

# Dinghy Towing '96

Chevrolet and Pontiac add towable automatics,  
and there's big news on the SUV front





## PRESTON GRATIOT

Once again, the manufacturers are introducing the latest offerings to the motor-

ing public, and you can be assured this will be accompanied with all of the horns and trumpets befitting such a gala celebration. Chevrolet and Pontiac go topless and shiftless by approving the new four-speed-automatic Cavalier and Sunfire for towing in '96, besting Saturn's automatic dinghy by offering the duo as flat-towable convertibles! Other notable announcements for '96 include the introduction of several new vehicles catering to the adventurous at heart, in the sport-utility-vehicle (SUV) category, such as the Kia Sportage and Suzuki X-90.

But before you run out and start buying the tow bars, lighting harnesses and gravel guards for your family flivver, there are a few things to study and consider before the purchasing starts. This same "homework" applies to those of you ready to make the big step and purchase one of the new '96 vehicles specifically to join your recreational livery as a motorhome dinghy.

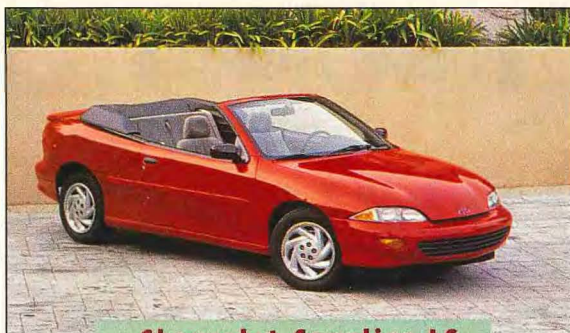
First, choose a candidate vehicle based on your needs. Parameters should include passenger comfort and safety, economical operation, maneuverability, performance and even long-range resale values.

But the most important thing

for you to do before finally spending any money on anything is to read the owner's manual. Taking advice from a salesperson on the towability of a

vehicle is not reliable. Read the owner's manual and verify the restrictions and recommended procedures that apply to your specific vehicle. We constantly get letters and phone calls from readers who took the word of a salesperson or mechanic that a vehicle could be towed on all fours, only to find out later that the information was incorrect and the error expensive.

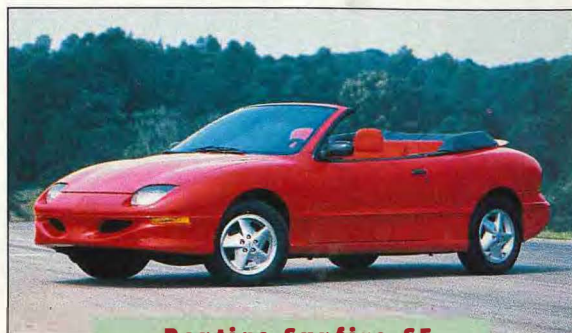
All of the 1996 model-year vehicles listed in the accompanying data table are approved by the manufacturers to be towed on all fours behind a motorhome (when equipped and used as specified) without accessories such as dollies, drive-shaft disconnects or lubrication pumps. However, there may be several versions of owner's manuals during a vehicle's pro-



**Chevrolet Cavalier LS**

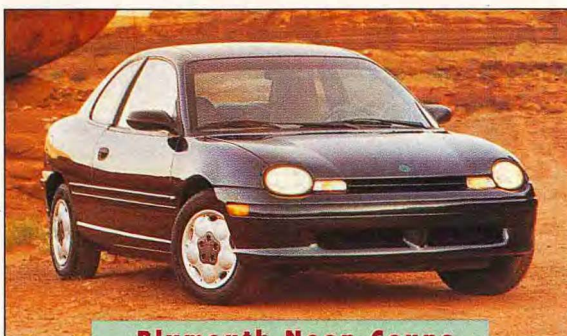
duction run, and manufacturers have been known to change policy in the middle of a model year. The information contained here is accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of printing.

