TRAVEL

Travel Trailers 2000 Aerolite Cub Hybrid

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Rediscovering the 2000 Aerolite Cub Hybrid: A Lightweight Legend on the Road

In the vast and evolving world of recreational vehicles, few names evoke the spirit of accessible, no-frills adventure quite like the Aerolite Cub. Specifically, the **Travel Trailers 2000 Aerolite Cub Hybrid** occupies a special place in the hearts of minimalist campers and first-time RV buyers. At the turn of the millennium, this little trailer represented a perfect storm of affordability, lightweight engineering, and clever design. While modern RVs are packed with slide-outs, smart technology, and high-gloss finishes, there is a compelling case to be made for this vintage hybrid. It offers a back-to-basics camping experience that many seasoned travelers are now seeking to recapture.

If you are in the market for a used travel trailer that is easy to tow, surprisingly spacious for its size, and built with the durability of early 2000s craftsmanship, the 2000 Aerolite Cub Hybrid deserves a close look. In this comprehensive guide, we will explore every facet of this unique camper—from its construction and floor plans to towing dynamics, maintenance quirks, and its enduring appeal in today's RV landscape.

The Rise of the Hybrid: Why the Aerolite Cub Stands Out

Understanding the Hybrid Concept

Before diving into the specifics of the 2000 model year, it is important to understand what a hybrid travel trailer actually is. Unlike a hard-sided conventional trailer or a fully collapsible pop-up camper, a hybrid combines elements of both. The **Travel Trailers 2000 Aerolite Cub Hybrid** features a solid, fiberglass or aluminum-sided main body with one or more fold-out canvas bunk ends. This design offers a unique compromise: the permanent kitchen, bathroom, and dinette areas provide the comfort of a hard-sided trailer, while the tent ends drastically reduce overall weight and towing drag. The result is a trailer that feels much larger inside than its exterior footprint suggests.

Why the 2000 Model Year is Significant

The year 2000 was a transitional period for Aerolite. Built by the now-defunct Dutchmen Manufacturing (a subsidiary of Thor Industries), the Cub line was designed to hit a price point that appealed to young families and retirees on a fixed income. The 2000 models featured a slightly more refined interior aesthetic than earlier 90s versions, with improved cabinet hardware and fabric selection, while still retaining the rugged, simple chassis that made the Cub famous. This specific vintage is often praised for using higher-grade plywood and heavier-duty axles compared to later iterations, making it a sturdy choice for used buyers.

Key Specifications and Design Features

Let us break down the tangible specs that define the **Travel Trailers 2000 Aerolite Cub Hybrid**. Understanding

these numbers is critical for anyone considering a purchase or restoration.

- Dry Weight: Typically ranges from 1,800 to 2,200 pounds, depending on the specific floor plan. This makes it towable by many mid-size SUVs and minivans from the era.
- Length: Generally falls between 16 and 20 feet from hitch to bumper.
- Sleeping Capacity: Most models sleep 4 to 6 people, utilizing a combination of a permanent queen or full-size bed, a dinette conversion, and one or two fold-out tent bunks.
- Fresh Water Capacity: Usually a 20 to 30-gallon fresh tank, adequate for weekend dry camping.
- Construction: Aluminum-framed sidewalls with a fiberglass exterior skin (often white or cream) and a rubber membrane roof.

Engineered for Easy Towing

The most compelling selling point of the 2000 Aerolite Cub is its towability. With a GVWR (Gross Vehicle Weight Rating) often under 3,500 pounds, it does not require a heavy-duty pickup truck. A properly equipped 2000-era Ford Explorer, Jeep Grand Cherokee, or even a Honda Odyssey could handle this trailer with ease. The low profile also means less wind resistance, translating to better fuel economy on the highway. For those who value the ability to hook up and go without the stress of a massive tow rig, this is a dream scenario.

Interior Living: Compact Comfort with a Canvas Twist

The Floor Plan Options

The 2000 Aerolite Cub Hybrid was offered in several distinct floor plans. The most popular configurations included:

1. The Front Dinette, Rear Bath Model: This layout featured a wrap-around dinette at the front that converted into a bed, a mid-ship galley, and a rear wet bath with a toilet and shower. This was the preferred choice for families needing a dedicated bathroom.
2. The Side Aisle, Super Slide Model: Some versions incorporated a small slide-out for the dinette, creating an astonishing amount of interior living space for such a small trailer. However, slide-outs on a hybrid of this age require careful maintenance of seals and mechanics.
3. The Full Rear Bed Model: This layout sacrificed the bathroom for a permanent queen-size bed in the rear, with the kitchen and dinette in the middle. This was ideal for couples who prioritized sleeping comfort over indoor plumbing.

Galley and Living Area

Inside, the **Travel Trailers 2000 Aerolite Cub Hybrid** feels like a cozy cabin. The cabinetry is made from real wood veneer (usually a light oak), which feels far more substantial than the thermofoil or laminated particle board found in many entry-level trailers today. The countertops are typically a durable laminate, and the stainless-steel sink is deep enough for washing dishes. Most units came pre-wired for a microwave and featured a three-burner stove. The dinette cushions, while original, are notoriously comfortable for sitting, though they often lack the lumbar support of modern furniture.

