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# iMotorhome

iMotorhome Magazine is published monthly and available by free subscription from [www.imotorhome.com.au](http://www.imotorhome.com.au). Your letters and contributions are always welcome!

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# No Big Deals?

---

Thanks to everyone who dropped me a line after my last editorial. Seems it hit a nerve.

I also had a call last week from a major dealer supporting my comments. They had already decided to significantly alter their attendance plans for this year, but money aside, I found one comment from them particularly interesting. It related to the number of shows and the buying public's expectation of special deals.

In a nutshell, it seems buyers are hanging off making purchase decisions between shows in the hope of snagging super deals at the next one. In a way dealers are partly responsible; the imperative at every show is always to sell as many units as possible. However, that's partly because of high attendance fees and so organisers must carry some blame. Ditto Joe Public for often unrealistic expectations. Everyone loves a deal – me included – but it has to be fair on both sides.

It will be interesting to see if the show schedule is rationalised over the next 12 months. If it does it will be because exhibitors and/or the public simply stop attending. Your thoughts on the number of shows and the expectation of big deals would be interesting. Also, which is your favourite show and why, and have you ever travelled long distances to check out a specific RV and/or seek a deal? Just curious...

## Subscribing to a Theory...

Our technical guru Allan Whiting is a veteran automotive journo, top bloke and longtime mate. He's also owner of the [Outback Travel Australia website](#) for all-things off-road in Australia. The number of hits his website gets – millions a year – is amazing and yet, like all of us who rely on advertising

to keep readers informed and entertained, business is tough. Facebook and Google are sucking up more and more advertising revenue from smaller businesses, but Al's hit on an interesting idea: **Sponsorship**. He's asking readers for \$35, in return for which they'll receive a variety of benefits (and possibly some steak-knives).

He's just launched the plan and I'm keen to see how it goes. The thing is, iMotorhome is at the mercy of the same financial forces impacting Allan's and other like businesses. Getting ad revenue is tough getting tougher, and I'm seriously thankful we have a core of loyal advertisers. Without them, the lights would very quickly go out and I encourage you to support them whenever possible.

That aside, I'm toying with the idea of subscriptions and/or sponsorship. Ages back I asked if readers would pay \$1 for an issue of iMotorhome Magazine and the few that answered said no. One sighted the difficulty of being on a pension while another said if it's online it should be free (I get that from potential advertisers too). So, I'm asking again: Would you pay not \$1, but \$1.99 (it's an Apple pricing thing) for an issue of iMotorhome Magazine on an annual subscription basis? That's half the price of a cup of coffee a month and would make a world of difference. Alternatively, would you throw \$20 a year 'into the pot' to keep receiving issues? Just thinking out loud here and your constructive input would be appreciated...

*Richard*



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# Haera Mai!

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I can't believe it but I am writing my February column already. Where did January go? I have an unsubstantiated theory that somehow as we get older, time goes faster. Does it seem like that to you? Next time I see Dr Who in his, oops sorry her (just catching up with the times) Tardis, I'll ask. All those things I had planned to do in the somewhat relaxed January holiday time are still waiting. So much for that idea...

In my most recent write ups of all things RV, I have been pondering some deep and meaningful matters. Like for instance, why is it that most manufacturers don't seem to be able to make a decent, light weight ladder for over-cab beds and more latterly, drop down beds? It can't be that hard, can it? Yet many I have seen appear to be like torture devices, with narrow steps that are hard on bare feet. One of the best I ever saw was made by KEA NZ and (I think) had folding steps. Sadly that disappeared in the THL merger and was never seen again.

How many RV travellers use their microwave oven? I often hear people say they never use them, yet I know myself I use them all the time – they are really good for reheating take away dinners (apparently!). I ponder that question because lately I've seen quite a few Euro built motorhomes without them. Maybe (obviously? – Ed) the Euros don't use them?

What's in a name? Okay, we all like to have a bit of fun with fush and chups, but some things are quite different. For instance, in Aussie it's a cooktop or cooker but in NZ it's the more British word, hob. I have to keep that in mind when I write reviews. A frudge is still a frudge, however...

Water tanks are not a major issue, except for the weight some people forget to account for. However, I am always fascinated by the capacity that TrailLite and other NZ manufacturers build into their motorhomes. In the Matakana reviewed in this issue, for instance, the fresh tank holds 275-litres and the grey 220-litres. Very few Australian manufacturers

build with that capacity, yet here we are in a huge, hot country where water is scarce in many areas. Additionally, very few caravans (the dominant part of our industry by a long shot) have grey water tanks as standard. Any ideas?

Now for something a little different and not in NZ, but you're invited. Back in 2007 the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) held a rally at Barcaldine in central Queensland. Prior to that rally, an attempt was made on the Guinness World Records for "Longest line of motorhomes," which still stands at 672. Sadly we failed by just 30, but it was a great deal of fun and for me, one of the few photo journalists present, an amazing opportunity as we had unlimited use of a helicopter. This was prior to a time when drones were available.

In 2019 a similar event is being planned by the Australian Lions Club on 25 May at 'Barcy', as Barcaldine is known to us who have been there. Barcy has the major asset of long straight and relatively quiet roads and you do need a considerable amount of real estate for nearly 700 RVs. It is RVs this time around because not only motorhomers are invited, but the caravan and 5th wheeler brigade as well.

I realise the Tasman Sea is a slight issue, but maybe if you'd like to join in the fun and bring your motorhome with you, or rent one out of Brisbane, then why not? I'm thinking out loud here, but maybe iMotorhome could organise to lead a special trip and we'll get involved too? We'll see...

Closer to home, if you are planning to attend the Covi Supershow at Greenlane on 16 – 18 March, then watch out for us. We won't have a stand but will be wandering around taking it all in. See you there?

Haere ra!

*Malcolm*





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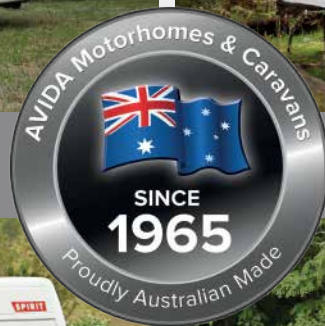
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It's only fitting that since Ed has his say in On My Mind, you should be able to have yours too. If you have anything to say – or ask – just drop a line to ✉ [letters@imotorhome.com.au](mailto:letters@imotorhome.com.au) and we'll share it with our readers. We'll also reward the most interesting, useful or thoughtful letter each issue with \$50 to help you on your way.



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## A Quick Heads Up

I own a Fiat Ducato motorhome (Avan M4 Ovation) and read with interest an article or comment some time ago in iMotorhome about an issue in relation to the difficulty in reading the instrument panel of the latest Fiat Ducato. It is something that both my wife and I have struggled with since we purchased our motorhome two years ago. Last week when returning from Adelaide the issue arose again, and while my wife was driving I decided to look for a solution. I found an app which provides a clear readout of your speed as well as providing speed warnings and other travel statistics. The app is DigiHUD Speedometer (HUD being Heads Up Display) available from the Google Play Store.

I have now downloaded this app to an old Android phone and have it mounted in a holder on the windscreen of the motorhome and it provides a clear indication of the speed we are travelling, overcoming the difficulty in reading the speedometer. I have also downloaded all of our music to the old phone so it also provides the musical entertainment as we travel. I have attached a photo of the setup in the motorhome.

Just another small issue with the Fiat Ducato. When we took delivery of our motorhome two years ago Fiat did not have Australian maps for the inbuilt GPS. We were given a

portable TomTom as a replacement which does show the actual speed that you are travelling. However, early in 2017 Fiat was able to provide Australian maps for the inbuilt GPS. Guess what? The Fiat mapping system does not show the actual speed. It does show the legal speed and can warn you when you exceed it but the legal speed in the mapping system is not always correct.

I guess I could resort to using the TomTom but this kind of defeats the purpose of having an inbuilt mapping and GPS system. By the way my wife and I enjoy reading each issue of iMotorhome.

**Regards,  
Chris.**





Thanks Chris and well done coming up with a simple and workable solution through some lateral thinking (especially the use of an old phone). I use the speed readout on my portable GPS when I'm driving a Ducato and it works a treat. I note that DigiHUD Speedometer app isn't available for Apple devices, but there are quite a free free apps in the App Store. I've used Speed Box in the past and it worked well.

I didn't know Fiat FINALLY has Australian maps for the Ducato's in-built GPS. What a stuff-up. Have you checked all the GPS settings to see if a speed display is possible? Just a thought, and you're right about reverting to TomTom: Why would you? For your efforts in potentially helping many other Ducato drivers keep legal, please accept this issue's \$50 prize. Congratulations and safe travels!

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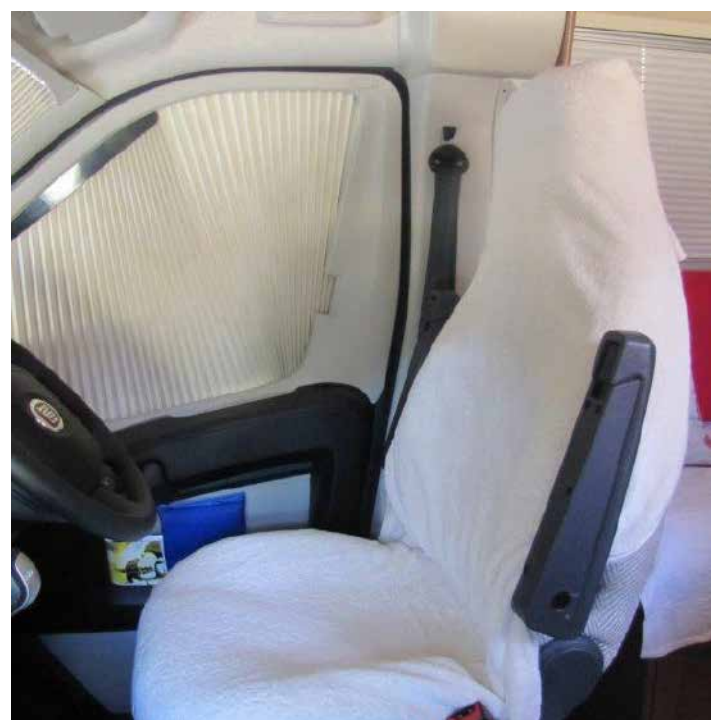
## Ducato Seats Covered

We were unable to find suitable seat covers for our Fiat Ducato-based Autotrail motorhome, which has high back seats and non-removable headrests. We also needed to consider our use of the rear pockets as laptop storage, plus interference with armrests or seat belts. When we researched we could only find expensive covers which did not fit the requirements of the seats. So, for \$27 I found a set of towels in Aldi that lay over the seat nicely and fold around the headrest fixed with one large safety pin. They are comfortable, breathable and don't scrunch up as you move, and can be easily removed for a quick wash anytime. It's a simple solution and they have turned out to be

the best and most comfortable seat covers we have ever used.

