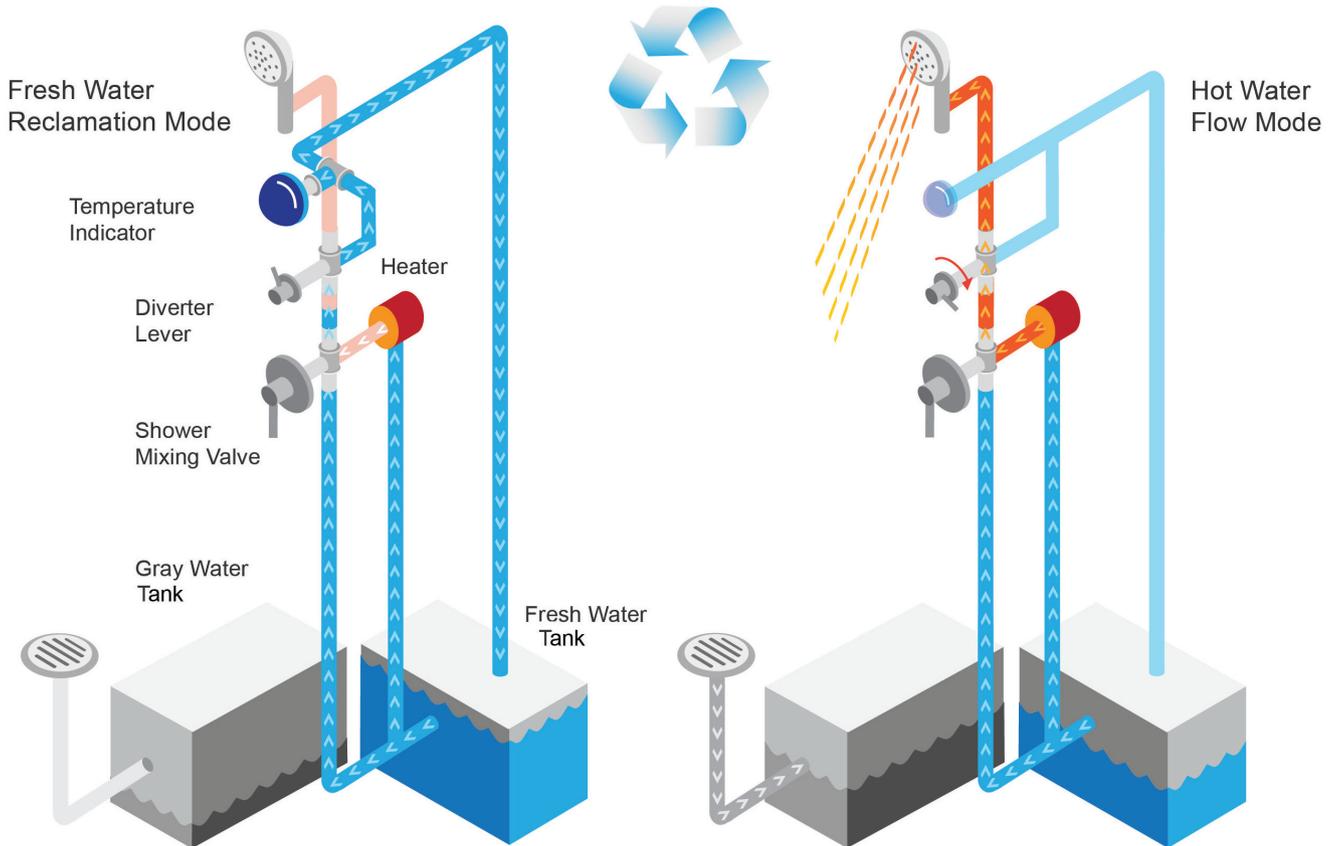
to white as the water approaches 91 degrees Fahrenheit. The pigment requires no batteries, no electricity and pretty much lasts forever, according to Searcy. The pigment's use in the pipe is FDA-certified safe.

