

# ONE HOT ITALIAN

THE CLASSY STAINLESS-STEEL SMEV OVEN AND RANGE COOKS EVEN BETTER THAN IT LOOKS

**D**uring the last 15 years or so, the general style and overall function of the RV stove and oven have remained the same. Minute improvements and a few safety features have been added, especially regarding the oven pilot function. While durability as a whole has been very good, cooking on these ranges, and especially baking in the oven, has been less than desirable for the serious chef in the family.

For those looking to upgrade their cooking experience, there's an entry from Italy that hasn't had much exposure in the United States thus far, but under the wing of Dometic, that could change. Dometic's imported SMEV stove-and-oven combination is a finely crafted appliance made of premium 304L grade (18/10) stainless steel, and, the good news is, it can be retrofitted relatively painlessly.

SMEV created its premium stove-and-oven range to set the standard for high-quality RV cooking appliances in European-made RVs. Not only does the 304 stainless provide a highly corrosion-resistant foundation, it matches nicely in RVs with stainless-steel microwave ovens and/or residential-style refrigerators. The sleek SMEV design allows for accurate, home-quality broiling, cooking and baking — modern advantages



**(1)** The original stove-and-oven combination was a basic model that did not include a burner cover. **(2)** Locating all of the mounting screws that hold the original range in place can be a challenge. **(3)** Always use extra caution whenever you are installing, removing or replacing an LP-gas line. **(4)** Take care not to scratch yourself or the cabinetry on the sharp metal edges when removing the existing range.

usually not found in an RV unless it's equipped with a high-quality microwave/convection oven.

Due to the compact size of most RV stove-and-oven combinations, 17-inch ranges are the norm, placing the oven burner so close to the baking pan or sheet that the temperatures within the oven are difficult to control. Even lighting the oven burner can be a difficult task and requires one to kneel on the floor with a flashlight and a long igniter — many times needing the help of a second person to push the reset button while lighting the pilot. Open up the oven door two or three times, and the set temperature will quickly be lost. With temperatures this hard to control and no way to see what you are cooking without a flashlight, even the best chefs are left wondering if their baked goods and prepared dishes will be cooked properly.

SMEV's patented jet-flow-sealed burners not only are designed to consume 33 percent less LP-gas but



**(5) Rubber gas lines are susceptible to damage caused from protruding staples and screws, so be sure to keep them out of harm's way. (6) When working with wood exercise patience. Cabinet modifications will need to be made, and there is not much room for error. (7) The SMEV is roughly 1½ inches narrower than the original range, thus requiring a spacer board to be installed on both sides of the cabinet to fill the gaps. (8) Both spacer boards required sanding for a precise fit.**



**(9) Always measure twice before cutting! (10 and 11) Pre-drill all of the woodwork before reinstalling the mounting screws. (12) Proper installation of the new SMEV required a bit of patient manipulation, as the new configuration of space was rather snug.**

allow for more efficient cooking, especially when using the high-output front burner. The ingenious design of the SMEV oven burner helps prevent the burned-on-the-bottom-and-not-baked-in-the-middle problem commonly experienced with RV gas ovens. And lighting the oven burner (as well as the stovetop burners) is as simple as holding in the temperature knob and pushing the switch for the built-in igniter.

Safety is a concern for many RVers due to the volatility of LP-gas and the fact that the stove is the only place in an RV where there's an open flame and source of propane. If a burner is accidentally turned on without a flame, the inside

of the RV can be filled with explosive gases. The SMEV stove-and-oven combination has a thermocouple safety shutoff for the cooktop and oven burners. If any of the burner knobs are accidentally turned on (while serving food or if Fido jumps up to take a look), the flow of propane is prevented. Propane can flow only if the burner is lit and the thermocouple sends a message to the control valve. The oven door also utilizes a safety micro switch for added peace of mind.

The SMEV features a multiple-layer glass oven door that greatly reduces surface temperatures; a 12-volt DC interior light allows a clear view of cooking food. Continuing

the high-end Italian look is the chic tempered-black-glass burner cover that provides a welcome extra work surface when the stove is not in use.

Installation time will vary depending on the range size and style to be replaced. Our project SMEV stove-and-oven combo was slated for use in a rig with the aforementioned 17-inch standard three-burner cooktop and oven. Because of the European sizing, we knew that the cabinetry would have to be modified. Fortunately, wood is a very easy material to work with. The cutout in the countertop was not a problem, as the SMEV's top flange fit snugly into the original space.

However, the SMEV was higher than the original stove-and-oven combo, requiring that the support shelf be lowered and the slide-out drawer under the shelf be modified. It only took the removal of a few screws to dislodge the shelf, which provided access to lower the front cross member by almost 2 inches



**(13)** When attaching the 12-volt DC wiring, be certain to use high-quality butt connectors for trouble-free operation. **(14)** The SMEV's superior construction is evident throughout its design. **(15)** Switches for the oven light and igniter are found in the left side of the front panel. **(16)** The stainless-steel sealed burner makes cleaning fast and simple.

(held in by four countersunk screws).

We carefully measured before drilling new holes to accommodate the new location of the front cross member. The lower-slide-drawer configuration was a little more of a challenge. The depth of the drawer was low enough to clear the front cross member, but the faceplate of the drawer needed to be cut down almost 2 inches to clear the bottom of the SMEV.

We removed and cut off the bottom of the drawer face to avoid modifying and staining the top edge, then re-installed the drawer face 2 inches lower than originally set. Since the cut drawer face ended up only an inch above the floor, restaining and rerouting the edge was not necessary because it was out of sight.

The next step was to run positive and negative wires from a nearby source to the SMEV. Fortunately, the refrigerator was the adjoining appliance, so a hole was drilled through the

separating wall and the wires attached to the incoming 12-volt DC source that powers the refrigerator.

Before we were done, the wires running through the wall were sealed to prevent any possibility of carbon-monoxide intrusion. There was no problem attaching the original gas line to the new stove and oven since it was long enough to reach the connection on the back of the stove. Before permanently installing the SMEV, the LP-gas was turned on to check for leaks.

A modification was made to the back section of the countertop, and after securing with screws, the range was set to go — except for a miscalculation in the clearance of the cooktop cover under the existing range hood. The test trailer was fitted with an extra-large range hood, and the cooktop cover would not open all the way. Although there are slimmer range hoods on the market, we chose to build a new one using some of the components from the old range

hood. This added time to the project but in the long run was worth the effort.

Cooking on and in the SMEV is a pleasure. While the burners are nicely spaced for accommodating all sizes of pots and pans, and the surface is sealed and easy to clean, the best benefit comes from cooking in the oven. It's big enough to handle large pans required to cook for at least six people. Temperature is accurate, and food is baked evenly — and there's no risk when baking cakes and breads.

Once the SMEV was installed, standing back and admiring the beauty and craftsmanship of the new range was a big part of the reward for making the switch. Simply put, after cooking many meals with the SMEV, it easily outperforms our highest expectations.

The SMEV model CU43410730000US has an MSRP of \$975. 📞

**Dometic**

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