### Kind regards, Shirley

*Shirley, that certainly is a simple and clever solution to the seat cover problem. Carry a spare set on a long trip and you could keep them clean and use them for emergency moping up, roadside repair mats or whatever. Thanks for sharing and safe travels.*



# Dropping In

Reading Maggie's letter (January issue) re Right Connection, I have found the most efficient way to save photos from iPhone to iPad is by AirDrop, for which you don't need a wifi connection. Turn on AirDrop on both devices and choose photos to be transferred. Eventually they can be saved to iCloud if that's your choice of storage.

If wanting to download photos from digital camera to iPad you can use a lightning to SD card reader. I used this method successfully with an older iPad with the wider connector, but haven't with my newer one. In saying this, reviews on the Apple website re the efficiency of this connector are rather mixed, so Apple need to do some work on it. Needless to say,

these methods and connectors probably work for Apple products only.

**Hope this is helpful,  
Pam**

*Thanks Pam. AirDrop works via Bluetooth between Apple devices (including laptop and desktop computers), you just need to have the correct permissions on in Settings. It is the quickest and easiest way and makes short work of transferring even large numbers of photos. iCloud back-up storage needs WI-FI of course, but when travelling I carry a 1 TB pocket drive to back up to. Better safe than sorry!*

---

# Taking Sides

In reference to the story a few issues back on why we drive on the right or left-hand side of the road, I was living and working in Nigeria when that country changed from driving on the left to driving on the right in April 1972. It was almost painless. For 24 hours (a Sunday) no private vehicles were allowed on the roads while sign posts and road markings were changed around. Then for a week the speed limit was 50 km everywhere. After that things returned to normal. There were no serious accidents.

**Cheers, Simon**

*Thanks for sharing Simon, what an experience that must have been. I'm not imaging things would go so smoothly in a place like Australia or New Zealand now, but it would certainly make sense from a global perspective. It would also put an end to international visitors coming to grief and taking locals with them...*



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# Voxer Tooooo

While I applaud ToooooAir for their initiative and some unique features, most of the basic functions have been available to Apple and Android users for some time via an app called Voxer.

**Cheers, Ian.**

---

*We'll check it out, Ian, and get Emily to write a review!*

# Fiat Foibles?

You asked for comments from owners of the above vehicle in reply to a letter from Peter in the Jan 2018 issue. We run a C-class motorhome with a 150 hp Ducato up front and Comfortmatic automated manual transmission. The vehicle has now travelled just over 50,000 km in 3 years. Based in Sydney we have been north to Cooktown, west to Ceduna, south to the bottom of Tasmania and many areas in between. It has proved to be a very reliable vehicle to date.

### Likes:

- Very comfortable seats
- Sufficient power and torque
- Fuel efficient - 10.something l/100 km average (depends on the wind direction)
- Very easy to drive and handles well for it's 7.1 m size
- Excellent sider mirror set
- No issues with warranty due to excellent Service Dealer

### Dislikes:

- Due to FWD it likes a regular diet of front tyres: 1st set at 17,000 km and 2nd and 3rd at 22,000 km

- Basic cruise control - no braking ability on down hill road sections
- When cruise control is on the vehicle is slow to down change on uphill road sections. This is one of the small issues the AMT has, but once you are aware of them it is easy to drive around these quirky items.

We chose the Fiat primarily as it was the only vehicle option on the motorhome we had decided on purchasing. Having said that we would be happy to purchase another Ducato-based motorhome.

### Cheers, Gary

*Thanks Gary, very interesting. I agree with your likes and dislikes, but am surprised by the tyre wear (to say the least). What pressures are you running?*



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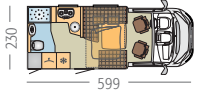
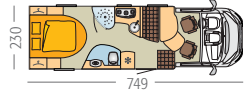
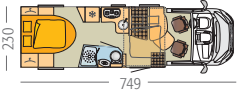
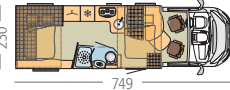

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### Fiat & More

Just reading your latest publication and totally agree with the “Steady As She Goes” article on page four. I’m somebody who retired two years ago, purchased a motorhome and started travelling this great land. In the two years I have travelled over 40,000 km. To start with I went to many caravan parks, plus many caravan and camping shows, from Melbourne to Brisbane. Like the article said, I also like the choice to free camp when it suits and normally where a town is RV friendly we tend to spend money there. A good example to this is Kingston SE in South Australia. Like the article also said, going to Caravan and Camping shows you’re been slugged for entry and food costs. I have notice the standard at the Brisbane show has dropped to the first one we went to four years ago.

I also saw in the latest issue where a person was asking about Fiat Ducato motorhome and about the Fix-It-Again-Tony reports. We purchased a Fiat Jayco Conquest 6.1. Second hand, it was 10 months old, had done very little work and had plenty of warranty and roadside assistance left.

We had an issue where we lost gears from time to time and had to be towed twice. After some heart burn the fault was finally found (a bad electrical connector) and ever since has been fantastic and cannot speak highly of the Fiat. Our fuel consumption runs from a best of 9.2 L/100 km to a worst 11.8 l/100 km (driving into headwind from Mt Isa to Townsville). I find the Jayco a good product, however with some extra TLC it would be a even better product. I enjoy reading your publications keep up the great work.

#### **Cheers, Terry**

*Terry, that’s very interesting and a great update on the Ducato. It’s good to hear the electrical fault was eventually traced and rectified, and that Fiat’s roadside assistance looked after you. Safe travels!*

---

### Strife of Bryan

Hi y’all and more specifically both Richard and Malcolm. Ref your ‘subdued’ message to the editors of the NZ Motorhome Association (Street View, Jan issue). YES you are right on the nail, even as a member I was trying to interpret what it was they were trying to divulge – was it aiming at genuine members of the association or those attempting to join, or was it really trying politely to advise those both renting minimally set up vehicles or purely the visitors renting/buying a very dilapidated van for the duration of their in country visit and exploration? Whichever way,

both the Association and the regional control officers are way behind the eight ball. The nite stay-overs are using the land, trees and parks as a wash/eat/defecation area with no thought of the country’s inhabitants. The mess left is very ‘ooh poo’ yet we as a country consider tourists are a bonus. Yep, some are, but the younger generation mostly aint, but this does also apply to club members to a much lesser degree. Please I certainly request you have sent your response back to the association, because it is repeating to what a lot of association

***continued..***



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## 18 | On your mind / News

*continued..*

members have sent – it needs clarifying and enforcing by both the association and the regional councils in NZ.

**Cheers, Bryan.**

*Malcolm's comments on the NZMCA's email were, as you say Bryan, right on the nail. The initial one was poorly worded and ill-considered, and got many of us "foreigners" hackles up. The clarification that quickly followed showed they must have received a fair amount of backlash. For all the bluff and bluster of being seen to be championing New Zealanders' rights, the impact will be minimal, I believe, because so few of the myriad backpackers could possibly be bothered seeking membership. Perhaps lots do? It would be interesting to know numbers. Regarding the backpacker issue as a whole (or hole?), there's no silver bullet. However, increased education and financial penalties are perhaps the most effective solutions. Make rental companies collect fines from customers' credit cards, and require offenders to produce passports for identification, and prevent them from leaving*

*the country with unpaid fines. Well, that's my plan! I've seen a lot of backpackers doing the right thing in my travels around NZ and know it's always the minority that spoils it for everyone. Over to Malcolm...*

*There's no doubt there's a problem here. On one hand we have irresponsible people leaving rubbish and worse around the countryside and on the other, there's what to do about it. I've been to meetings where everyone there (club members, manufacturers' association representatives and motorhome rental operators) has agreed there's a problem, but what the solution is and who is going to police it is another matter entirely. Clearly the NZMCA decided to take a stand but it seems didn't quite make it clear of the intent and process along the way. Like many travellers we at iMotorhome are keen to keep things as environmentally clean as we can, but I think the little message here is to make sure that everyone understands what is going on if the cause is good. Thanks for your letter, it was good to know that I was not the only one trying to figure out the reasoning.*

---

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***continued..***



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Just for February, Duvalay Australia is offering iMotorhome Magazine readers a 10% discount on selected sizes and colours. They are: 4 cm x 77 cm for \$243 plus p&p (down from \$269)

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## GOLD TOURISM AWARD FOR WILDERNESS

Premium New Zealand motorhome rental company Wilderness Motorhomes has been recognised for its excellent customer service and commitment to the environment and sustainable business practices with a coveted tourism award.

The Gold Sustainable Tourism Business Award was awarded to Wilderness, along with an Endorsement, under new guidelines established by Qualmark, the official quality assurance organisation of Tourism New Zealand.

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### *continued..*


Only 10 percent of tourism businesses have achieved a Gold Award under the new Qualmark rating system. It recognises the best sustainable tourism businesses in New Zealand, with the delivery of exceptional customer experiences an integral part of everything they do. A Gold Award identifies businesses leading the way in making the New Zealand tourism industry a world class sustainable visitor destination.

Wilderness was assessed on aspects of its environmental performance, customer service and feedback, and health and safety.

In congratulating Wilderness, Peter Clinton-Baker, Qualmark Tourism Business Advisor, said the rental company had continually scored highly in previous evaluations. "This time you have raised the bar again and demonstrated clearly that Wilderness Motorhomes is continually looking at ways to improve the customer experience across all aspects of the business."

