



Rating RVs Since 1990

Nonprofit / Independent / Unbiased

Things that can go wrong with a new RV (And why ratings matter!)

Ratings are more than important. They are essential if you want to choose as close to a trouble-free RV as possible. In this article, I'll not only give you some ideas of how a few RV manufacturers are performing, but I'll also be showing you more about how RV Consumer Group (RVCG) goes through the rating process and an example or two of some manufacturers who aren't doing very well.

But first, I should tell you that to get some answers to the very complex issue of producing good ratings, we begin with searching the RVCG database of the thousands of comments and numbers sent to us by our members and others who have completed our [survey form](#) on RV.org, or by some RV owners who have written letters with details of their particular issues with an RV manufacturer.

My job as an RVCG researcher-tech is to find out how these RV owners feel about the RV manufacturer in which they have invested and, from these numbers and comments, produce ratings to help new or repeat buyers make an intelligent buying decision.

As an example, I must watch closely to find out how Jayco, a manufacturer of both towables and motor homes is doing after being purchased by Thor Industries. (See [RV Confidential #5](#))

Although the manufacturer is listed as Jayco, the parent company, Thor, is known to influence the quality of its brands dramatically. In the particular issue of Jayco's purchase by Thor—who historically has had low ratings on most of its motor home brands—has been under my microscope and with the computer's help, it doesn't take me long to discover that the reliability of Jayco's brands of trailers and motor homes are slowly inching down to the low 70s. (We've received 216 recent reports.) Although an unhappy discovery, the numbers do not surprise me.

Then, as another example, we received a letter from a couple who got me searching everywhere, including the web, to find out if the couple's complaints on the Nexus



Jayco Melbourne. *"Cabinet hinge design doesn't hold up. Issues with tank level readings and loose wiring around the freshwater tank. Front slide intermittently not coming in, as well as the automatic steps. Loose trim comes loose. Shower door gets stuck. Window shades are poor design." SM*



Jayco Ace: *"The quality control as well as materials used were very poor. Much revision, repair and replacement has been required over the 12 months we have owned it." KK*



Thor Palazzo: *"Spent entire first year of ownership resolving defects in workmanship and quality control. Lost several camping vacations due to stays at dealership for repairs and breakdowns." DG*



Thor Quantum: *"Total lack of quality control. From day of delivery nothing worked. Leaks everywhere. Every time we picked it up from dealership there were new problems & the old problems weren't fixed. Still dealing with leaks, a warped door, blowing fuses." LC*

motor home manufacturer had validity. After extensive research of RVCG's surveys, comments on the web, photographs, relevant documents, carefully reviewing their complaint and correspondence between them and the manufacturer and dealer, plus other resources, I became convinced that the complaints were valid.

Although we've received only 10 survey reports with extensive comments on the Nexus, and since they've been in the business of building luxury motor homes since 2016, only one was quite positive. *ID* said: *"We are pleased with the product and the support the manufacturer has provided on some of the issues...generally minor with the coach."* 9/14/2019

However, some of the other comments weren't quite as flattering. But, *JS* splits the positive / negative opinion by saying, *"First motorhome (2016) I purchased from Nexus was a disaster."* Then he traded for a larger one. *"Very happy with my decision to stick with Nexus."* 2/7/2017

In another comment, *DB* says, *"Better than average construction. Poor weight distribution which causes poor handling. Long rear overhang."* 11/1/2016. Then a year later (we recognize reports as valid if the reports are at least a year apart), *DB* sends another report that shows a change of mind. *"I've heard horror stories, but our experience has been very good. We drove our class C several thousand miles last year and will again this year. We've had very few problems."*

It gets confusing, so I have to read on and on to get a complete picture. In the case of the Nexus, most of the complaints are about quality control. For example, *P & C M* says, *"Factory direct concept totally flawed in that it is next to impossible to find anyone to work on warranty or other repairs. Their maintenance referrals either refused to do warranty work or were fly by night hole-in-the-wall backyard mechanics."*

This couple was obviously bitter about the service they received as shown by the long list of defects that were apparently never fixed by Nexus. The comments concluded that they finally sold the motor home at a loss of almost \$100,000. WOW!

Now let's get back to the letter that started the research on Nexus. It is the story of *Marilyn*, the beautiful motor home with extremely high maintenance as told by Jackie and Ross LaDart. (They gave us permission to use their full names.)

***"I've heard horror stories, but our experience has been very good. We drove our class C several thousand miles last year and will again this year. We've had very few problems."* DB**



A Nexus Bentley class A

***"Factory direct concept totally flawed in that it is next to impossible to find anyone to work on warranty or other repairs."* P&CM**

***"First motorhome (2016) I purchased from NEXUS was a disaster." Then he traded for a larger one. "Very happy with my decision to stick with NEXUS."* JS**

The list of defects was long. It is one of those sad stories that we hated to learn about because Nexus was a young manufacturer who we thought had a good future. This story and my research convinced me that Nexus has some growing pains that might damage their chance at making that good future unless they are capable of correcting their deficiencies during the manufacturing process. But back to the story of *Marilyn*.

After the LaDarts decided that the Nexus best fit their needs, they found a 2019 Bentley advertised in another state so they sent a deposit of \$5,000 and drove the many miles to buy it. At the dealership, they paid another \$20,000 to cement the deal (the price tag on their motor home was approximately \$190,000.)

Once there, they noticed the window sticker showed it to be a 2019 model listing additional house batteries and a 360 camera - that were not on the motor home. Then the list of problems began.