If your vehicle doesn't show up on this listing, that doesn't mean you can't tow it behind your motorhome, it just indicates that it is not factory approved for flat towing and



**Pontiac Sunfire SE**

you will have to utilize one of the towing accessories, such as a towing dolly, trailer or some other device, listed in the "Dinghy-Towing Accessory Buyers Guide" on page 65.



**Plymouth Neon Coupe**

## GENERAL MOTORS

Big news from GM is the inclusion of the Cavalier and Sunfire series with the

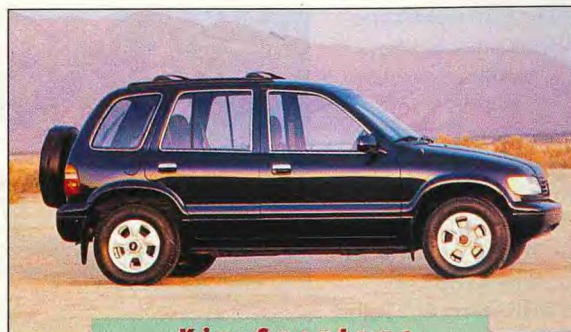
four-speed automatic into GM's flat-towing lineup. (GM Service Bulletin 53-01-05, November, 1995) Saturn is the only other manufacturer to approve towing its passenger cars with automatic transmissions. However, the Cavalier and Sunfire are the only towable automatic cars offered as *true convertibles*!

Both the Cavalier and the Sunfire received major redesigns last year, and the 15.2-gallon gas tank gives the sun-loving convertibles a 380-city/560-highway mile range. Standard safety features include four-wheel ABS and dual air bags.

Chevrolet/GMC also unveiled some new truck innovations including the "Easy Access System," a third



**Ford Explorer V-8**

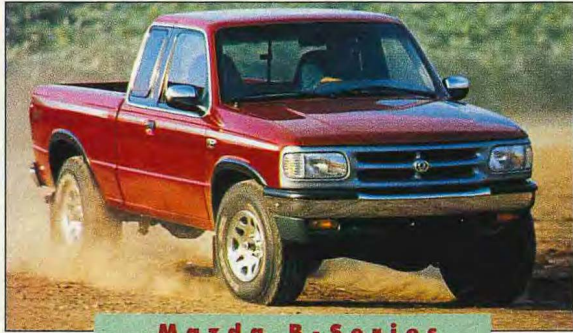


**Kia Sportage**



## DINGHY TOWING '96

door that is available as an option on the extended cab GMC Sonoma and the Chevrolet S-Series. The 4WD versions of both vehicles, with both manual and automatic transmissions, are flat towable when equipped with a manual transfer case. Trucks with the electric-shift transfer case (there is



**Mazda B-Series**

no neutral position) or two-wheel drive (2WD) models are not approved for flat towing.

Performance is up in the GMC Jimmy/Chevrolet Blazer models (towable with both automatic and manual transmissions when ordered with the manual 4WD transfer case), which benefit from an additional 15 hp. Tahoe benefits from the new Vortec technology with the new 5700 Sequential Fuel Injection (SFI) V-8 that produces 50 more horsepower than last year's standard engine.

Geo Metro is this year's winner when it comes to miserly fuel consumption, averaging a commendable 44-city/49-highway mpg rating, which equates a range of 465-520 miles. While the gas-sipping, three-cylinder, inline engine only produces 70-hp, the Geo only weighs a scant 1,808 pounds. All Geo vehicles, including the Geo Tracker SUVs, are equipped with both driver and passenger air bags.

### CHRYSLER CORPORATION

Neon, the bright light from Dodge/Plymouth, continues to carry the dinghy pennant for Chrysler Corporation's domestic car line. With its low rolling weight (base 2,343 pounds) and powerful, optional 150-hp engine, the Neon is a real performer. Now available in both two- and four-door versions, the roomy little car can be towed when equipped with the manual transmission.