Wilderness Motorhomes Marketing Director, Mary Hamilton, says the company is thrilled to have its work recognised this way. "It illustrates our commitment to the environment and our focus on continually surprising and delighting our guests with outstanding customer service."



Environmental initiatives in place at Wilderness Motorhomes and sister company SmartRV (retailer of premium European motorhomes) include a recycling programme for tyres and engine oil, a commitment to becoming paperless, community programmes and team tree planting days, and an LED light replacement programme for its Auckland and Christchurch bases. Find out more at the Wilderness Motorhomes website [HERE](#). 



## CAVEAT EMPTOR

**A** rogue businessman who converted vehicles into RVs but failed to deliver finished products has been sentenced to home detention. Brett Maxwell Smith, 53, director of Stargazer Motorhome Conversions, received the 15-month punishment after taking more than \$165,000 to build motorhomes that were never delivered.

Parramatta Local Court found Mr Smith had breached a good behaviour bond he was on for an unrelated larceny offence and, to



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make matters worse, was declared bankrupt in July 2015.

“Despite his history of bankruptcy and being on a good behaviour bond, Smith continued to lure unsuspecting consumers,” NSW Minister for Better Regulation Matt Kean said.


Mr Smith, who operated out of Heatherbrae and Medowie in NSW, admitted obtaining a benefit by deception, failing to supply services and accepting money while he was bankrupt.

Mr Kean said the businessman had quoted consumers tens of thousands of dollars to convert their vehicles to recreational style, full-kitted motorhomes.

“This shonk blatantly ripped off consumers by taking their hard-earned money and failing to provide a finished product,” he said. “One poor customer had paid more than \$90,000 for the motorhome conversion of a bus. But after frustrating delays and dodgy unfinished

work the owner had to have it towed to another company and fork out another \$80,000 to get the job done. Despite his history of bankruptcy and being on a good behaviour bond, Smith continued to lure in unsuspecting consumers,” Mr Kean said.

He warned consumers to be wary if asked for large upfront deposits and to be sure to view progress before making any additional progress payments.

Mr Smith has the right to lodge an appeal. His company boasted in one business directory listing: “Our incomparable services with the dedication and compassion towards marinating best customer satisfaction are the talking point of our success. Within a short span of time, we have developed a huge customer base and most of them are repeat customers and referrals. Our experience and creativity has positioned us one of the top service provider in Australia.” 

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## RSPCA ANIMAL SHELTER CAMPSITES

Grey nomads are being invited to experience a different kind of low-cost camping that involves spending a few days enjoying a unique animal encounter. Six bays have been created for recreational vehicles at the RSPCA’s Wacol centre in Brisbane. Volunteers can stay for up to a fortnight, helping out at the centre. RSPCA Brisbane spokesperson Michael Beatty said the new initiative was designed to give grey nomads an insight to life-changing work undertaken every day by the charity.

“Campers simply volunteer in one of many areas at the shelter for two to four hours a day and we ask for a donation to cover their facilities expenses during their stay.” he said.

Volunteers have access to water, power, waste disposal, BBQ and an undercover picnic area. For more information, email the RSPCA [HERE](#).



# US RV SALES RECORD

**R**V wholesale shipments finished 2017 with 504,599 units up 17.2% compared to the 430,691 units shipped in 2016. The Recreational Vehicle Industry Association's (RVIA's) December survey of manufacturers found RV wholesale shipments finished at 36,227, an increase of 9.9% from the 32,970 units shipped the previous December. December 2017 shipment total was the best December on comparable record.

Towable RVs, led by conventional travel trailers (caravans), totalled 31,541 units for the month, an increase of 9.5 % compared to the December 2016's total of 28,795. Totals for towable RVs in 2017 were up 17.6 % to 441,961 units.

December motorhome shipments were up 12.2 % to 4686 units over the previous year. Motorhome shipments for 2017 finished at 62,638 units on 14.4 % growth over the 54,741 units shipped in 2016. 



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# KEA ODYSSEY

The RV Super Centre in Auckland has released for pre-sale the new KEA Odyssey; a budget 2-berth van conversion built on the SWB Renault Master. Delivery is scheduled for April and unusually, the vehicles will be sold with an estimated 15,000 to 20,000km on the engine.

According to the company, “The all new KEA Odyssey is all you need for a great summer adventure. Perfect for a couple, this late model vehicle is very easy to drive – just like a car, but with all the bells and whistles a campervan typically comes with. Finding a parking spot becomes a breeze thanks to an automatic transmission and a very manoeuvrable body. Small on the outside, it is very practical on the inside. You’ll have access to a full size pull down double bed, shower and a full kitchen with a gas cooker. Guaranteed comfort on the road! The KEA Odyssey will also please adventurers. The double back doors offer very easy access to the wide living area and make it easy to load sports equipment such as bikes or surfboards”.

The Master has a 2.3-litre turbo diesel and drives through a 6-speed automated manual transmission. It comes with remote central locking, electric windows, cab aircon, dual front airbags and anti-lock brakes, plus stability and traction controls. There’s a 75 AH house battery with 110 W solar, 75-litres each of fresh and grey water, while its party trick is the hydraulically operated drop-down longitudinal bed.

Priced at what seems a very reasonable NZ\$84,990, to find out more visit the RV Super Centre website [HERE](#). 



# GOLD COAST PRICE GOUGE?



**R**V According to a report on the [caravanningnews.com](http://caravanningnews.com) website, caravan parks on the Gold Coast have been accused of ripping off visitors by jacking up their prices for the upcoming Commonwealth Games. One park is asking an incredible \$10,252 for a three-bedroom cabin during the 11-day sporting event, twice the normal rate.

“They are certainly not playing the game... just making themselves more wealthy by seizing the chance to swindle us out of our hard-earned cash,” disgruntled grey nomad Maurice Cowdell complained. “There’s no way the ordinary caravaner can afford those grossly inflated prices.”

Tourism officials predict the April 4-15 games will attract more than 100,000 visitors to the Gold Coast, injecting more than \$2 billion

into the local economy. Gold Coast Tourism chairman Paul Donovan has already warned that unscrupulous operators would give the tourist mecca’s accommodation industry a bad name.

A two-bedroom deluxe villa at Tallebudgera Tourist Park will cost \$5214 for the 11-day sporting event, compared to \$2846 a month later, while a premium powered site will cost \$913 for the duration, but only \$42 a night after the Games finish.

Couples staying 11-nights in an ‘eco tent’ at Paradise Country Farmstay will have to pay \$3000, whereas a three-bedroom cabin at the BIG4 Gold Coast Holiday Park will cost \$10,252 (the price drops to \$4972 a month later). Meanwhile, non-powered sites for a 24 ft RV at the Park comes in around \$2000.

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Queensland's peak caravanning body, Caravanning Queensland, does not consider the prices "As necessarily excessive" for a peak period when location, facilities and occupancy, etc, are considered.

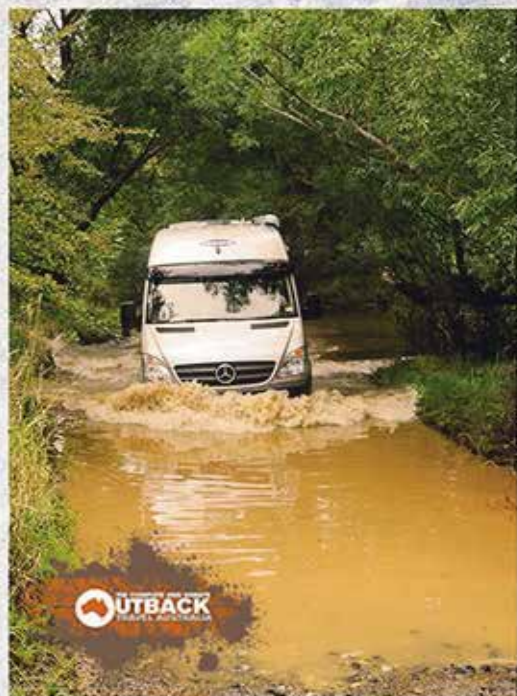
"The better positioned, better equipped parks will always attract higher rates at peak times. This is no different to any other accommodation type," said chief executive Ron Chapman.

"If any accommodation establishment is not competitive then they simply won't get business. I know of several parks which actually contacted everyone who stayed with them at the corresponding time last year offering them a discount as a loyal customer. Regrettably it is not realistic to expect off-peak rates at a time of high demand. This never was the case nor is it likely ever to happen."

Gold Coast Tourist Parks spokesperson, Adam Spencer, said bookings were strong across all tourist parks for the period.

"We offer a range of pricing depending on the style of accommodation and the pricing is the same as our peak holiday charges we normally have at Christmas and Easter," he said.

"We still have camp sites available over the Commonwealth Games period from \$52 a night and two-bedroom self-contained villas from \$201 a night. This is some of the most affordable accommodation on the Gold Coast so we expect it will get snapped up pretty quickly." 



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# COCKTAIL CARAVAN

A grand old lady from yesteryear has a new lease of life – as a mobile cocktail bar! The 1960s caravan was originally intended as a coffee bar, but Ballarat owner and qualified bartender Aprille Kaye has transformed it into the La Poire Bar, where around 120 different cocktails including old time classics and some new seasonal flavours can be produced in a shake.

Aprille said she had to struggle through mountains of paperwork, permits and licensing requirements before the fully kitted-out single-axle caravan could take up its new role attending events such as weddings and other gatherings. She even flew to Spain to

undertake an internationally recognised cocktail course and was named as Ballarat's best bartender while working at JD's Sports Bar. To find out more visit the La Poir Bar's Facebook page [HERE](#). 



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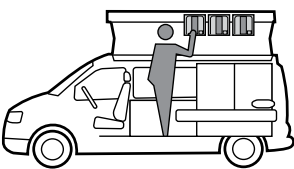




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# *Touchdown!*



**Roller Team lands Down Under...**

by Malcolm Street





Although 3 years old this year, this ex-rental Roller Team Zefiro 259 has just 75,000 km on the clock (Project Polly had 245,000 km after 5 years). And although built on the lowest powered Fiat Ducato cab chassis (96 kW/320 NM), it's also a featherweight, with a tare of 2800 kg – subject to conformation – and a GVM of just 3500 kg. So performance is still good, aided by streamlining from the raked nose.

