

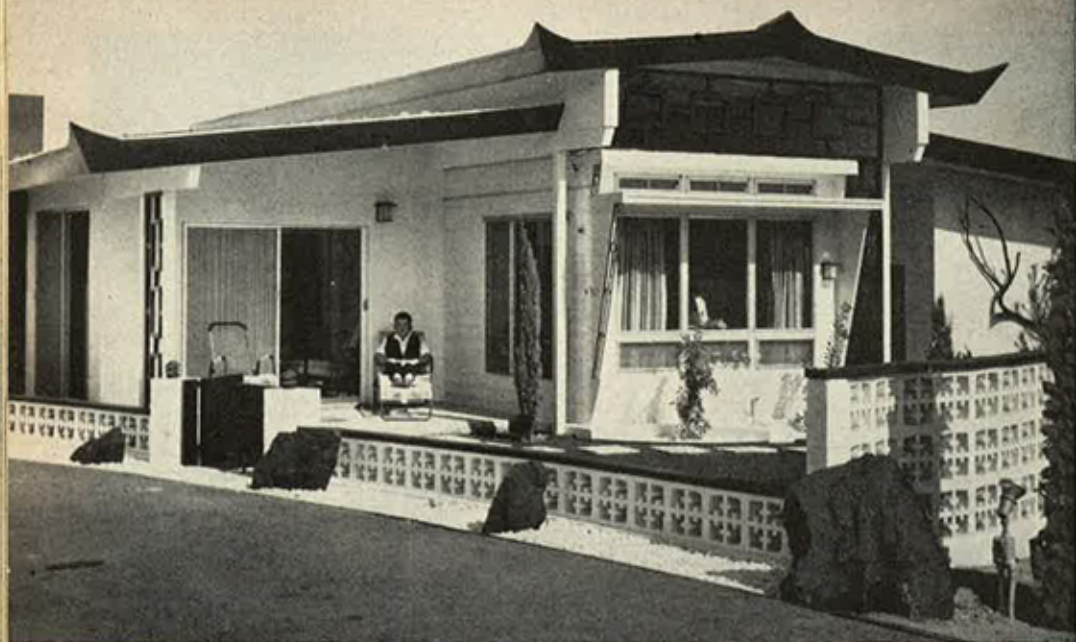
How Do Owners Like the PLYMOUTH?

POPULAR MECHANICS

JULY, 1960
35 CENTS



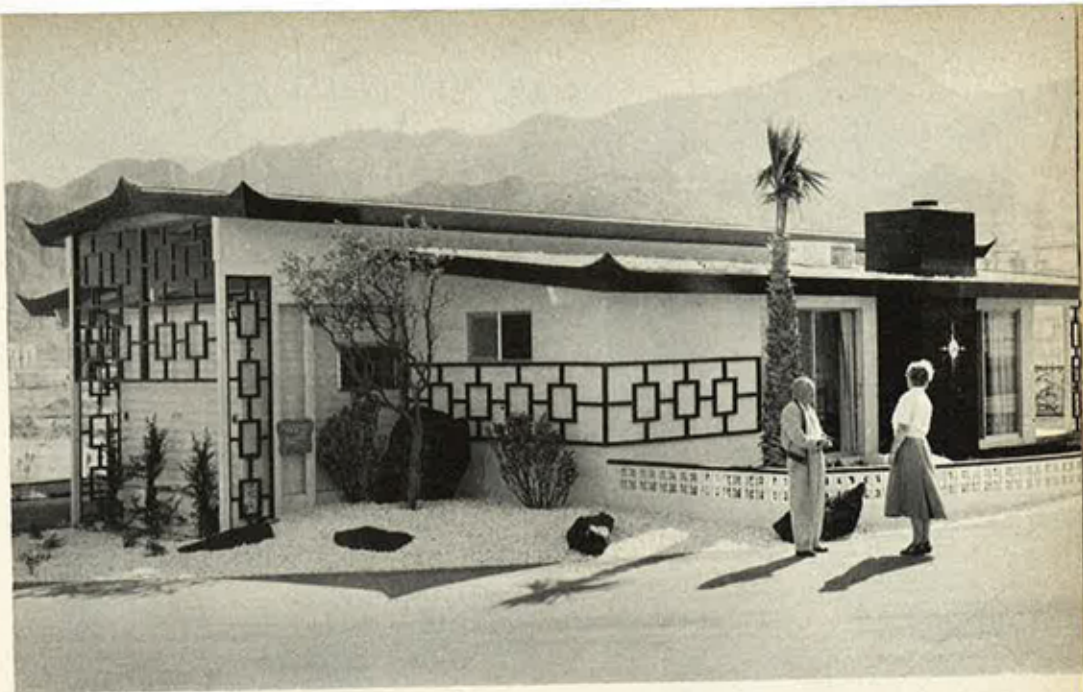
TRAILERS JOIN THE COUNTRY CLUB
Uncle "How-to" Men Show the World
... SOUNDPROOF YOUR HOME ...