Chrysler's Jeep Division

continues to offer a full line of 4WD vehicles approved for towing. While the Wrangler is technically not being offered as a '96 model, the popular off-road soldier should be available for purchase throughout the year until the new Wrangler's reintroduction as a new '97 model later this year.

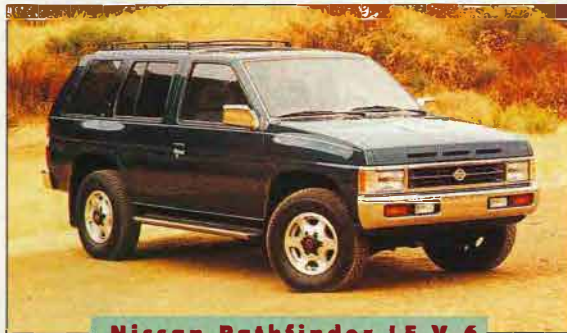
The Cherokee and the Grand Cherokee offer an improved 4.0-liter six-cylinder engine that is designed to run quieter with more usable torque at lower engine speeds. Four-wheel-drive systems have also been upgraded on both models to improve traction in both on- and off-road conditions.

Grand Cherokee gets minor cosmetic changes to the exterior and offers an optional integrated child safety seat along with standard driver and passenger air bags. In addition, technical writers at Jeep have produced excellent owner's manuals for years that provide easy-to-understand instructions on the proper towing of their vehicles.

### FORD/MERCURY

Ford Motor Corporation continues to offer a wide array of towable vehicles. If lightweight and high-mileage are what you're looking for, the Aspire, at 2,004 pounds, will deliver 36-city/42-highway. On the more luxurious side, you have the Ford Explorer and its new clone the Mercury Mountaineer. Both feature a new neutral-tow option for the 4.0-liter engine with 4WD that allows the popular SUV Fords to be flat-towed when equipped

(effective production date December 1, 1995) with an automatic transmission and the electronically activated automatic trans-



**Nissan Pathfinder LE V-6**

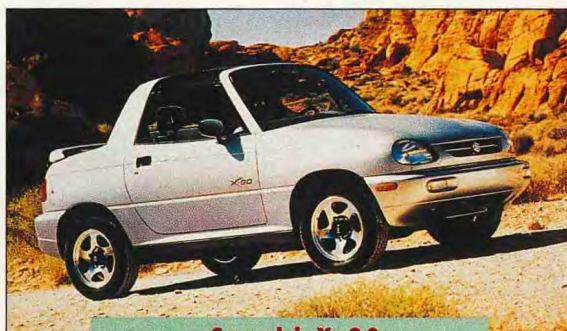


**Saturn (f-r) SW2, SC2, SL2**

fer case. This system can be enabled at the dealer service department with the aid of information encoded on a CD-ROM disc.

Ford truck enthusiasts can also choose the Bronco, Ranger or the redesigned F-150 pickup, although it takes a hefty motorhome to tow the heavy larger trucks. The next generation F-150 was recently introduced as a 1997 model and will appear in showrooms early this year.