It might sound like I'm starting an NZ motorhome review but this little Trivial Pursuit question is about Australia. Can you tell me the name of an Italian motorhome, complete with a habitation door on the kerb side that is currently available for sale in Australia (and more than one at that)? Roller Team is the answer, and a most un-Italian name if I have ever heard one.

To be precise it's the Roller Team Zefiro 259 and NZ conglomerate Tourism Holdings Limited – aka THL (think Britz/Maui/KEA) – or at least their company owned dealerships like the RV Super Centre in Melbourne, have them for sale. These are not new motorhomes but ex-rentals, albeit with a curiously low mileage on them, around 75,000km.

Their provenance is interesting. Across the Tasman for the last couple of years, THL has had a deal going with a company called Just Go in the UK. Just Go is a motorhome rental mob with Roller Team motorhomes on its fleet. When they're a year old they're shipped to NZ and sold there as second hand motorhomes. I've seen a few – both C and A-class models – and they seemed to be in reasonable condition. What's interesting is that some have kerb-side habitation doors and some are on the 'other' side.

THL in Australia has obviously been looking at this arrangement and maybe testing the waters because I have to say I was surprised when I saw them available on the RV Super Centre website. A call to the THL team revealed there

## 34 | Tested

was one available out of its Sydney depot and we were away, 'Bound for Botany Bay' as that old song goes...

### Motive Power

Well there are no surprises here. You would expect to find an Italian built cab-chassis, aka a Fiat Ducato (the company and model with the lion's share of the European motorhome market), underneath an Italian Roller Team. Indeed, in this case it's a Multijet 130, which means the lowest powered turbo-diesel in Fiat's range, at just 96 kW. Although quite a few Euro-built motorhomes come with a manual gearbox, this one has the six-speed Comfortmatic automated manual transmission, or AMT. The chassis has just 3500 kg GVM rating, so it is quite light weight.

### Body Beautiful

Like many of its Euro contemporaries, Roller Team's motorhomes are built with a composite wall and roof structure; the walls having an external covering of fibreglass with laminated plastic on the inside and Styrofoam and extruded plastic in between. The roof is much the same, except that the interior sheeting is fibreglass (in a similar style to the floor, but the latter is 54 mm thick for an extra strength where it counts). One oddity is the trunking that runs up beside the habitation door. It looks like an awning support but there isn't one. Hmmmm.

Although the motorhome I had a drive of was all white with no decals and just a lower waistline of grey, it did have a fairly stylish look. To my eyes the Polyvision acrylic windows



Decor is Euro light and modern, if nothing exceptional, and leans more towards the functional. Note the drop-down secondary bed, with cupboards below.



looked on the small side, but I suspect that is more about keeping heat in during colder European months rather than looking for cooling breezes.

In keeping with quite a few rental models the external bin space is relatively small, with just one at the rear driver's side that gives access to the under bed area. It passes the camp chairs, hoses, power leads and tool box test, however, which is important. Plastic roller bins for wet gear would be an asset though. Although there is a bin with a single 9.0 kg gas cylinder, it has room enough for two.

## Stepping Inside

Surprising for its size of just 6.9 metres (22' 6"), this B-class motorhome has approved seating for 6 and sleeps 5, making it great for a young family or older folks and grandkids. That's been achieved by having a French bed in the driver's-side side corner, a dinette behind the drivers' seat and an electric

drop-down double bed above the central area. All beds are different sizes, the rear being 1.96 m x 1.3 m - 0.92 m (6' 5" x 4' 3" - 3'), the drop down 1.9 m x 1.37 m - 1.27 m (6' 3" x 4' 6" - 4' 2") and the dinette, the smallest of the three, 1.8 m x 0.97 m (5' 11" x 3' 2"). This means that for a couple there's a choice of beds that do not have to be made up each night. Either that or the partners can have one each. Naturally being multi bed it's also good for a family.

When the drop-down bed is fully lowered there is just enough room to get out of the door whilst crouching down. To use the dinette bed as well the upper bed would have to be raised a bit, but there is a good sized ladder for access.

Internally, the colour scheme is mostly darker hues for the faux timber but much lighter shades for everything else, including the cupboard and locker doors. Just about all the windows are the usual top-hinged style, except



This is one of the first of the current X295-series Fiat Ducatos, so although the dash has been updated it retains the large, easy-to-read instrument cluster of the previous model. That's since been ditched in favour of more stylish but difficult to read dials, which is a retrograde step. Note reversing camera display in the rear view mirror.

## 36 | Tested

for the slider by the dinette; the latter being unusual as this type is usually found behind an opening door.

### Cooking-up Anything Really

I must admit this is not the micro kitchen that I have come to expect in a Euro motorhome.

Some space has been saved by having a combo cooktop and sink unit, while what bench space there is has been created by having an under-bench 100-litre fridge. Given the oven-with-griller is also fitted into the under-bench area, storage is limited to three different sized drawers and a couple of overhead

lockers. The latter are neatly partitioned to prevent things moving around too much and there is also a small bar across the front of the lockers to prevent stuff falling out when the door is opened: Simple but effective!

### Internal Storage

In a six berth motorhome getting enough usable storage is a bit of a trick, but there are overhead lockers in all the obvious places, including under the drop-down bed. Additionally, a waist high cabinet behind the front passenger seat offers both a large drawer with plate and bowl racks, two hinge-out shoe



The dinette is generous and solid, although the rear facing pew precludes the driver's seat from swivelling. Note the sliding window, which is unusual given there is no entry door beside it to hit the usual swing-out style. It's possibly a throwback to the vehicle's left-hand-drive origins.





Even with the roof bed lowered you can scoot through underneath. Just...

storage compartments and a bit of bench top area.

Between the café style dinette and the rear bed, a full-height cupboard offers both hanging space and a cupboard below. Also stored there are the timber bits required to make up the dinette bed. The forward seat base can be lifted for extra storage, but the rear seat has a water tank underneath (the Euro habit is to mount the water tanks where they won't freeze in winter). In the rear there is of course the fairly spacious under-bed area, but that also doubles as the external storage as well. Generally speaking on the storage front, the 259 scores quite well.

## Sitting Back

Although this is a six berth motorhome, the café style dinette is really for four people. With the reward-facing dinette seat back where it is, swivelling cab seats really aren't going to help much. That said, the seating is quite comfortable and the table a good size. Watching the TV is a bit of a trick, given it's located on a shelf above the

passenger seat and that it has quite a small screen. I'm thinking that a keen TV viewer will be purchasing a larger free-standing TV that sits on the cabinet opposite the dinette when parked-up. It can't be a wall mount because of the drop down bed, but will improve evening entertainment considerably.

## Ensuite

Squeezed in between the bed and the kerb-side corner, the bathroom isn't particularly spacious but everything is there – a semi circular shower cubicle, cassette toilet and a small vanity sink and mirror. A non-fan hatch above the shower and a small window provide the ventilation.

## Electrics

Clearly this 259 has had it's electrics modified for Australian use, although I sometimes think it would be nice if the power points for instance, were colour coordinated instead of being stark white. Still, they were all located in the most user friendly places. There were even 12 V USB charging points; one under the table and one on the



**Above:** The small TV looks like an afterthought, while the useful cabinet opposite the dinette prevents the passenger seat swivelling. Such are the compromises in a small van built for many people. **Left:** The roof bed is electrically operated and has safety nets to stop careless occupants tumbling earthward in the night. Its underside is festooned with LED downlights to brighten the interior after dark.

wardrobe wall at the base of the bed – a slightly odd location but better than nothing. Not totally electrical, but the Truma Combi 4E heater provides both hot water and hot air when needed.

Reading lights are fitted to the main bed and both the drop down bed and the dinette get an LED strip light mounted on the wall. Ceiling lights are fitted in all the required places, but strangely there is no external wall light fitting. However, I think retrofitting one might not be too difficult. Either that or get a decent LED strip with rechargeable battery that hangs off the door or window.

## Overall Condition

**G**iven this is a used (by any number of people) motorhome I had a good look around to see how used and abused



it was. Generally speaking the external body work was in a fair and reasonable condition. A curiosity inside was that the most obvious signs of use were to be found in cupboards and drawers, rather than on the cabinetry. Either THL has done a good clean-up job or the overall finish is quite resilient. Other obvious wear and tear was on the front seats, but I discovered the faux leather seats were actually seat covers and so the original seats were in quite good condition underneath. When driving, there was a rattle somewhere, either a window or from the drop down bed, which I'd need to track down if I was the owner...

I briefly ponder the issue of spare parts given Roller Team motorhomes are not common in Australia, but both the Fiat Ducato and any number of the appliances and components are quite common to any number of RV manufacturers. That only leaves body work and any specialty fittings, which could probably be sourced from Europe quite readily if required.

## What I think

**A**lthough there were clear signs that this motorhome has been on the rental circuit, I was surprised at its generally good overall condition. Maybe the relatively low kilometre reading might have something to do with it, but it was notable.

Being a six berth means it lacks the island bed some couples desire, but unlike some multi-bed motorhomes I've seen, this one can easily be used by a couple, a family or with the grandchildren on occasional trips.

Judging the manufacturer Roller Team; I obviously have not spent much time driving its motorhomes in Australia but have driven several in New Zealand. My overall impression is Roller Team is a competent builder and very much in the European style. Check it out!



The rear corner bathroom is nicely finished if a bit basic, but includes a separate shower cubicle. The window is a nice touch, although it lacks a blind (loo with a view?), while the sharp handbasin corner is likely to cause some grief.