Problem—find the trailer in this oriental-motif mobile home installation in Bing Crosby's Blue Skies Park near Palm Springs, Calif. Below, view of the park from its private pitch-and-putt golf course

Trailers Join The Country Club





Another view of this month's cover "home." Trailer sits on concrete foundation which doubles as storage space

By Thomas E. Stimson, Jr.

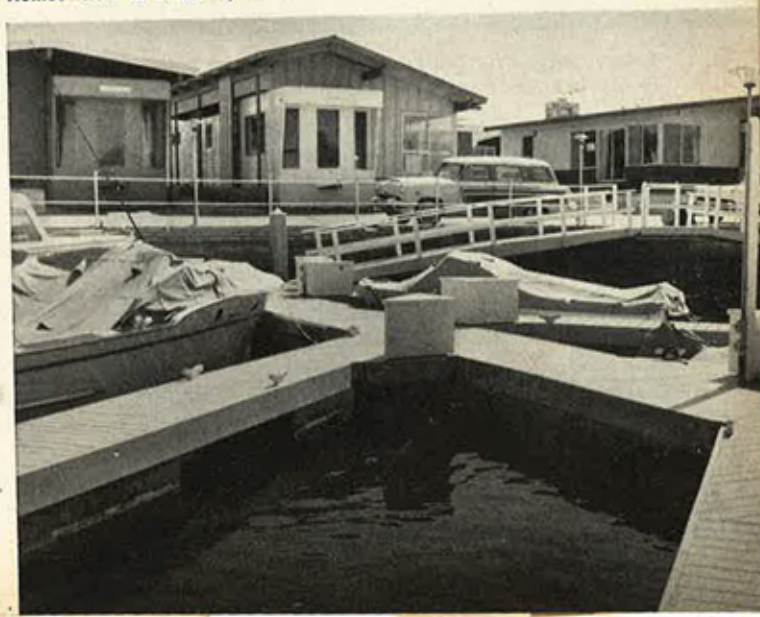
HOW WRONG CAN YOU BE? That was the general reaction a couple of years ago when an economist predicted that 20 million Americans would be living in house trailers in 15 or 20 years. But now it's beginning to look like the forecaster knew what he was talking about. Some fabulous things are happening, and mobile homes are becoming permanent and luxurious residences.

Technically they are still trailers, and

the law says that they must have wheels and tires, a towing hitch and an annual license plate, but from the practical standpoint it's a real chore to uproot a 60-foot trailer and put it on the road.

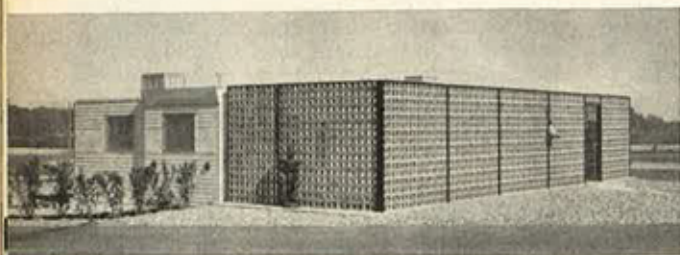
All this started years ago when people with small vacation trailers first stretched an awning out to one side, creating outdoor space for a few folding chairs. Later they put down ground coverings, then put up screens to keep out the bugs. This