As it has been for quite some



**Suzuki X-90**



## TOWABLE CARS

MANUFACTURER	BASE CURB WEIGHT	SPEED/DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE W/MANUAL TRANS	TOWABLE W/AUTO TRANS	EPA MPG CITY/HWY	BASE RETAIL PRICE
<b>CHEVROLET</b>						
Beretta	2,756	none	yes	no	24/36	\$13,490
Cavalier	2,617	none	yes	yes*	25/37	\$10,500
Corsica	2,745	none	yes	no	25/32	\$14,385
*With 4-speed automatic						
<b>DODGE / PLYMOUTH</b>						
Neon 2-dr	2,385	none	yes	no	29/38	\$9,495
Neon 4-dr	2,343	none	yes	no	29/38	\$9,995
<b>EAGLE</b>						
Summit 2-dr	2,085	none	yes	no	33/39	\$10,090
Summit 4-dr	2,250	none	yes	no	26/33	\$12,537
Summit Wagon	2,734	none	yes	no	24/29	\$14,499
<b>FORD / MERCURY</b>						
Aspire	2,004	55/none	yes	no	36/42	\$8,790
Contour/Mystique	2,769	55/none	yes	no	24/34	\$13,785
Escort	2,323	55/none	yes	no	25/31	\$10,065
Probe	2,690	55/none	yes	no	26/33	\$13,930
Tracer	2,409	55/none	yes	no	31/38	\$11,755
<b>GEO</b>						
Metro	1,808	55/none	yes	no	44/49	\$8,085
<b>HYUNDAI</b>						
Accent	2,101	legal/none	yes	no	28/37	\$8,285
Elantra	2,458	legal/none	yes	no	24/32	N/A
Sonata	2,864	legal/none	yes	no	21/28	\$13,399
<b>MITSUBISHI</b>						
Mirage	2,085	none	yes	no	32/39	\$10,440
<b>NISSAN</b>						
200SX	2,330	70/500	yes	no	30/40	\$12,449
240SX	2,753	70/500	yes	no	22/28	\$18,359
300ZX	3,287	60/200	yes	no	19/26	\$37,439
Altima	2,853	70/500	yes	no	24/30	\$15,649
Maxima	3,001	70/500	yes	no	22/27	\$20,999
Sentra	2,315	70/500	yes	no	30/40	\$11,499
<b>PONTIAC</b>						
Grand Am	2,881	55/none	yes	no	23/33	\$13,999
Sunfire	2,679	55/none	yes	yes*	24/36	\$11,999
*With 4-speed automatic						
<b>SATURN</b>						
SC-series	2,282	65/none	yes	yes	manual 29/40 auto 27/37	\$12,195
SL-series	2,348	65/none	yes	yes	manual 29/40 auto 27/36	\$10,495
SW-series	2,437	65/none	yes	yes	manual 28/38 auto 27/36	\$11,995
<b>SUZUKI</b>						
Swift Hatchback	1,878	55/none	yes	no	39/43	\$13,499

## TOWABLE SPORT-UTILITIES AND PICKUPS

MANUFACTURER	BASE CURB WEIGHT	SPEED/DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE W/MANUAL TRANS	TOWABLE W/AUTO TRANS	EPA MPG CITY/HWY	BASE RETAIL PRICE
--------------	------------------	-----------------------	------------------------	----------------------	------------------	-------------------

### CHEVROLET

Blazer 4WD	3,814	none	yes*	yes*	16/21	\$21,204
S-10 4WD	3,356	none	yes*	yes*	16/21	\$15,710

\*With manual transfer case

### DODGE

Dakota	3,630	none	yes*	yes*	15/19	\$16,114
Ram	4,510	none	yes*	yes*	13/17	\$18,492

\*With 4WD only

### FORD

Bronco 4WD	4,587	55/none	yes*	yes*	14/17	\$22,840
Explorer 2WD	3,690	55/none	yes	no	18/23	\$19,570
Explorer 4WD	3,927	55/none	yes**	yes**	16/20	\$21,535
F-Series 4WD	4,063	55/none	yes*	yes*	14/17	\$17,190
Ranger 2WD	2,961	55/none	yes	no	22/27	\$10,425
Ranger 4WD	3,340	55/none	yes*	yes*	20/25	\$15,890

\*With manual transfer case; \*\*with electric or manual transfer case

### GEO

Tracker 2-dr	2,246	55/200*	yes*	yes*	24/26	\$13,285
Tracker 4-dr	2,434	55/200*	yes*	yes*	24/26	\$14,885

\*With manual hubs only; after 200 miles operate engine one minute with manual transmission in second, automatic transmission in drive