## SPECS

### GENERAL

Make	Roller Team
Model	Zefiro 259
Type	B-class
Berths	5
Approved Seating	6
Licence	Car

### VEHICLE

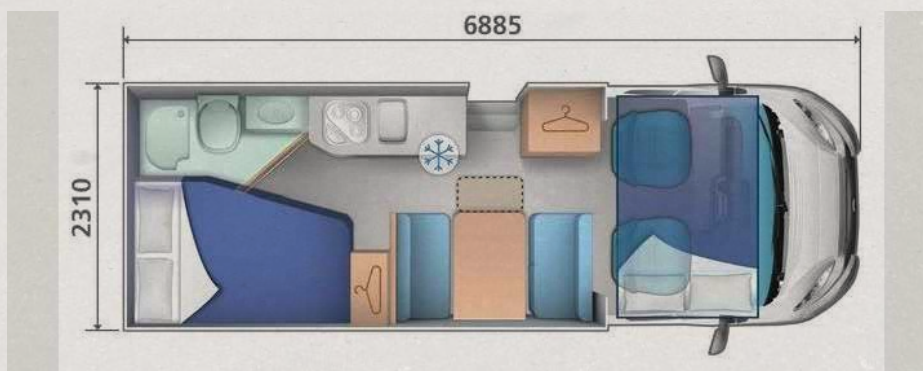
Make/Model	Fiat Ducato Multijet 130
Engine	2.3 L 4-cylinder turbo-diesel
Power	96 kW @ 3600 rpm
Torque	320 Nm@1800 rpm
Gearbox	6 speed automated manual (AMT)
Safety	ABS, ESP, Dual front air bags
Fuel	90 L

### WEIGHTS

Tare Weight	2800 kg (To Be Confirmed)
Gross Vehicle Mass	3500 kg
Max Payload	700 kg (TBC)
Braked Towing Capacity	1500 kg (TBC)

### DIMENSIONS

Overall Length	6.90 m (22' 8")
Overall Width	2.31 m (7' 7")
Overall Height	3.30 m (10' 10")
Internal Height	2.08 m (6' 10")
Main bed	1.96 m x 1.3 m - 0.92 m (6' 5" x 4' 3" - 3')
Elevating bed	1.90 m x 1.37 m - 1.27 m (6' 3" x 4' 6" - 4' 2")
Dinette Bed	1.80 m x 0.97 m (5' 11" x 3' 2")





# SPECS

EQUIPMENT	
Slide-Out	No
Awning	No
Entry Steps	Moulded
Cooker	Smev 3 burner S/S combo with sink
Rangehood	No
Sink	Stainless steel combo
Fridge	100 L Dometic RM 8501 3-way LP-G/12V/240V
Microwave	No but Smev grill/oven
Lighting	12 V LED
12 V Sockets/USB Outlets	TBC
Air Conditioner	Air Command Ibis 3
Space Heater	Truma Combi 4E
Hot Water System	Truma Combi 4E
Toilet	Thetford Cassette
Shower	Separate cubicle
CAPACITIES	
Batteries	100 AH
Solar	100 W
LPG	1 x 9.0 kg but space for two
Fresh Water	100 L
Grey Water	105 L
Hot Water	10 L
Toilet	19 L
PRICE - ON ROAD NSW	
From	\$104,990
Warranty	Check with dealer

## PROS...

- Compact at less than 7 m (23')
- Easy to drive
- Choice of beds for a couple
- Fully appointed, including air conditioning and heating
- Generous internal storage
- Drop down bed operates very smoothly

## CONS...

- Lowest powered Fiat engine
- Small screen TV
- No external light
- No awning
- External bin space
- No microwave oven

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Google Maps



# BACK TO THE FUTURE?

**What's old is new in  
Traillite's pleasing  
Matakana...**

By Malcolm Street







TrailLite's Matakana harks back to earlier days on NZ floorplan design. It ups the ante, of course, with a Mercedes Sprinter underneath and the latest in styling, construction and fit-out. At its heart, however, is an echo of the 'good old days' and that's no bad thing...

On a visit to Christchurch prior to this one, I had been treated to varying quantities of grey cloud and rain. That was after being stuck in Tekapo for some hours because of heavy overnight snow. Not the greatest time to visit the Governors Bay area above Lyttelton Harbour, then.

However, when taking the TrailLite Matakana 545 for a run on this occasion, the sun was shining and the sky was blue, so it was time to depart from TrailLite's depot and head up Dyers Pass Road to catch the views. Oh and do a little photography along the way...

The Matakana 545 is a nice sized motorhome. At 7.0 m (23') long it's a good size, I reckon: Long enough to give a comfortable interior but short enough for easy driving. Interestingly, it sleeps four but only transports two, which

means the secondary (dinette) bed is really just in case one of you needs little extra room.

## On the Road

Speaking of driving, the Matakana comes with Mercedes Benz Sprinter underpinnings. In this case it's a 416 CDI, which means a 2.2-litre 120 kW/360 Nm turbo diesel and a 4600 kg gross vehicle mass (GVM) chassis. Aussie readers might like to note that is not mistake – the Kiwis get an extra 100 kg and can still drive on a car licence (up to 6000 kg in fact). What that weight does, however, is put the Matakana into the more expensive Certificate of Fitness category for registration, rather than the sub-3500 kg Warrant of Fitness category. Still, it's a small price to pay for the vehicle's strengths, features and abilities



Big windows and a modern door combine Euro and NZ design elements into a modern and desirable package.

There are two other options with the Matakana, a Sprinter 516 CDi (same engine but a 5000 kg GVM) and a 519 CD (5000 kg GVM and Benz's V6 3.0-litre 140 kW engine. Both the 416 and 419 get a 5-speed auto but the more powerful engine get the slicker 7-speed.

That said, my Matakana handled the Dyers Pass Road with aplomb. Sure it's not the Crown Range Road and the motorhome was lightly loaded, but it still travelled well and without much downshifting.

### Body Building

Like the rest of the TrailLite stable the Matakana is built using foam-core sandwich panel construction. There's ply wall lining on the inside and Alufiber on the outside; the latter being a layer of fibreglass with a thin layer of powder coated aluminium on the outside.





TrailLite reckon this is better than fibreglass because although it is less dent resistant, the finish lasts longer. The windows are the very familiar Seitz double glazed acrylics and the door is a Euro-style Dometic item, with upper window, lower (inside) garbage bin and a separate concertina style insect screen. The large Skyview hatch above the cab not only looks good but also gives plenty of light in the front living area.

Although there's an impressive array of storage bin doors along the offside, most of them are occupied by the likes of gas cylinders, Thetford toilet cassette and the battery and associated electrics. There is but one for general gear, but that along with the rear bin, which gives access to the under-seat area, should be adequate for all the basics – power leads, hoses fresh and drain, camp chairs and toolbox. Anyone contemplating something like golf clubs might need a different motorhome, but apart from that no real difficulties. For the outdoor lifestyle, a Thule Omnistor awning covers everything very nicely.



External storage is a bit light on, with all lockers but the boot already full of essential equipment. Drop-down doors provide easy access, but could be damaged if one accidentally came open or was left that way.



### Historical Background

Here's a quick question for those who have been around the motorhome scene in NZ for quite a few years. Up until about the last decade or so, what was the most favoured motorhome layout and why? The answer my friend, is not blowing in the wind, but is actually a method of escaping the wind (and bad weather). It's what I call the New Zealand Back: A club lounge in the rear, surrounded by windows. You could simply back the motorhome up to whatever view was going and enjoy it from the comfort of the lounge, regardless of the weather. Sleeping arrangements were either in the Luton peak above the cab or making up the club lounge into a bed. Time, and perhaps ageing bodies, meant that fixed double and single beds have become more popular and the NZ Back declined in popularity, yet is still around. Clearly the DNA is still there because



With wrap-around rear windows for great viewing and fresh air, plus a U-shaped lounge with plenty of seating, the New Zealand Back still has great appeal. Note the boot door (top) which accesses storage beneath the rear lounge seat.





the modern interpretation is in layout designs like TrailLite's Matakana.

It's quite simple: You build in the club lounge with windows all round and then install an electric drop down bed above. That way it's quite possible to have your cake and eat it too. The drop down bed can be left made up and it's a matter of just pushing a button to lower or raise it. Of course the slight downside, apart from the lack of an island bed, is that with the bed lowered, the seating is a bit tricky if partner's bed times are different. No worries however, just use the swivelled cab seats, fit a small removable table and the late night (or early morning) seating is sorted! Fit a kitchen bench along the kerb-side by the entry door and a bathroom on the opposite side (along with a fridge and a large wardrobe) and you're done and dusted.

Okay, so maybe the design process was a little more precise than that, but it's a design that works well.



Daytime living or nighttime sleeping at the flick of a switch makes the rear drop-down bed the perfect NZ Back arrangement.



The north-south main bed is a good size and occupants could never complain about a lack of fresh air. Note the steps (below) that fold out of a kitchen cupboard – very clever – and are a quantum leap over the usual aluminium ladder.

### In the Rear Above

Taking a closer look, the drop down bed measures 1.95 m x 1.47 m (6' 5" x 4' 10") and it can be lowered to below window level, as long as the side cushions are removed. However, there's less fiddling around if the bed sits a bit higher, which does make it slightly awkward for getting into until you make the discovery like I did of the fold-out wooden steps that sit in the adjoining nearside cupboard. Yes they take up a bit of space, but for the less mobile amongst us they're much easier to use than the usual, narrow aluminium ladder.

Bed lighting isn't prolific, with just two roof mounted lights and nothing else. It's something of an oddity in the RV industry, overall. Drop down beds and reading lights seem to be a technology combination that's a bit hard or something. The bedside shelves fitted to the side of the fridge cabinet are a nice touch. Always a bit of a design challenge with drop down beds, this is a neat solution.







## In the Rear Below

Still on light fittings, there are certainly plenty of those under the bed, both in the middle and under the overhead lockers on either side. There is of course plenty of natural light and ventilation, and enough room for two to stretch out on the seats. Between the seats, the Zwaardvis table offers both a sturdy mounting and easy manoeuvrability. Roman blinds are fitted, which do add a touch of class to the Seitz windows. The under-seat storage is well utilised with three good sized drawers, which is so much easier than fiddling with under-cushion ply hatches.

## Catering

In times gone by, like maybe when the NZ Back was popular, kitchen bench storage usually consisted of cupboards which gave space but often weren't very usable. The Matakana's kitchen reflects

There's good storage throughout plus under-lounge access to the Truma Combi hot water and space heater. Kitchen bench space is quite good, while the slide-out pantry is a welcome inclusion.



## 50 | Tested

the much better idea of using drawers and a slide-out pantry. Except for the overhead lockers there are not cupboards at all. There are of course the expected items like stainless steel sink and four-burner hob with grill.