Homeowners in Back Bay Park can moor their boats in their front yards

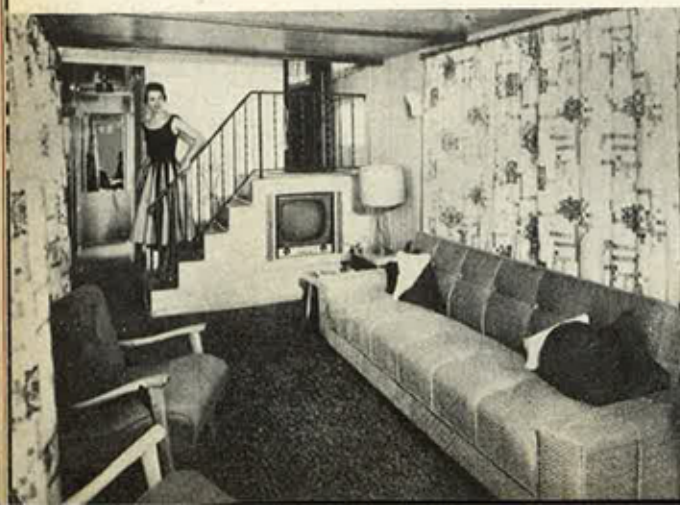




Above, typical modern mobile home interior. Below, "Expando" trailer with concrete block patio screen



Below, interior in a new "tri-level" trailer. Full-draped walls and extra-length davenport minimize narrow living room



led to the cabana, a room with its own roof and walls attached to one side of a trailer. Meanwhile, some of the trailers were growing uncomfortably large for highways.

Look what has happened now. For a good look, visit "Blue Skies," Bing Crosby's new million-dollar trailer court near Palm Springs, Calif. Rex Thompson, Bing's manager, proudly shows you the park's swimming pool, the billiard and card rooms and the shuffleboard courts, the pitch-and-putt golf course and the big recreation building where visiting TV talent make personal appearances.

Still under construction, the park is to have its own small shopping center, a uniformed gateman and maid service for those who desire it. Thompson tells you that the 26 acres inside the park contain 152 trailer spaces, but there is hardly a trailer in sight. About all you can see are some small, beautiful homes, each attractively landscaped. Only a close look reveals that the end of a trailer projects somewhere from each structure.



Pool at Blue Skies Park. Other features include shopping center, recreation building, even maid service

These are residential mobile homes such as no one ever saw before. Each consists of three parts—the trailer itself; attached, permanent cabana, often with a fireplace and porch; and a ramada or separate roof that stretches over the trailer and an adjacent carport. Next to the carport there may be a row of storage lockers and a small building for the home laundry.

A typical 10 by 60-foot trailer at Blue Skies is custom-built and furnished and decorated by an interior decorator. Part of one wall is removed to open that side to the cabana, creating a living room some 20 feet wide. From inside, one can't tell where trailer and cabana join. Wall-to-wall carpeting covers the joint in the floor.

The utilities are all underground, and include natural gas for heating, 220-volt current for the electric kitchen, two phone lines (one to the park switchboard, one a private outside line), and water and sewer connections. An underground coaxial cable brings in color TV from a master antenna.

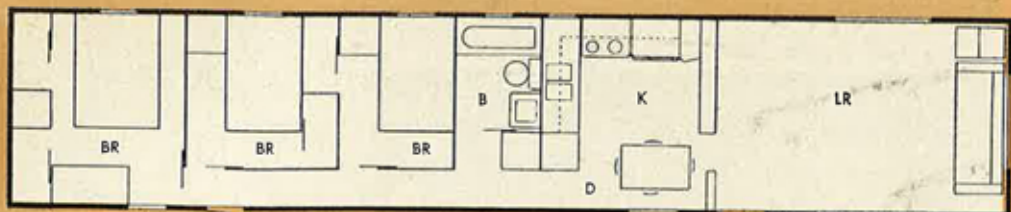
This is not cheap living—a deluxe trailer like that costs around \$15,000. The cabana and other structures, designed by an architect, cost about as much and Rex Thompson reports that some owners at Blue Skies are spending even more—up to \$40,000 for

their complete mobile homes. In addition, they pay a ground rent from \$720 to \$1200 per year, plus their own utilities.