Instead of the advertised 8.0 Onan generator, it had a 6.0 generator. However, when a carfax report showed the unit to be a 2018 model, they contacted Freightliner and were told that the chassis was from 2017. Then the argument expanded until they tried to get their \$25,000 deposit money back and cancel the deal. The dealer refused. He said they could cancel but would lose their deposit. (In my book, [RV Buying Trilogy](#), I stress that a “hold” or deposit should be refundable and be so stipulated on the buyer’s agreement).

After the LaDarts surrendered and drove it back home to Texas, the list of complaints got longer; and after delivery, the list grew to over 30 items.

1. Leak from behind the shower wall - water ran all over the floor, sealants missing. Apparently, the entire shower unit was installed crooked.
2. They discovered that water could not be added to the tank.
3. The kitchen sink would not drain.
4. Floor coverings peeling on the bathroom/bedroom steps.
5. They paid for a repairman to re-route the fresh water tank hoses to enable them to sanitize the system.
6. The refrigerator “walks” across the floor when the unit is in motion. It does not run off battery power.
7. Trim pieces above hallway area door have fallen off.
8. Hallway pocket doors are broken. They fell off the track and their latches were broken.
9. Sliding wardrobe doors did not latch.

(The pictures on the following 2 pages show some of the LaDarts' issues with their Bentley.)



This is “Marilyn” - the LaDart’s Nexus Bentley—what they call the pretty motorhome with “high-maintenance” problems.



Rockguard fell off.



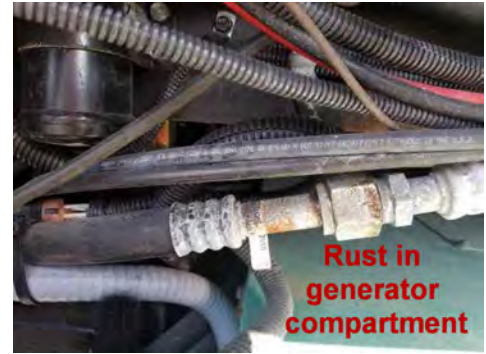
10. Vent cover on front of the rear wardrobe fell off.
11. The horn did not work. There was a loose wiring harness on the floor beside the steering wheel.
12. Outside shower missing bracket allowing it to swing loose.
13. LP hose problems.
14. Front generator cover pops open while motorhome is in motion.
15. Some of the windows frame were bent.
16. Some of the LED's on front and bay lights did not work.
17. Main light switch in kitchen had "ceiling lights rear" button - which does not work.
18. Several of the basement light covers were missing and/or lights didn't work
19. Front window shade did not lower.
20. Passenger and driver windows pop while unit in motion.
21. Water tank sensors were not operable.
22. Rear rock guard was improperly installed.
23. Brakes squealed.
24. Sliding door jumped track, got stuck inside the pocket behind the refrigerator. Rubber came off.
25. A/C not cooling.
26. Windshield washers would not squirt water on windshield.
27. Windshield wipers did not turn off without turning off the engine.
28. Kitchen pop-up outlets and overhead electrical outlets were not working.
29. Kitchen sink drain did not drain properly.
30. Had soft spots behind and beside driver's seat.
31. There was no power to the Winegard antenna.
32. Had no hot water. (Circuit breaker issue).
33. Bathroom door knob was smaller than the hole.
34. Driver's right arm rest was higher than it should be.



The LaDarts said that they sent a demand letter to both Nexus and the dealer (American Family) in an attempt to get them to make corrections or buy the motor home back. The dealer has made some corrections at the LaDarts' insistence. To my knowledge, they are still driving *Marilyn* with a long list of repairs needed.

By the time my research was over, I was relieved to discover that RV Consumer Group had given most of the Nexus brands only a two-star reliability rating since 2016. But after reading the many complaints by buyers of Nexus, I can understand why the database's scoring system is pushing the Nexus rating downward - and this makes me sad because the RV world really needs some good RV manufacturers.

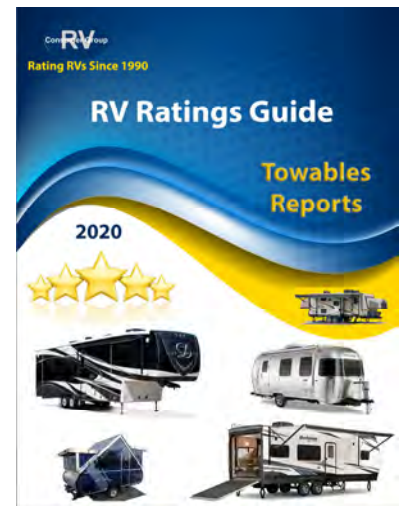
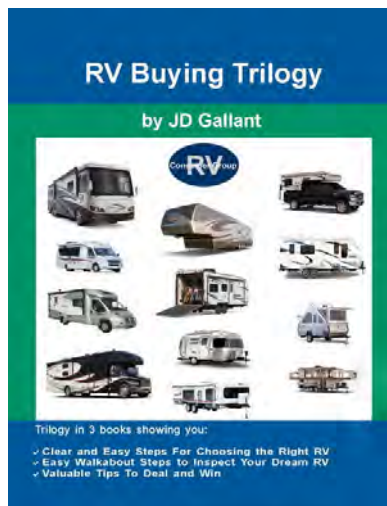
I'm not giving up completely on Nexus. I think the story of *Marilyn* is primarily a problem with the dealer for not doing a good pre-delivery inspection and making corrections where needed (they get paid for it). But that does not excuse the manufacturer for any shoddy workmanship. Management at the factory is still responsible during the warranty period. So, I for one, am sympathetic to the idea that *Marilyn* can rise to stardom and leave that high-maintenance tag behind.



JD Gallant



We Rate RVs



Do your research before you buy—it pays off and avoids much grief later on!

Get your RV Ratings Guide today at RV.ORG!