

Lighting Up

Overhead and reading LED fixtures from marine supplier, Alpenglow, illuminate dark areas with minimal modifications

By Bob Livingston



LIGHTING

Cost: \$119-149

Time: 30 min

Difficulty: 3/10

Lighting up the interior of a motorhome has become a science of late, namely because of the plethora of LED fixtures that have flooded the market. Until LEDs became cost-effective — and provided greater intensity — the choice was simple; you either used incandescent or fluorescent, the latter embraced mostly by those who frequented primitive locations. Alpenglow, a company that made its mark building quality overhead and bulkhead reading lights for the marine trade, has recently branched out into the RV field with two interesting lighting options. One is a surface-mounted fixture in two sizes and the other designed to appeal to readers.

The overhead lights take their cues from the marine industry and are framed in hand-rubbed wood offered in teak, cherry oak and mahogany. Built into the frame is a curved prismatic lens that is designed to handle rugged conditions and will not yellow over time, according to the manufacturer. The lens is sealed into the wood frame, which means it won't be dislodged while the motorhome is on the road; screws go through the wood for mounting, making the install solid.

There are two models; the Tuscany measures 10 by 6 by 2 inches and the Catalina is 7 by 7 inches but only 1 inch thick. We mounted the larger light under the overhead cabinets in the galley because this area was inherently dark due to poor lighting fixtures from the factory. The transformation here was dramatic with plenty of diffused lighting covering the entire galley counter. The switch allows the user to rock between high and low outputs or 600 and 300 lumens, respectively. Power consumption on

high is .5 amps and .25 amps on low.

The Catalina was installed above a work desk, tucked into a cubbyhole in the bedroom. Again the area was dark and the 400-lumen output of the new fixture made a big difference. Even the low, 200-lumen setting improved the lighting in the area. Both fixtures can be ordered with a built-in red nightlight with high and low outputs — and controlled by a separate rocker switch.

Alpenglow also offers a Caribbean Reading Light that definitely has marine styling and function. We installed that one above the bed where the 3 7/8-inch-diameter articulating shade (up and down and side to side) showers the area with enough light for two people to read. It's on the big side so placement is important to keep from hitting your head when sitting up in bed. A rheostat allows the light to be adjusted from dim to bright, which is key to its operation, in our opinion.

All the lights are rated at 2,700 Kelvin and have a warm glow, rather than more harsh daylight LEDs. Installation is quick and simple requiring connection of only two wires, which were exposed when we removed the old overhead fixtures; it took a little more effort to fish wires to the reading light. Polarity is clearly labeled on the back of each fixture.

Opting for the night vision adds \$15 to the \$129 and \$119 price tags for the Tuscany and Catalina fixtures, respectively. The Caribbean Reading Light sells for \$119 or \$149 with the dimmable feature. These fixtures are obviously not cheap, but they are very high quality and will likely outlast the motorhome. **M**

Alpenglow, www.alpenglowlights.com



[1] Installation requires connection of 12-volt DC positive and negative wires. Don't rely on color coding; check polarity of power leads before butt connecting wires. **[2]** Caribbean Reading Light has metal on/off rocker switch and rheostat to adjust intensity of the light, a feature which gives users better control for reading in bed.