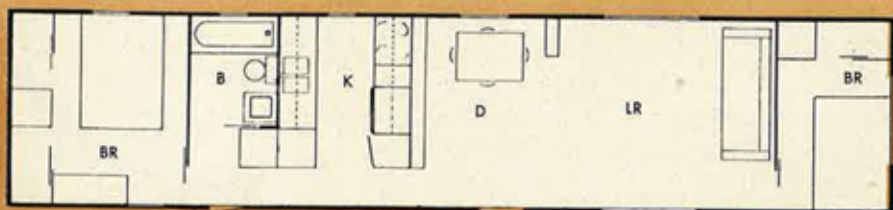
Blue Skies is not the only example of a sumptuous trailer park. Just being completed at Newport Beach, Calif., is Back Bay Park on upper Newport Bay. Here the residents moor their boats in their own front yards. They have their own beach and a spectacular bay-front clubhouse.

At Back Bay the trailers are custom-designed to fit the cabanas instead of the other way around. Each trailer measures 10x50 feet; each cabana another 12x40 feet plus porch, outdoor barbecue and carport. The trailer-cabana combinations sell at from \$12,000 to \$25,000; ground rent runs from \$80 to \$150 per month.

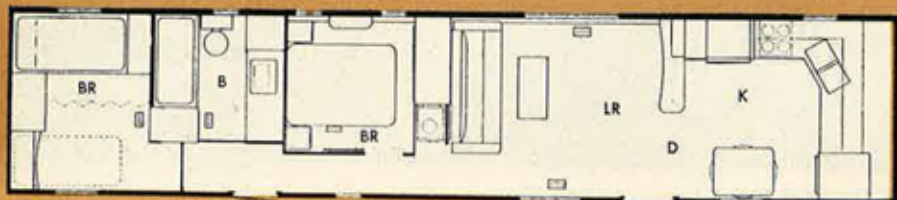
Why should anyone pay prices like these when he can buy a permanent residence for the same money or less? There are a number of reasons. Most of the top-priced mobile homes are bought by well-to-do people who are retired or semiretired. They no longer want the bother of maintaining a large home, and a compact, efficient mobile home exactly fits their needs. The most expensive trailer parks are located in high-priced resort areas where any kind of living is expensive. Each resort



