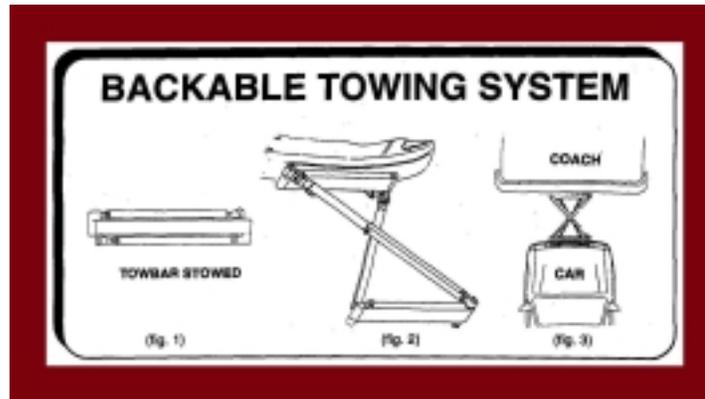


THE M&G TOW BAR



Maxwell/Gurdjian

November, 1999

www.rvtechstop.com

Following our review of the M&G Tow Car Brake in 1996, Leon Meadows, owner of M&G Engineering, told us about a tow bar he was working on. He said it was going to be completely different from any other tow bar and it would allow a motorhome to back up with a tow vehicle attached. Last July at the FMCA Convention in Ames, Iowa, Meadows informed us the tow bar project was complete, patented, and ready for production. When asked if we were still interested in reviewing this product, we answered with an enthusiastic "YES." After five years, we continue to be impressed with the M&G Tow Car Braking System which has lived up to every claim made by M&G. We looked forward to experiencing the revolutionary features of the new offering from this Texas company.

DESCRIPTION

The M&G Tow Bar is unique because it uses four points of attachment rather than three. A mounting bar is permanently attached to the motorhome with a coupler and receiver. A 5/8", grade 8 bolt and nut tightened to 150 foot pounds of torque are used instead of the normal pin. The bar has two telescoping arms plus attachment ears for safety chains, connections for lights, and other devices. The mounting bar permanently attached to the towed vehicle is secured to base plates that are specific for each vehicle model. Non-chrome components are finished with a durable fine powder coating.

INSTALLATION

After removing the existing ball hitch, we slid the coupler of the M&G Tow Bar into the receiver and tightened the bolt and nut ac-

ording to the product specifications. For our installation, we needed to relocate the system hookups. This included the tow car lights, the **Preston Systems Wheel Sentry**, the air supply for the **M&G Tow Car Brake**, and the **VORAD**. (Articles about these devices are included in the Article/Archive section on this web site). Because of the attachment ears, it was quite easy to move the hookups without drilling any new holes. We made a mounting plate of 1/8" aluminum stock that was large enough to accommodate all the plugs for our equipment and bolted it to the forward attachment ears. On many installations, relocating plugs may not be required. The next step was to remove the old tow bar from the towed vehicle and mount the M&G bar on the existing base plates. This was a very simple procedure with nuts and bolts adjusted to the

proper torque. The entire installation took less than an hour. Once installed, we were very pleased with the appearance. When stowed, the tow bar is neat and unobtrusive. Indeed, it is much more appealing than the previous ball hitch we used in the past—how many times did we bang our shins into that?! The towed vehicle component is equally pleasing to the eye and adds less front-end weight than the previously installed tow bar.

THE TRIP

Hooking up is a snap. We drove the towed vehicle within 18 to 30 inches of the coach and connected the telescoping bars to their respective attachment points. After attaching the safety chains and accessory lines we were ready to roll. We left Pennsylvania, heading to Arizona with planned stops in Albuquerque and Flagstaff. We stopped in Oklahoma at a rest area to dump our waste water. Since there was no one around, we decided to see if we could really back up with the car attached. We successfully backed up in a straight line—we stopped at 25 feet but we are sure we could have kept going. When we got to our first stop in Albuquerque, we found that disconnecting the towed vehicle was

In the event you are parked on an incline, M & G recommends the following procedure:

- ▶ **Start the engine and put the transmission in gear.**
 - ▶ **Move forward slightly—motion will be hindered by the hitch**
 - ▶ **Apply the parking brake.**
 - ▶ **Use the release tool provided with the system to unlock the telescoping bar.**
 - ▶ **Unhitch the towed vehicle**
-

very easy and we did not need to use the special release tool to unlock the telescoping bar. The next morning, we hooked up the towed vehicle and were soon underway again. After a 3-hour stop in Flagstaff, we arrived at our final

destination in Wellton, Arizona. When we disconnected the tow vehicle, we found that we again did not need the release tool.

CONCLUSION

While driving, we noted that the connection between the car and coach was firm. There was no fore to aft movement in the coupler/receiver junction, and the looseness felt with ball hitches does not exist. We did not feel the tow car surging and tugging during stops and starts as we did with our previous system. For a few miles, Carol rode in the towed vehicle and found the ride no different than driving the vehicle. Ed commented that if he did not have the rear monitor, he would not know he was towing anything! We also discovered this is the easiest tow bar to connect and disconnect that we have ever used.

We were quickly able to substantiate the manufacturer's claims about this tremendously innovative tow bar. Just like many others, we have previously tried to backup when we overshot a fuel pump, dump station, or similar situation. The front tires on the towed car would turn and it seemed like the tires would be ripped off the rims. We always ended up having to go around again. With the M&G Tow Bar, we were able to successfully back up in a straight line for the very first time in our RV experience.

Meadows tells us that if a towed vehicle has 2 degrees or less caster, it can even be maneuvered like a trailer. The manual for our vehicle, a 1994 Mazda pick-up, states the acceptable caster is from 2 to 6 degrees positive. Because of this, we were unable to maneuver backup turns. Nonetheless, the ability to back up in a straight line for considerable distances is a vast improvement in towing equipment. This remarkable feature plus the unequalled ease of use and smoothness in ride justifies the manufacturer's enthusiastic performance claims.



Setting the torque specifications for the coupler/receiver bolt on the coach (above) and the mounting bolts on the towed vehicle (below)



When stowed, the tow bar is neat and unobtrusive.

The device retails for around \$550.00. For more information and dealer locations, contact M&G Engineering, P.O. Box 1107, Athens, Texas 75751, (800) 817-7698, (903) 675-1147, FAX (903) 675-8671