The redirection valve attaches to the waterlines at the shower's wall to make the hand lever accessible in the shower. The Showermi\$er then connects to the line running to the showerhead.

The valve/hand lever prevents water from going to the showerhead, instead sending it through a brand-new line that runs to the freshwater holding tank or to a line running from the tank to the water pump.

Recently, some manufacturers have requested slight variations to the initial models to align with their interior designs more aesthetically. Newmar, for example, is using an electronically

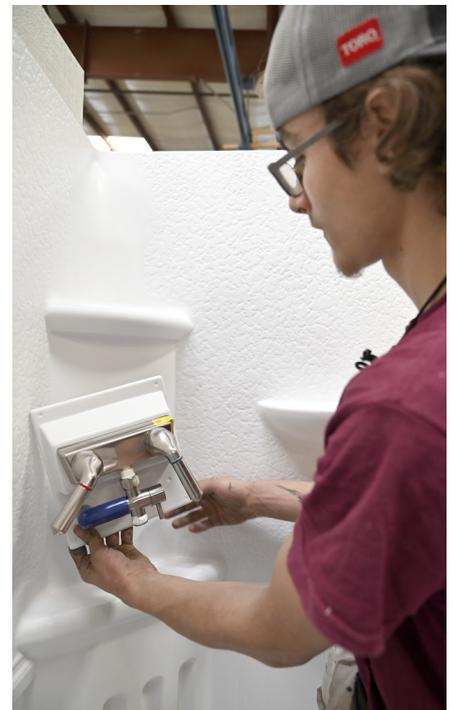
HOW SHOWERMISER WORKS



ShowermiSer connects to a shower outlet and recirculates cold water back into the freshwater tank by flipping a lever. When the cold water clears the pipe, the color-changing temperature indicator alerts the consumer to flip the lever back and deliver hot water.



Searcy and his wife, Terry, delivered the first ShowermiSer shipment in packaging the pair are holding. Now, the couple makes shipments such as these 10,000 units from California to Forest River in Elkhart, Indiana.



Plumbing installer Marlin Miller installs a ShowermiSer in a Rockwood RV.

controlled color-changing tube. Others have requested the hand-lever hardware match the shower's finish on the dials and showerhead.

Installation at the OE level is simple, and technicians report installing Showermi\$er as an aftermarket product also is fairly straightforward, so long as waterlines behind the shower enclosure are easily accessible. Searcy said an independent study indicated an aftermarket installation takes between two and three hours.

Ridiculed, Violently Opposed, Self-Evident

Searcy began researching his plumbing invention in May 2015 but did not officially launch Aqua View until 45 days later. Once a working prototype was available in October 2015, mass production kicked into full gear.

However, launching Showermi\$er into the RV market waited until available inventory far exceeded projected, aggressive product demand. Potential customers were not informed of Searcy's creation until a dearth of inventory was readily available.

At product launch, RV manufacturer enthusiasm was more like a slow drip from a leaky faucet than a gushing geyser.

Searcy used a quote from 18th-century German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer to describe Showermi\$er's original equipment evolution and RV manufacturer adoption.

Schopenhauer said, "All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident."

The first RV manufacturers Searcy presented the product to stonewalled him. They said, "Customers are not asking for it, and our competitors do not use it.... We do not see the need for adding your product to our vehicles." He said Lance Campers handed him his first rejection, but others quickly followed with similar reasoning.

Searcy countered doubts by explaining how RV consumers could not request Showermi\$er because they did not know the product existed.

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(L to R) Searcy and Forest River General Manager Don Gunden came to an agreement in 2018 to add Showermi\$er as a standard OEM feature in Flagstaff and Rockwood RVs. The divisions were the first entire towable divisions to implement Showermi\$er.

Showermi\$er was an invention that solved a problem with no prior solution. Manufacturers were unmoved.