On the opposite of the motorhome, between the lounge and bathroom, is the 190-litre 3-way fridge and microwave oven. Oh, and should I mention the wine bottle holder neatly tucked in beside the fridge and very handy to the dinette...

### Staying Clean

Instead of a totally square bathroom, TrailLite has angled doorway, making it less of an impediment on the aisle but making the bathroom look smaller than it actually is. Inside here's enough space for a separate shower cubicle, cassette toilet and a small vanity cabinet with upper and lower cupboards, plus a good sized wall mirrors. Like the rest of the motorhome, the bathroom is nicely appointed.

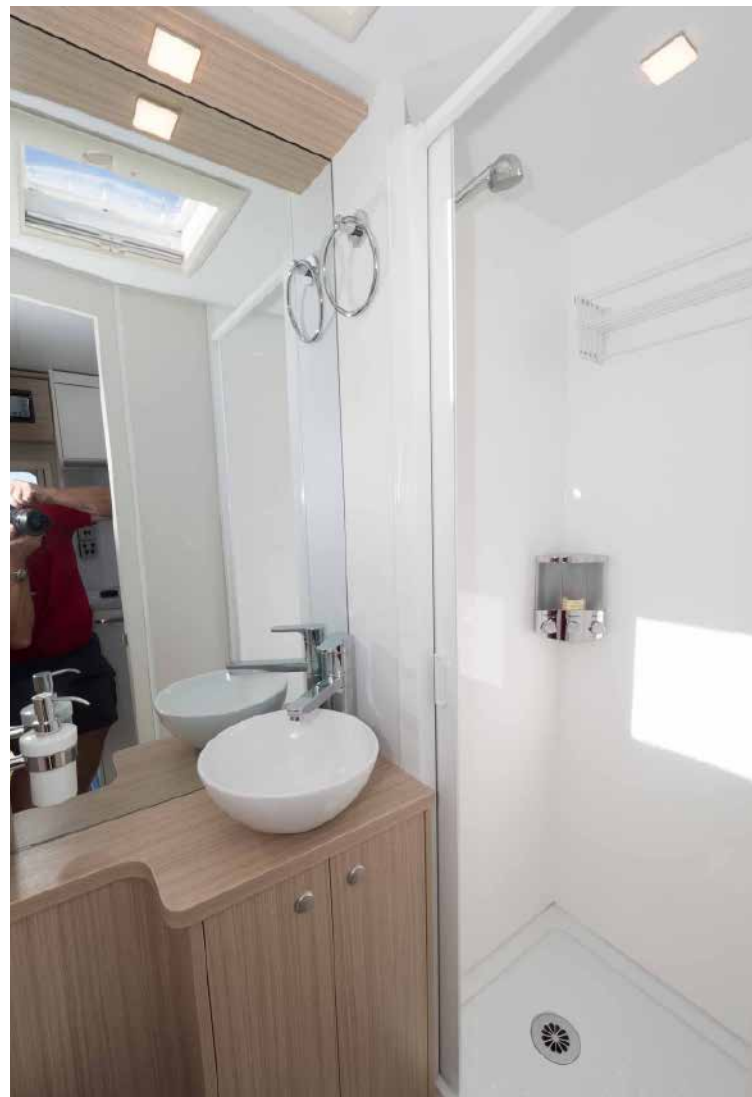
### Around the Cab

Personal preferences kick in here, I'm thinking. There are cupboards fitted to either side of the motorhome, like behind the passenger seat where a shallow multi-shelved unit is handy for smaller items. Opposite, the much deeper wardrobe (with a couple of drawers) will handle essential clothing requirements. However, the problem here is that the latter blocks the swivelled driver's seat somewhat. So if a free flowing cab area is the preference then that's not really going to happen, but if storage is the priority then it's a winner.

### Off-Grid Travel

Like the rest of the TrailLite range, the Matakana is fully equipped for free-range camping. Fresh and grey water capacities are an impressive 275 and 220 litres each, respectively, whilst an equally impressive 260 AH of battery capacity and 150 W of

Despite an angled entry door the bathroom has acceptable room and includes a separate shower, which is a nice touch. Fixtures and fittings are of the usual high TrailLite standard, as you'd expect.







Due to the layout the cab seats might look a bit 'lost', but actually make a handy and quite private, separate seating/reading and (light) dining area.

solar takes care of the electrics. However, for those whose electrical use is heavy duty, there are various upgrades available up to 520 AH battery capacity! Cool evenings are no problem, thanks to an Eberspacher diesel-fired heater.

### What I Think

I like the Matakana's layout; not because it's particularly special, but because it uses my old favourite New Zealand Back with, I should add, modern technological adaption. Certainly the rear lounge is a good size and there's room to move inside. Best of all, it's done in the bright and breezy TrailLite style and with all the sophistication and quality the company is famous for. Seems the future's looking bright indeed...



## SPECS

### GENERAL

Make	TrailLite
Model	Matakana 545
Type	C-Class
Berths	4
Approved Seating	2
Licence	Car

### VEHICLE

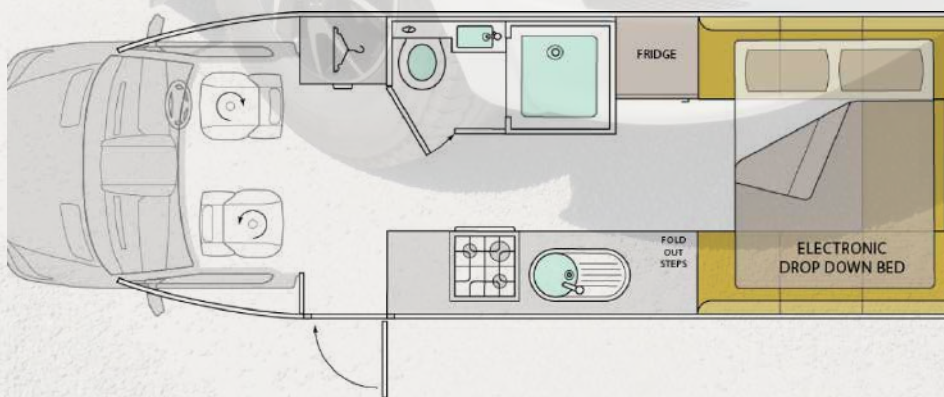
Make/Model	Mercedes Benz Sprinter 416
Engine	2.2 L 4-cylinder turbo-diesel
Power	120 kW @ 3800 rpm
Torque	360 Nm @ 1400-2400 rpm
Gearbox	5 speed auto
Safety	ABS, ESP, Air bags
Fuel	75 L

### WEIGHTS

Tare Weight	3980 kg
Gross Vehicle Mass	4600 kg
Max Payload	620 kg
Braked Towing Capacity	2000 kg

### DIMENSIONS

Overall Length	7.00 m (23')
Overall Width	2.40 m (7' 10")
Overall Height	2.32 m (7' 7")
Internal Height	2.00 m (6' 7")
Main Bed	1.95 m x 1.47 m (6' 5" x 4' 10")
Dinette Bed	1.95 m x 1.52 m (6' 5" x 5')





# SPECS

EQUIPMENT	
Slide-Out	No
Awning	Thule Omnistor
Entry Steps	Electric
Hob	Thetford 3 burner
Rangehood	Yes
Sink	Stainless steel
Fridge	Dometic RMDX25
Microwave	Panasonic
Lighting	12 V LED
Air Conditioner	Opt
Space Heater	Eberspacher diesel
Hot Water System	Suburban gas/elec
Toilet	Thetford cassette
Shower	Separate cubicle
CAPACITIES	
Batteries	260 AH AGM deep cycle
Solar	150 W
LPG	2 x 9.0 kg
Fresh Water	275 L
Grey Water	220 L
Hot Water	22 L
Toilet	19 litre
PRICE ON-ROAD NEW ZEALAND	
From	NZ \$206,265.00
As Tested	NZ\$ 209,540.00
Warranty - Vehicle	3 years/200,000 km
Warranty - Body	TrailLite Care 5 year structural warranty

# PROS...

- Quality
- SMB Sprinter cab-chassis
- Generous off-grid abilities
- NZ Back with drop down bed
- Bed steps (even though they take space)
- Kitchen layout
- Internal storage
- Well sorted electricals
- Bedside shelves & wine rack

# CONS...

- Limited external storage
- Bulky cupboards up front
- 12 V fuses a bit difficult to access
- Drop-down bed lighting
- The idiot who burnt a car out in a prime photographic spot at Governor's Bay

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# G'TRAY MATE!



## Trayon's Traymate slide-on is versatile and budget priced...

by Allan Whiting of [outbacktravellaustralia.com.au](http://outbacktravellaustralia.com.au)

Slide-on manufacturer Trayon has produced a budget-priced, lightweight, slide-on camper – the Traymate – that can double as a tradie's body during the week.

When company owners, the De Walt family, researched the lower end of the slide-on market they discovered that the only available dual-purpose, work/play bodywork was the aluminium tradesman canopy. The most limiting factor in using trade canopies as campers is that they are usually built with 20-45° tapered sides. This is done primarily for aesthetics, to match the slope of the ute cabin sides, but is also a safer design for carrying loads on the canopy roof rack, keeping the load well

inside the suspension points on the chassis. However, tapered canopy sides limit interior space – particularly when it comes to installing a fridge on a slide. Tapered sides also mean there's less rooftop space, limiting the floor area of a rooftop tent. Enter the Traymate Camper: an aluminium canopy with lift-up doors set into vertical sides and four free-standing legs.

### Shell Be Right!

The base model of the Traymate Camper is called the Traymate shell. It's a blank canvas for you to fit out just the way you want, as you would with any other aluminium ute canopy. There is no slope in the sides,





Trayon makes a range of fully equipped slide-on campers for single and dual-cab utes, like the one on the previous page. The Traymate (above) is a basic shell you can set-up as you like or add the manufactures extras. It provides an affordable and versatile slide-on entry point and is well worth investigating.

providing much more interior volume and rooftop space, yet it's extremely strong.

The Traymate shell weighs 175 kg including the legs. It has the same powder-coated aluminium construction as the Trayon Camper and the same floor structure with beams. This allows the addition of drawers for extra storage, an external bench and an additional 35-litre water tank.