56 x 10 CAPRI—THREE-BEDROOM CONVENTIONAL



50 x 10 CAPRI—SPLIT THREE BEDROOMS



50 x 10 GOLDEN STATE—TWO BEDROOMS, FRONT KITCHEN

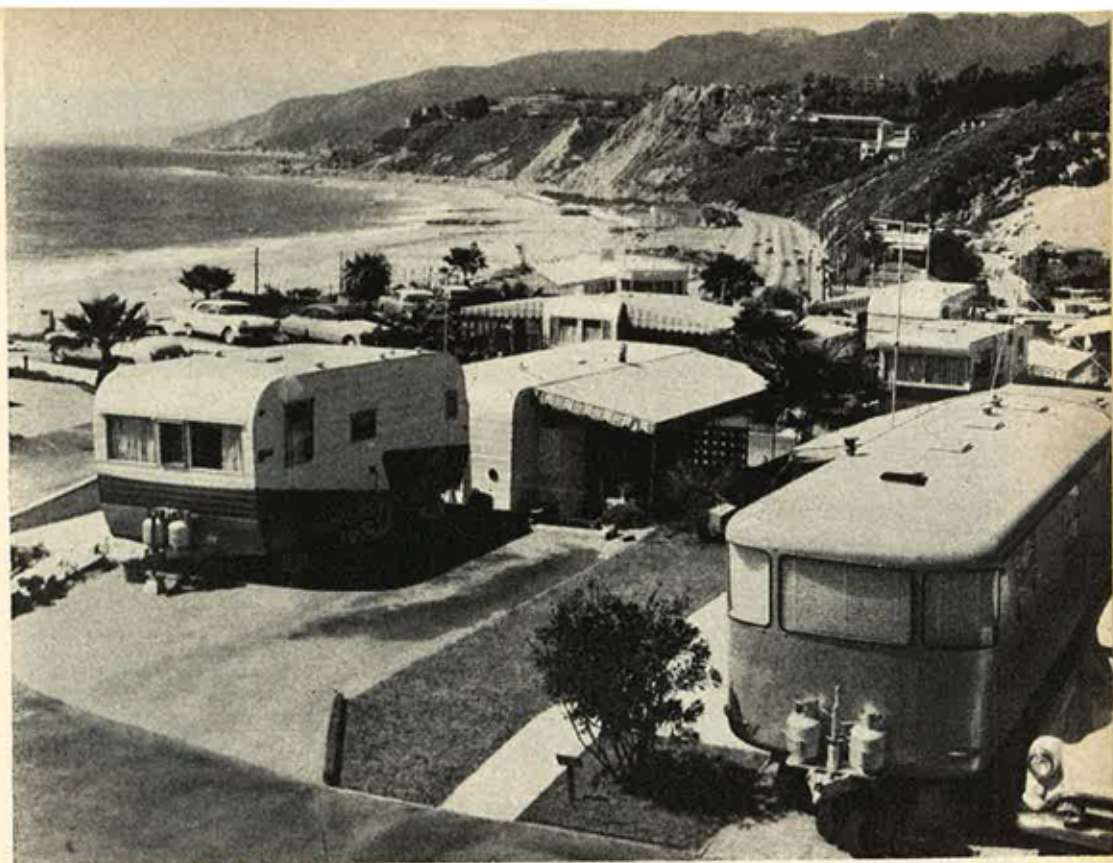


45 x 10 GOLDEN STATE—ONE BEDROOM, CENTER KITCHEN



37 x 10 GOLDEN STATE—ONE BEDROOM, CENTER KITCHEN

Five examples of mobile home floor plans—several optional plans are usually available in standard models. Fronts are to the right. Trailers are completely furnished and feature many ingenious built-ins



Hillside Trailer Park near Santa Monica enjoys a fine view over the coastal highway toward the Pacific

park is like a private club and has a well-planned program of activities.

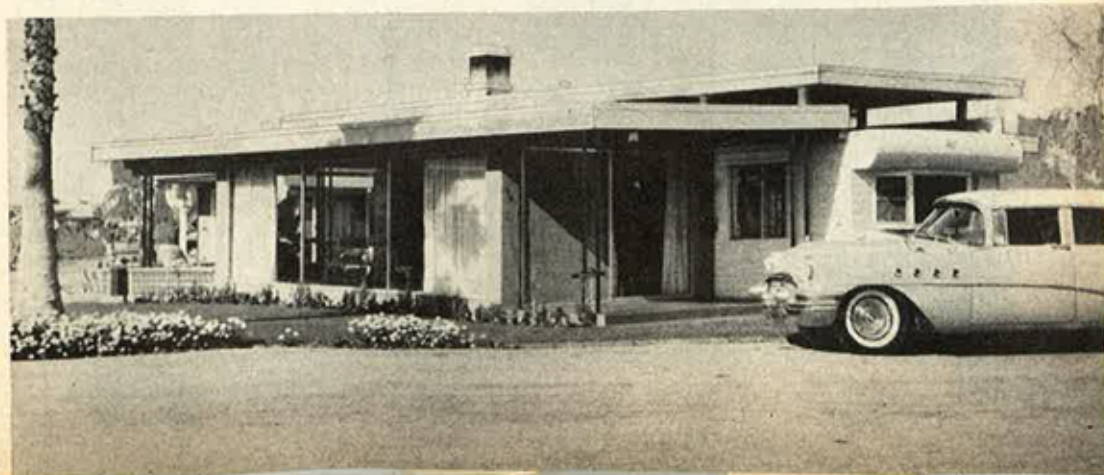
The Sahara mobile home park just outside of Palm Springs, for instance, has ball-room dancing twice a week in its recreation hall, and motion pictures in the hall on Wednesday nights. They have card parties and potluck dinners. Tennis courts, riding clubs and golf courses are only a few minutes away, and if a resident tires of all this he can hitch up his smaller trailer that is stored in a parking lot and take a vacation.

About every four years the average resi-

dent moves to another park in another region. If his residential trailer is a big one, say 10x50 feet, he hires a licensed towing service to do the job. In California a big mobile home may be towed on the highways only during daylight hours and not in inclement weather or on weekends or holidays. If the owner leaves a permanent cabana behind him, he arranges to sell it to the next occupant, in turn he buys any permanent improvements that are installed in the space he occupies at the new park.