The inventor then blitzed distributors for international RV manufacturers who take conservation more seriously. He began seeing sprouts of success. His next stop was the world's RV manufacturing capital.

One of the first Elkhart County engineers he showed Showermi\$er to scoffed at Searcy's unbelievable claim.

"I told him, 'I can increase the fresh and grey water holding tank capacities by 40 percent without increasing tank sizes or adding weight.'

"He said, 'I am an engineer. I know that is impossible.'

"I said, 'Well, the product is installed right here in my RV, would you like to see how it works?'

"Within minutes, the engineer said, 'Newmar has to see this...,' and he arranged for me to present the product in Nappanee in front of nine engineers. Newmar became my very first 'Yes.' Showermi\$er is now on all their diesels."

During that same trip, Searcy made a cold call to Forest River's Berkshire division. This time, he did not have a

well-connected engineer paving the way for his "40 percent" presentation.

When Searcy sauntered into the lobby requesting an engineering audience, the Forest River receptionist contacted Diesel Division Engineering Manager Brady Main.

“Anytime we put this in a potential customer's hands, we immediately see their wheels start turning.

— Wes Fike

"Tell him I have a six-minute presentation, a 30-second demonstration, and I give free samples," Searcy told her.

Main graciously conceded Searcy six minutes and 30 seconds.

Forest River's Berkshire brand became Aqua View's second confirmed customer. Coachmen's Galleria Type Bs followed in 2016. During the past three years, other Forest River brands

and models slowly came aboard. Showermi\$er reached a major milestone in 2018, when an entire towable division implemented the product.

"I was made aware of Showermi\$er as we were introducing a model at Rockwood and Flagstaff with true off-grid capability," Forest River General Manager Don Gunden said. "It seemed like the Showermi\$er would be a logical fit. Once we saw the benefits and ease of use, it only made sense to include it as a standard feature in all of our trailers."

In 2020, Tiffin, Entegra Coach, Foretravel and Forest River's No Boundaries, R-Pod and Surveyor brands added Showermi\$er. Winnebago towables, Airstream, Lance Campers, Rev Group and Thor Motor Coach will be adding the product in 2021.

"If everything continues as it has, the number of brands using our products will double because competition will mandate it," Searcy said. "We are hoping that as more towable brands adopt it and Type Cs start using it, things will really take off. Last year we only sold 35,000 products, so we still have a lot of room to grow."

The OE/Aftermarket Channel

Though Aqua View enlisted international distributors early on to aid in product integration, the company used several Elkhart-area OE distributors to launch in the U.S. Dave Carter & Associates oversaw OE sales early on. South Bend, Indiana-based Natcon distribution now handles the company's distribution.

"Anytime we put this in a potential customer's hands, we immediately see their wheels start turning," Natcon Director of Sales Wes Fike said. "At first it took some time to develop the customer base, but we have had the product for about two years now. It has been great for us. We continue to see more and more OE interest."

Way Interglobal CEO Wayne Kaylor, who oversees Aqua View representation to RV manufacturers along with rep group Total Sales & Service, agreed.

"The vast majority of RV manufacturers will have this product on their units in the next five years or so," Kaylor said. "A big factor that is not immediately obvious is its impact on the RV aftermarket and with retail consumers as a retrofit. Legislation developing in California, Colorado and Oregon, as examples, is critically looking at water waste. If any of that legislation passes, which is likely, a product like this may become mandatory in certain states. RV retailers have a potentially huge opportunity to move a lot of aftermarket Showermi\$ers in coming years."

Arrow Distribution and NTP-Stag offer Showermi\$er to U.S. and Canadian retailers. Searcy said dealers did not see the value when he exhibited at his first NTP-Stag show.

"I would hear the same things from them, 'Customers are not asking for it, and OEMs are not using it...' and I get their perspective," Searcy said. "But now it is on their lots and customers are thrilled with it. Look at the RV user groups, and they rave about it. We have had more companies say yes this year than ever before." **RVN**

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