It has been designed to accept existing toolboxes, fridge slides and rooftop tents, so it can be adapted by people who already own the working and camping gear they need. The Traymate Shell price is \$6000.


## Traymate Kit

For those who don't have camping gear, or who want much more camping accommodation, there's a purpose-designed rooftop tent that measures an unprecedented 2.30 m x 1.80 m, allowing the standard queen-sized bed to remain made-up all the time. Once open, the roof top tent becomes a large awning, approximately 2.30

m wide and 2.30 m long.

Opening the rooftop tent is said to be a matter of simply flipping over one beam and the counter-levered, Australian-made canvas structure erects the tent. Then you push up three peaks and you're done.

The Traymate Rooftop tent is priced at \$3800, including a mattress and an internal LED strip light. An additional weather-proof annex with a vinyl floor can be zipped onto the tent awning, giving privacy and shelter. It can be added for \$1785 and comes in a bag that fits inside the Traymate.

But wait – there's more! The Traymate Camper's sleep-out, for \$1890, is a room with fly screens all around that can sleep three kids or two adults. Other possible addition is the Trayon Outhouse: an aluminium-lidded, vinyl shower and toilet enclosure that clips to the side of the Traymate. To find out more visit the Trayon website [HERE](#). 

# CAMPER MAN?

**MAN trucks tests the waters  
with some tough 4X4 van  
conversion concepts**

From [newatlas.com](http://newatlas.com)







MAN's TGE is a twin with the new VW Crafter and both are good looking line-ups that should shake Mercedes' from its complacent slumber. It's unlikely we'll see the TGE Down Under, but the new Crafter is close and highly anticipated.

There's a new breed of Volkswagen Group camper van roaming around, and it's the MAN-liest one yet. Volkswagen's big truck, bus and engine brand entered the light-vehicle market last year in Europe with a new-VW-Crafter twin called the **TGE**. While the new van is aimed at the same business-and-industry folks that drive MAN's heavy truck business, the company is exploring the leisure vehicle market possibilities with a pair of rugged 4x4 camper van concepts. Are we seeing the birth of the next great European camper conversion platform, complete with baked-in 4x4 option?

MAN certainly isn't a complete foreigner to the world of motorhomes. The company points out that it showed its first 'weekend car' nearly a century ago. Its trucks have also been used for some of the biggest, baddest motorhomes on the planet, including the Unicat **Md77h 6x6**.

## New Ballgame

The van conversion market is a different ballgame, however. While MAN has plenty of experience with heavy-duty truck, the van market was new territory when it began producing the TGE last April. It's stuck largely to what it knows, marketing the "Truck among vans" to courier services, professional trades, construction outfits, logistics businesses and the like.

It was actually this type of work that convinced MAN to let its in-house Bus Modification Centre (BMC) loose on two camper concepts, which were revealed at the CMT Show in Stuttgart last month. It began within the framework of a dual-use van that could haul loads while also housing the crew overnight, eventually recognising and exploring the potential for the recreational van market. The concepts seem



## 58 | Concept



Designed as a toy hauler, this TGE concept blends utility with style and I think would find a market here and in NZ.

more a showcase of the BMC's ability to build specialised vehicles to customer specification than serious proposals for production camper vans, however. Still, each of the two models looks pretty good in its own right. They're both built with off-roading in mind, featuring 4X4, increased ground clearance and wide off-road tires. Each is driven by a 127 kW 2.0-litre turbo-diesel and based on a standard-wheelbase TGE with high roof.

### Versatility...

The white model with zebra window wraps features the more traditional camper layout of the two, with a pop-up roof, kitchen, rail-mounted rear seat, bathroom and rear bed. This one is a full-time globetrotter with permanent furniture installation; the model for folks (or companies) that have space in their driveways for a permanent motorhome.







The pop-top adds extra sleeping upstairs and is a common Euro design that's never made it Down Under in a large van conversion as far as we're aware.

The blue van shows a more flexible conversion, reworking the idea of a modular daily driver/holiday camper split that's becoming increasingly popular. This concept could be thought of as a daily worker-come-weekend getaway van. Its fit-out is removable, clearing the cargo area for nine-to-five work duties or weekend trips that entail large equipment, like bikes or hot air balloons.

For adventure trips that run more than a single day, the owner can drop-in the camping furniture and load bikes, boards and other equipment between the side benches, using the integrated ramp. At camp, a middle mattress panel combines with the two side benches to create a longitudinal bed. There's also a kitchen unit and plenty of cabinetry for storage.

It doesn't look like either van is heading to local MAN dealerships anytime soon. But hopefully an aftermarket conversion shop like Westfalia will try its hand at transforming a TGE 4X4 (or 2WD) into a proper camper. Meanwhile,



Australians are still awaiting the launch of the all-new VW Crafter, which is a collaboration with MAN and closely resembles the TGE. It's due to appear in 2018 and we're sure local conversion specialists are already busy working on their new models. 🚐



# Tough Love

Here's a tough portable power system that's easy to love...

by Allan Whiting of

[outbacktravelsaustralia.com.au](http://outbacktravelsaustralia.com.au)

The Toughpower portable power box is said to offer more benefits than any comparable unit in the market. A power box is an alternative to a fixed house battery – so ideal for campervans for example – and has the advantage of portability, allowing it to power electrical equipment away from the vehicle.

## Battery Not Included!

Toughpower was designed by Intelliquip for the Australian 4WD market and conditions. It can house any type of battery (not included), like wet cell, gel, calcium, AGM and LiFePO4 lithium.

There are several types of power boxes in the market, but Intelliquip claims the ToughpowerTP-1000 Dual model is the only one that has automatic low-voltage shutdown and recovery; full battery protection; inbuilt 10-amp mains charger, 10-amp DC-DC charger, MPPT





solar controller and displays of all charging inputs. It also incorporates a 1000-watt pure sine wave inverter that has a 2000-watt peak output, for appliance start-ups.

Charging can be done from 240-volt mains power, 12-volt solar, CIG vehicle socket, vehicle alternator or external 12-volt supply via an Anderson plug. Outlets are 240-volt, 1000-watts, 50-amps, 12-volt Anderson, 12-volt CIG, 12-volt Engel, 12-volt Merit and two 2.5-amp USB ports. Inbuilt protection eliminates the need for fuses on the output side.


The Toughpower's LED touchscreen displays all charging inputs and loads, shows live data and usage logs, has an inverter timer and a touch-dimmable camping light.

Low-voltage protection switches off all outlets if battery voltage drops below a pre-determined level and automatically re-connects power when charging begins. For example, if the Toughpower turns off the fridge because of low battery charge overnight, it will automatically start powering the fridge as soon as the morning sun strikes a connected solar panel.

Another useful feature is Dual Battery Bypass Control, which allows the Toughpower to run appliances if it's connected to the vehicle alternator, even if the stored battery is flat. With the vehicle's alternator operating, the



system allows full alternator charge to the stored battery during bulk charging and then switches to the inbuilt DC-DC charger for the 'float' charging stage.

Toughpower is made from heavy duty plastic and comes with a 12-month warranty. The unit, complete with inbuilt chargers, outlets, monitoring systems and inverter has a RRP of \$1299, plus the cost of your chosen deep cycle battery. The optimum setup would be with a \$1953 Revolution 100AH lithium battery added, but less capable volt boxes can be had from around \$400. To find out more visits the website [HERE](#). 



# Whatever Boat You Float!

There's still plenty of summer left to get out on the water for fun...

by Allan Whiting of [outbacktravelsaustralia.com.au](http://outbacktravelsaustralia.com.au)







We all love it when the boat slides into the water and we clamber on board for a day's fun. Although the tinnie is the favourite RVing boat-of-choice, there are some alternatives worth investigating if you're in the market and unsure of your options.

## Kayaks

Kayaks have become very popular in recent years and **Hobie models** can be adapted easily to pedal, paddle or sail propulsion. Several are designed specifically for fishing, but rod holders and other fishing kit can be added to virtually all Hobies. The Hobie pedal-propulsion system uses a pair of bicycle-like pedals and two underwater fins that oscillate to push the boat along.

Most kayaks are of one-piece plastic rotomoulded construction and are very durable. They'll scratch if snagged or dragged over sharp rocks, but are unlikely to break.

A single kayak is relatively stable, but the Hobie Mirage Island models have two outriggers and are almost impossible to capsize. They can be fitted with trampolines between the main hull and the outriggers, for additional load or people space. These models also come with carbon-fibre mast and a sail, and can honk along in a fair breeze.

Depending on your vehicle a kayak can be

carried 'up the aisle' in a van conversion like Project Polly, or on specially made roof racks.

## Inflatables

Modern inflatables are much more durable than their predecessors. The likelihood of sinking the boat by snagging a barra hook in one of the air chambers is remote. An inflatable is also much easier to stow than a hard-shell boat – a smaller one will easily fit into a decent sized storage locker.

Inflatables are almost impossible to capsize and are much more stable as fishing platforms than small tinnies. Cheaper inflatables have flat, wooden-slatted bottoms that don't get any 'grip' on the water. They're fine as bigger-boat tenders, to get a short distance from ship to shore, but they're not much chop for real boating. There are more expensive models with high-pressure, inflatable floors that are firm and flat to stand on and have a proper vee-shaped, underwater profile.

If rock damage is a concern it's possible to buy a rigid inflatable boat (RIB) that has a metal lower 'hull' with air chambers around its perimeter. The metal section is 'veed' like a power boat's bottom. However, a RIB won't pack down as compactly as a full inflatable and might require a small trailer.

### Tinnies

If your heart is set on a tinny there's a myriad to choose from, although you'll need a conventional trailer. The good news a tinnie travels right way up, which means most of the gear – even lighter outboard motors – can be securely stowed inside. If the boat is big enough it can double as extra overnight accommodation for the kids, especially if it has a large bimini top and side curtains that can be erected over the cockpit!

Boat trailer launching and retrieving is straightforward, if you've bought a quality trailer that's tailored to the boat. You have the freedom to set up camp and trail the boat as far as you need to, for easy launching. However, one problem with lightweight boat trailers is just that: light weight. Most run tiny wheels and tyres and have spindly frames and axles. If you plan to tow any distance or venture off-road you definitely need to upgrade the trailer to one that has at least passenger-car-sized wheels and tyres. Also, it's always wise to put a hand on the wheel bearings to check for heat build-up when towing. Hot bearings means dying bearings (usually due to a lack of grease through inadequate maintenance) and the risk of a wheel seizing and/or coming off. A little care and attention goes a long way...