### GMC

Jimmy 4WD 2-dr	3,760	none	yes*	yes*	17/22	\$21,456
Jimmy 4WD 4-dr	4,007	none	yes*	yes*	17/22	\$23,504
Sonoma 4WD	3,469	none	yes*	yes*	17/22	\$15,730

\*With manual transfer case

### JEEP

Cherokee	3,069	none	yes*	yes*	19/22	\$16,160
Grand Cherokee	3,590	none	yes*	yes*	15/20	\$26,571

\*With 4WD only

### KIA

Sportage 2WD	3,069	55/400*	yes*	no	19/23	\$13,995
Sportage 4WD	3,280	55/400*	yes*	no	20/24	\$15,295

\*After 400 miles operate engine for a few minutes to lubricate transmission

### MAZDA B-SERIES PICKUP

2WD	2,927	55/none	yes	no	25/28	\$10,005
4WD	3,242	55/none	yes*	yes*	22/26	\$15,100

\*With manual transfer case

### NISSAN

Pathfinder	3,815	60/200/500*	yes**	no	15/18	\$21,549
Pickup 2WD	2,805	60/500	yes	no	22/26	\$10,394
Pickup 4WD	3,470	60/500	yes**	no	18/20	\$15,489

\*V-6 engine 200-mile limit; 4-cylinder 500-mile limit; \*\*transfer case must be left in 2H, transmission in neutral

### SUZUKI

Sidekick 2-dr 4WD	2,546	55/200*	yes*	yes*	manual 23/26 auto 23/24	\$14,669
Sidekick 4-dr 4WD	2,747	55/200*	yes*	yes*	manual 23/26 auto 23/25	\$15,999
Sidekick Sport 4WD	2,917	55/200*	yes*	yes*	manual 23/25 auto 21/24	\$17,999
X-90 SUV 4WD	2,734	55/200*	yes*	yes*	manual 25/28 auto 23/27	\$13,400

\*With manual hubs only; after 200 miles operate engine one minute with manual transmission in second, automatic transmission in drive



## DINGHY TOWING '96

time, if you want to flat-tow a Ford with an automatic transmission, you have to select a 4WD pickup or SUV. With the exception of the Explorer (and we assume the Mountaineer will share the newly announced neutral tow feature, although it is not certain), you must also order the manual-shift transfer case to maintain your full warranty coverage. You may have trouble finding this particular option, as most dealers pre-order their automatic transmission-equipped vehicles with the electric-shift transfer case. However, the Explorer models with the electric-shift 4WD are towable when equipped with the five-speed manual transmission.

### KIA

Kia's new Sportage enters the compact-SUV playing field. Both the 2WD and 4WD versions are towable when equipped with manual transmissions as long as the engine is operated after

every 400 miles of tethered travel to circulate oil in the transmission. However, if the manual gearbox 4WD Sportage is equipped with manual-locking hubs, there is no mileage limit.

### MAZDA

Mazda's B-series 4WD pickups continue to be the company's only vehicles approved for dinghy service when towed in the four-wheels-down mode. However, the pickups, available in two cab configurations, can be optioned-out into elegant little light-duty haulers that seat up to four people.

### NISSAN

Leading Nissan's parade of towables is the new-for-'96 Pathfinder SUV. Featuring a restyled body with expanded dimensions inside and out, the Pathfinder also receives a new, more powerful 3.3-liter V-6 engine, unibody construction, standard four-wheel ABS and dual air bags.

While Nissan does not address flat-towing in its owners' manuals, technical bulletins NTB91-061 and NTB90-004 cover 1987 through 1991 models. These still apply to the drive-lines with manual transmissions that are used in 1996. Nissan stipulates a distance limit on all its cars and trucks: 500 miles for manual transmission models equipped with the four-cylinder engines and 200 miles for vehicles equipped with the manually shifted V-6 engines (however, the V-6 option, available on '95 pickups, is planned for deletion in the '96 series). When this distance is reached, the engine should be started and allowed to run for a few minutes to help ensure proper lubrication of the transmission.

