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## Durable Bicycle Cover

USA Roadbag is the ultimate protection for bikes carried on a rack that mounts in a standard hitch receiver

By Bob Livingston



Once strapped down, the Roadbag fits snugly around the bikes. Glow-in-the-dark piping provides good visibility.



PROTECTIVE  
GEAR

Cost: \$179.95

Time: 10 minutes

Difficulty: 1/10

**B**icycling is a natural extension of the RV lifestyle, and it's common to find one to four bikes hanging on a rack mounted on the rear of a motorhome or dinghy vehicle. No doubt, the rear of any vehicle is the worst environment for bicycles. Road debris can coat the frames

with a layer of gunk that's not only unsightly, but hard on the components. And diesel soot makes the situation even worse. Covers are mandatory if you want to keep the bikes clean and ready to ride. But not all covers are created equal.

Back in 1998 I discovered the USA Roadbag, possibly the most durable cover ever made, which lived up to claims of superior quality suggested by its patented protection. The bag was used to cover two bikes hanging on a rack via two extended arms. After years of repelling downpours and abuse from horrendous road dirt, the old bag was retired (but still in good shape) because it could not be fitted on a new rack that held the bike wheels in channels rather than placing top tubes on arms. I rediscovered USA Roadbag this year and am happy to report that the company now offers bags that will work on just about any rack that fits into a standard hitch receiver. We still travel with two bikes, and the current rack tends to provide more space between them. That being the case, the USA Roadbag model LT-37 is a perfect fit. It's actually

designed for up to three bicycles but covers two bikes (with large handlebars) quite nicely, without struggling to close the zipper.

The cover (bag) is made of durable 600-denier cloth that is very thick and waterproof. We opted for the LT-FL front-loading version to accommodate the design of our rack; it retails for \$179.95. Essentially, it's a two-piece bag connected by a long zipper that covers the circumference of the material. The design makes it work extraordinarily well, without having to remove the rack to install. This is a welcome feature, since we always hated removing the rack from the hitch receiver to slide off the previous cover when the bikes were not carried.

Once the bikes are loaded on the rack and secure, the front portion of the bag is simply placed over both bikes and allowed to hang freely. The rear portion of the cover is then positioned around the stinger (bar) that goes into the hitch receiver and is zipped to the front section. Snaps are used to snug the material around the stinger. Sewn-in D-rings and straps are then used to tighten the Roadbag around the bikes so the material doesn't flop wildly in the wind. The whole process takes only minutes.



Above from left: The rear section of the cover is zipped around the circumference of the bag. The material is snapped into place around the bike-rack bar that goes into the hitch receiver. Straps (not provided) are used to snug the bag around the bikes.





Above from top: Roadbag is opened and hung on the bikes before the back section is attached. Folding the bag into the original, tidy shape after use will take some doing.

Glow-in-the-dark piping is sewn onto the material to provide visibility at night, but care must be taken to make sure the motorhome or dinghy vehicle taillights are not obstructed by the material. This can usually be accomplished by adjusting the straps.

USA Roadbags are available in eight colors and in two other sizes. The LT-27 (\$169.95) is the smallest bag and is designed for one or two bikes. The largest of the models is the LT-47 (\$189.95), which can accommodate up to four bikes, depending on style and configuration.

While the USA Roadbags are not inexpensive, they are durable enough to last for many years. Since they are waterproof, cleaning is just a matter of hosing off the material while in place around the bikes. Undoubtedly, this is the best bicycle cover we've ever used. **M**

#### USA Roadbags

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