

Ordering Your RV

Of the various ways to purchase an RV, you can also order one to be custom built by the manufacturer. I know this because I have ordered two—a 2005 model Monaco Dynasty and a 2007 Monaco Dynasty. Both were ordered through a dealer and we worked with a sales rep—the same person for both purchases. While some manufacturers may deal directly with the purchaser, we did not have that experience. I have to believe that the process may be a bit different since the recession as manufacturers have changed how they do business to some degree.

We found that one major advantage to ordering is that you can have some minor customization done during the construction. Admittedly, we ordered both of ours prior to the economic recession and manufacturer's relationships with customers was a bit different then. I'm not suggesting the customers were treated better or worse but manufacturers had to change some internal processes (as a result of the economic crisis) and I believe things are a bit different now. I have not experienced the process of ordering since the economy went into the toilet.

Our First Experience

For the 2005 model, we had no idea what we were doing. We agreed to the “deal” over the phone, knew what the coach looked like, had been in one with the same floor plan, and because we had owned other motorhomes, had some idea of what we wanted. However, what we wanted was, for the most part, the stock coach (as it would normally be manufactured). Our sales rep walked us through a variety of choices on paint color schemes, interior, etc. and we asked for some very minor changes (so minor I don't remember what they were). Ultimately, we picked up the coach at the dealer (Guaranty RV in Junction City, Oregon—very close to the Monaco plant). Everything was fine.

Our Second Experience

For the 2007 model, we knew we wanted some changes. So, as part of the deal, we negotiated these minor changes. In doing so, our coach is, we believe, much more livable (at least for us) and more functional, too. Here's some of what we did...

- Our showerhead is connected to a 24-inch vertical shaft. By holding a spring-loaded button in, you can raise or lower the showerhead to better accommodate any person's height. We had the manufacturer move this shaft from the center of one wall of the shower about 9 inches closer to the adjacent wall. The showerhead now resides close to a corner of the shower giving larger people (like me) more maneuvering room while taking a shower. Granted, this was a minor change but far more efficient for us.
- We like large, full-height closets—a definite hard-to-find item in a motorhome. Our 2005 model had one across the rear—8+ feet long and pants could be hung full-length on hangers without folding them.

For some strange reason in the 2007 unit, Monaco had decided to install a three-drawer cabinet that consumed about 1/3 the total closet space. Then they decided to put the two electrical boxes (big grey ones with the circuit breakers) in the top of this cabinet insert. Moving the boxes opened up a small cabinet in the bathroom.

We know this closet cabinet was a true "insert" because the original closet "pole" (that you hang the clothes on) still ran the full length of the closet—across the top of the cabinet insert. They simply stuck this cabinet under that pole. (Really strange.)

We insisted they remove that cabinet insert to give us back the full-size closet. They would have to move the two electrical boxes and we suggested they put them where they had them in the previous year's models. (They did.)

The result was we lost three shallow drawers we didn't want, gained about 3-4 feet of hanging space in the closet, and the electrical panels were actually more accessible.

- This coach had very nice lambrequins (those wooden frames around each window) but they stuck out from the wall about four inches. On our front, driver-side slide-out, our dining table was positioned a fixed distance from the rear (short) wall of the slide-out. Monaco had a window in this rear wall

that seemed to be the primary way to look down onto the external utility hookups (as in most coaches).

The problem with the one lambrequin (located on this short, rear slide-out wall) was that it affected how far back we could move the chair back away from the dining table—after all, 4 inches is 4 inches.

We told them to NOT put that window in the coach, that is, there would be no window on that particular wall of the slide-out. This would provide us with the maximum room for positioning the chair on that side of the table.

It worked. It was a great decision on our part. Plus, we can see those outside utility hook-ups from the bathroom window.

Minor Customization

At no time during our ordering process were we planning to rearrange the floor plan or do something major. We just wanted some minor changes that would result in a better fit for our lifestyle without detracting from the overall looks or function of the coach.

An unexpected surprise arrived after we closed the deal (actually signed for the order). We received a large box containing samples of every possible carpet, tile, counter material, vinyl, wallpaper, etc. that could be used in the coach. Our task was to choose our color scheme and select the materials we wanted. One interesting note was that Monaco put us together (via phone) with an interior designer. She talked us through some color and material combinations that we had not thought of, was very helpful, and we appreciated her input.

It's interesting to note that no one, not a single RVer, has ever guessed that we are "missing" what is considered to be a "normal" window in the dining table area. When we tell them, all agree the decision was a good one.

Customization Today

As we continue to climb out of this economic mess over the next few years, there will be more and more coaches ordered. It is simply a fact of life. Should you choose to

order yours, I recommend you consider some minor customization, but only those things that will make your lifestyle better and that can be done without significant effort from the manufacturer. Consideration of the manufacturer will save you lots of money.

For both our purchases, we had positive experiences, no disappointments or negative surprises, and the process went smoothly. The total time was several months but this was due to our delaying the actual production start date. We could not make the trip to Oregon to pick up the new coach until a certain time of the year.