Nissan pickups are available in both Regular Cab, and KingCab models in trim levels from the base, bare models to the full-dress SE 4x4 KingCab.

## Highest Quality and Superior Handling.

- Top of the Line Mini 21', 24', 26'
- Sold Factory Direct
- Nationwide Service



Motorcoach, Inc.

Highway 169 North  
Humboldt, Iowa 50548

P.O. Box 39  
1-800-247-1835



# DINGHY TOWING '96

## SATURN

As one of the most popular vehicles when it comes to motorhome dinghies, the Saturn family of cars, including the SL sedan, the wagon and the coupe led the field by being the first passenger cars approved for flat-towing with an automatic transmission. For '96, the Saturn lineup gets an improved roofline, promising more headroom and easier entry to the more accommodating interior, and improved aerodynamics with its new wind-cheating shape.

## SUZUKI

Suzuki enters 1996 with the new X-90 mini-SUV. This new two-seater requires the manual hub option in order to be flat-towable. A tankful of gasoline should be good for 250-280 miles of cruising in the fuel-frugal X-90, depending on terrain and traffic.

Suzuki's second new entry for

'96 is the Sidekick Sport, a new, more powerful "flagship" version of the existing Sidekick compact SUV lineup. The Sport features a front and rear track 2 inches wider than the standard Sidekick two- and four-door, and is powered by a new, 1.8-liter, dual overhead cam (DOHC), four-cylinder engine that generates 120 hp—25 percent more than any previous Sidekick engine. The Sport's list of safety features includes front air bags, reinforced side-impact protection, daytime running lights and standard four-wheel ABS.

Suzuki also offers the more sedate Esteem front-wheel-drive sedan, towable when equipped with the manual transmission only. Standard equipment includes air-conditioning, front air bags, reinforced side-impact beams, rear-door child-safety locks and daytime running lights. Four-wheel ABS brakes are available as an option on the upscale GLX model.

## SUMMARY

Before selecting a dinghy vehicle, be sure to weigh your motorhome when it is fully loaded for a trip, including fuel, water, propane, food, cargo and passengers. Subtract this amount from the gross combination weight rating (gcwr) of the coach to determine how much weight the motorhome is rated to tow.

Also, refer to state laws and the motorhome chassis manufacturer's recommendation regarding brakes on towed vehicles. Ford specifically urges that a separate functional brake system be used on any towed vehicle weighing over 1,500 pounds.

No matter what make and model you choose, always double check the options required by the manufacturer for dinghy-towing approval by reading all applicable information, including the owner's manual. Then be sure to follow all recommended towing procedures. ■

# K & C RV, Inc.

**Colorado's #1 RV Dealer**  
**Over 200 1996's In Stock!**



**Call Now For  
Best Selection!  
Best Prices!**



**LONGMONT, CO**  
35 Miles N. of Denver CO on I-25  
Frontage Rd.  
**1-800-452-5278**

AMERICAN EAGLE	COACHMEN	AERBUS
AMERICAN DREAM	ALLEGRO BAY	LUXOR
AMERICAN TRADITION	GEORGIE BOY	RIALTA
PACE ARROW	JAMBOREE	FLAIR
WINNEBAGO	PACE ARROW VISION	VECTRA

**COLORADO SPRINGS, CO**  
136 E. Garden Of The God's Rd.  
**1-719-528-6337**

AMERICAN EAGLE	SOUTHWIND
AMERICAN DREAM	WINNEBAGO
AMERICAN TRADITION	COACHMEN
SOUTHWIND STORM	DUTCHMEN

**MESA, AZ** 8901 E. Apache Trail • 602-984-8809  
COACHMEN Trailers & Fifthwheels • New MAXXUM Fifthwheels by Coachmen