The Hybrid Experience: Tent Ends

The canvas bunk ends are the defining feature of this hybrid. When set up, they extend the living space dramatically, providing a queen or double bed that is essentially a screened-in tent. In good weather, sleeping in the bunk ends is a sublime experience, allowing for cross-breezes and a view of the stars. However, owners must be diligent about setup: the canvas must be properly tensioned to prevent sagging, and all zippers must be fully closed to keep insects out. The original tent fabric on a 2000 model is likely UV-damaged or leaky, so a replacement canvas is often the first major upgrade a new owner will make.

Owning a 2000 Aerolite Cub in the Modern Era

Common Issues to Inspect

If you are considering purchasing a 2000 Aerolite Cub Hybrid today, you must go into it with open eyes. A trailer of this age will have specific pain points:

- Roof Leaks: The rubber TPO roof was good for its time, but after 20+ years, seals around roof vents, the AC unit, and the antenna are likely cracked. A thorough inspection and resealing with Dicor lap sealant is mandatory.
- Canvas and Zipper Degradation: The tent ends are the most vulnerable part. Check for tears, mildew, or rust on the zipper tracks. Replacement canvas can be ordered from aftermarket manufacturers like Bear Creek Canvas, but it is a significant investment (often $800-$1,500 per bunk).
- Axle and Suspension: The original torsion axles may have sagged, causing tire wear or clearance issues. Check the wheel wells for signs of rubbing.
- Electrical System: The converter/charger from 2000 is likely inefficient. Many owners upgrade to a modern three-stage converter to better maintain the batteries.

Restoration and Upgrades

Part of the joy of owning a classic hybrid is the restoration process. Many owners of the **Travel Trailers 2000 Aerolite Cub Hybrid** choose to gut and remodel the interior. Popular upgrades include:

- Replacing heavy old CRT TVs with flat-screen LED monitors.
- Installing lithium batteries and solar panels for boondocking.
- Swapping out the original vinyl flooring for luxury vinyl plank (LVP).
- Upgrading the water heater to an on-demand tankless system.

These updates not only increase comfort but can significantly boost the resale value of these sought-after vintage units.

Towing and Travel Experience

On the Road

Hooking up a 2000 Aerolite Cub is straightforward. The tongue weight is typically light (around 200-250 pounds loaded), so most people can manage the hitch without a weight distribution system, though a sway control bar is always a safe investment. On the highway, the trailer tracks well. It does not suffer from the severe buffeting that larger, boxier trailers endure when passed by semi-trucks. However, because it is light, you will feel the wind more. It is a trailer that demands attentive driving but rewards you with the ability to access remote, tight campsites that a 30-foot fifth wheel could never reach.

Camping in Comfort

Once set up, which takes about 15 minutes including popping up the tent ends, you have a very livable space. The interior ceiling height (usually around 6’3”) is generous for a trailer of this era. The small space heats up quickly in the fall with the standard furnace, and the single rooftop air conditioner (usually 11,000 BTU) is adequate for cooling in all but the most extreme desert heat. The true magic, however, is the connection to the outdoors. You can lie in bed in the tent bunk, listening to the rain on the canvas, with the screen open to the fresh air. It is an immersive experience that hard-sided trailers simply cannot replicate.

Comparing the 2000 Aerolite Cub to Modern Hybrids

How does the 2000 model stack up against a new 2024 hybrid like the R-Pod or the Rockwood Roo? In terms of raw weight, the modern trailers are often heavier due to mandatory safety equipment, larger holding tanks, and heavier appliances. The 2000 Aerolite Cub is lighter and simpler. Modern trailers offer better insulation, stronger composite roofs that rarely leak, and more efficient appliances. However, they also cost three to four

Travel Trailers 2000 Aerolite Cub Hybrid offers a path with lower that is financially accessible. You can buy a good condition 2000 model for between $4,000 and $8,000, whereas a new hybrid starts at $18,000 and goes up rapidly.

Parts Availability

One legitimate concern is parts. Dutchmen no longer exists in the same form, and specific decals, trim pieces, or window parts for the 2000 Cub can be hard to find. However, the trailer uses standard RV components. The appliances (Dometic, Suburban, Atwood) are standard parts still sold at any RV supply store. Windows, while no longer made, can be replaced with generic double-pane RV windows or custom acrylic options from specialty shops. This is not a trailer for someone who expects warranty service, but it is a perfect project for a DIY enthusiast.

Conclusion: A Timeless Ticket to Adventure

The **Travel Trailers 2000 Aerolite Cub Hybrid** is more than just a used RV; it is a statement of intent. It says you value experience over luxury, simplicity over complexity, and adventure over convenience. While it requires more maintenance and attention than a brand-new, turnkey trailer, the reward is a lightweight camping companion that can take you to the most beautiful, remote corners of the country. It offers a unique blend of hard-sided security and tent-camping intimacy that is increasingly rare in the modern market. For the right owner—someone with a bit of grit, a tool kit, and a love for the open road—the 2000 Aerolite Cub remains a fantastic, affordable, and incredibly fun way to travel. If you find one that has been cared for, or if you are willing to put in the work to revive one, you will be rewarded with years of memorable journeys.

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