(Continued to page 214)

Trailer seems almost incidental in this cabana-ramada installation at Sahara Trailer Park in Palm Springs



Trailers Join the Country Club

(Continued from page 99)

But everyone knows you don't have to be a millionaire to enjoy trailer living. You can buy a fairly large and extremely comfortable mobile home for three or four thousand dollars. A good rule of thumb is \$125 per running foot. Financing is about the same as with an ordinary home, and there are plenty of modern, attractive trailer parks that charge no more than \$30 or \$40 per month space rent.

There is a trend now toward trailer-park subdivisions in which you buy your plot of ground instead of renting it. The largest of these, and probably the world's largest trailer park, is Trailer Estates near Sarasota, Fla. The 1500 lots in the park each measure 2400 square feet or more and are sold for \$1800 to \$3000. Each lot owner pays a \$10 per month maintenance fee, which goes to the upkeep of the paved streets, street lighting, central TV antenna, watchman and other facilities. Trailer Estates has its own moorings for pleasure boats, for which an extra fee is charged.

If you haven't walked through a modern residential trailer you have a real surprise coming. It is a complete home. A purchaser has his choice of up to a dozen floor plans and can select his own color combinations and interior styling. The trailers are completely furnished and feature many ingenious built-ins.

A 10x50-foot trailer is apt to have a 10x17-foot living room and two separate bedrooms in addition to full-sized kitchen and bath. Walls and ceilings are expensive veneers, the sturdy floor is carpeted wall-to-wall. Kitchens have hot and cold running water and all the usual facilities including a combination refrigerator-freezer. Some have garbage disposers, dishwashers and automatic clothes washers. Bathrooms have standard plumbing, including tub-shower combinations.

When a cabana is added, the cabana is often divided into a living room space that augments the trailer's living room, and a dressing room that is entered separately from one of the trailer's bedrooms. Sometimes a cabana contains an extension of the trailer's living room plus an extra bedroom and extra bath.

Modern mobile homes are well insulated and have their own central heating plants that duct hot air to floor registers in every room. They can be equipped with space coolers or refrigerated air conditioning for the hot months. In California, where a number of the manufacturers of large mobile homes are located, the state housing authority enforces minimum standards for heating, plumbing and electrical installa-

tions that are comparable to those for conventional houses.

The Trailer Coach Association estimates that four million people are living in mobile homes today and that one out of every nine housing starts is a mobile home. The association expects that 50,000 of the large residential units will be built and sold this year. There are something like 14,000 trailer parks in the U.S. and new ones being built at the rate of about 1000 per year.

It costs from less than \$100,000 to over a million dollars to open a new park for mobile homes, depending on the cost of the land and the improvements that are installed on it. Paved streets, the latest in sanitary systems, parking areas, a service building that includes washing machines, dryers, and showers, and good recreational facilities are necessary in a modern park.

Trailer parks for semi-permanent mobile homes are divided broadly into two groups: commercial parks adjacent to cities or other work areas and whose occupants have regular jobs, and parks in resort areas whose occupants are retired or on vacation. Florida and California have most of the resort parks, although these luxury accommodations are spreading rapidly.

Trailer parks have become such a big business that several firms specialize in the design and engineering of parks. The firm of Walters & Son, Corona Del Mar, Calif., has designed more than 300 parks and has work representing \$6 million in costs on its drawing boards at present. K. W. Walters of this concern expects that the high-grade accommodations that are available in mobile home parks will be extended shortly to parks that cater to the smaller travel trailers. Such parks would compare with quality motels in the services that they offer. One of their features will be a series of parallel driveways that allow drivers to pull their trailers up alongside utility islands for the night and from which they can depart in the morning by driving straight ahead. The system eliminates backing or jockeying of the trailers.

This idea is to be used in a \$2.5 million vacation marina on the west shore of the Salton Sea in southeast California. The whole project includes a 150-room motel, a mobile home park with 150 spaces, and a travel-trailer park with 200 spaces. In addition there will be restaurants, boat storage, boat launching ramps and boat docks.

Eventually, Walters believes, parks that cater to the overnight travel trailers will provide a permanent cabana at each trailer space. It would contain all the comforts that a travel trailer usually lacks, including a large living room with TV and a bathroom with tub and shower. ★ ★ ★