### Safety!

Some wise words about safety. Always wear an approved life jacket and carry enough for every person on board, including ones suitable for children. If you're planning to fish in Northern Australian waters at any time of year the most obvious water hazard is the estuarine crocodile. Crocs aren't very bright and they see any large moving object as a threat to their territory, be it boat, buffalo, cow, 4WD or whatever. A tiny boat can provoke a croc attack and that's not a pretty sight. One croc on the Alligator River in Kakadu was famous for crunching outboard motors!



Obviously, the larger, stronger and more high-sided the small boat, the safer the occupants. The famous movie, 'Jaws' would have packed more credibility if the assailant was a giant croc!

### Finally

It shouldn't need to be said, but I'll make the point anyway: make sure whatever style of watercraft you have that you make sure you properly secure it to your vehicle. Racks often have their own locking systems, otherwise now that there are easy to use ratchet tie-down straps galore there's no excuse for unsecured boats flying off racks or trailers. There's no need to torque the boat out of shape with strap tension, but the tie downs should be snug and visible from the towing vehicle if the boat is





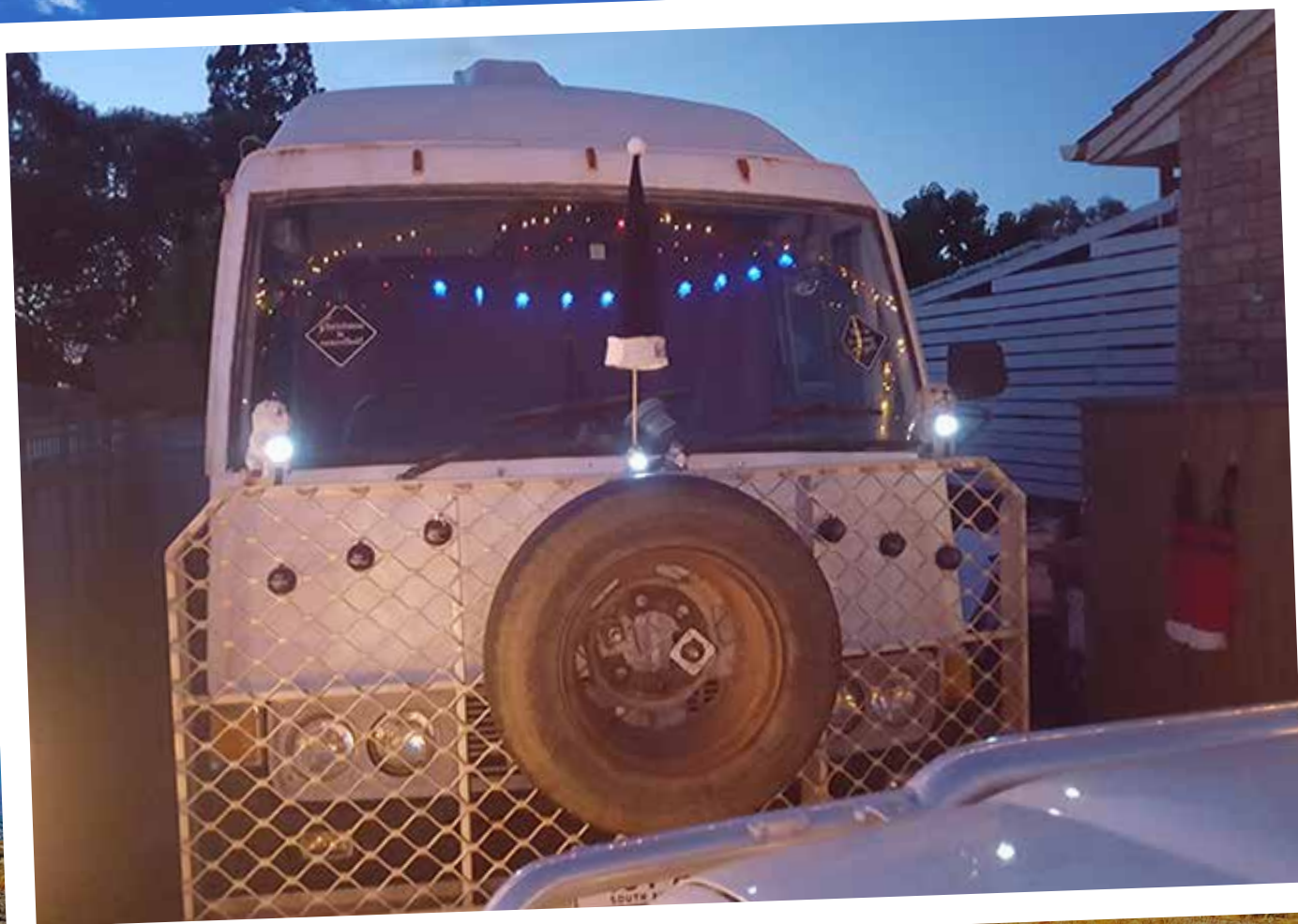
on a trailer. And if a strap comes loose you'll usually hear it flapping while driving. Straps need to be checked for tension after you've driven a few kilometres and every time you take a driving break.

Boating is an ideal recreation when travelling by RV. It also needn't be expensive nor inconvenient. Work out your needs, do some research and take the plunge. There are still plenty of long, lazy summer days ahead and if you listen carefully I think you'll hear the water calling...





# Wanda In The City



By Sharon Hollamby





While the rest of Adelaide is gearing up for the **Fringe Festival**, which runs from 16 Feb to 18 March, I am itching to get back out on the open road. Unfortunately, circumstances dictate I stay in Adelaide a little longer. It has certainly been an expensive festive season, but it has been good to catch up with family and friends, who have all been lovely and welcoming. Wanda has been running amazingly well and we have been coping with all the traffic lights and roadworks Adelaide has to offer. It is a little difficult when people cut in front of us and we have to stop suddenly, but thankfully Wanda has excellent brakes.

We have a few places to stay at in Adelaide, which is really helpful, but I am always mindful of respecting the other persons space, property and privacy. A bus in your driveway can be a bit daunting when you are not used to it! Sometimes, I just need my own space as well and after constantly being around other people I really did needed some alone time. I haven't had to worry too much about camping etiquette on my journey so far as generally people are pretty considerate, but I have certainly learnt a lot about it this month.



## Me Time

With some solitude in mind and to give the new appliances a proper test run, we wandered out to Port Parham for a few days after Christmas. Wanda cruised along nicely and seemed to want to keep going just as much as I did. Surprisingly, there were plenty of camping spots available and I happily unpacked and set up my tarp/annexe. A young couple pulled up on my annexe side, which was fine, but a little later a big truck pulled in and parked so close to Wanda I nearly had to issue a marriage licence. The



guy could barely open his drivers side door, my view became a white metal wall and they effectively cut off a nice cool breeze that had been blowing through. It was so annoying!

To top things off they had a constantly barking dog which they did nothing about, even when they were right next to it. They locked it in their van while they went out for the evening and the poor dog howled and barked for hours. When the young couple on the other side left the next morning, I was able to move into their spot and reclaim some breathing space. I must admit to feeling a little resentful that I had to move when I was there first but I guess that is free camping for you.

On the up-side all the appliances ran well and it was so nice to have cold drinks and 'fresh' food in the fridge!

### Two's Company!

There had been some doubt as to whether or not everything would be working enough to free camp with my grandson Brandon, so I had booked in to the Gawler Caravan Park for our visit. Reasonably priced at \$35 a night and situated close to the shops, public transport and the local pool,

it was ideal for our purposes. Brandon gave Wanda a big thumbs-up and we had a lot of fun catching up.

After having Wanda all to myself it was a little difficult sharing the limited space with another person, but with a few rules in place we managed to navigate around each other quite well. The only problem we had was a lack of television reception as the park is in a gully and my antenna was just not strong enough to pick anything up. A new antenna is now on the wish list.

A big concern for me was Brandon going into the men's bathroom by himself, so although it probably looked a little odd I stayed by the door until he came out. When it comes to the safety of a child, etiquette comes second. For legal reasons I can't post pictures of Brandon, but my friend bought him a mask which he loved and as it doesn't show his face I am able to share that photo with you.

With sad farewells and big hugs Brandon went home and it was time to leave the park and brave the Adelaide traffic once again. As I turned a corner there was a loud crash just behind me, so I quickly pulled over and turned to see the fridge had come loose and fallen



forwards. It seems the anchors weren't strong enough to hold the larger fridge. So, it was a slow, careful trip to my sister's place, where my brother in law secured it all properly for me.

## Invitation...

I could have stayed longer at my sister's, but a lady I had met when we were camping at Merbein had invited me to park on her front lawn. It sounded great and it would be nice to see her again, so we braved the traffic once more and headed off to Seaton.

When Kerry, opened the door she had by her side a stocky English blue staffy that looked like it could eat me for breakfast and still be hungry. Gulping down my fear, I presented my hand for this ferocious looking animal to sniff. She decided I was harmless we soon became good friends. Mahala is a beautiful gentle animal with wonderfully expressive eyes, a gleaming coat and a funny personality. She is a rescue dog and Kerry has done an amazing job of raising her.

Kerry's housemate Ros was also very welcoming, but I felt awful when I discovered that Ros would be burying her mum the next day. It was a sad time and although I didn't want to intrude, she assured me that it was fine, and that I was, "More than welcome".

As my way of thanks, while they were at the funeral I decided to weed a small garden that had become overgrown and I was pretty hot and dirty by the time Kerry arrived home. She said I was welcome to use their shower and I gratefully accepted. While I was in the shower Ros arrived home with her adult son and his girlfriend. Just as I was drying myself the bathroom door opened (there was no lock) and I was face to face with a highly embarrassed young man who had just wanted to wash his hands after using the toilet. I quickly covered myself with the towel and the young man beat a hasty retreat!



When I came out of the bathroom it was obvious that everyone was uncomfortable so I said to the young fella, "Well, you know you have to marry me now," which gave everyone a good laugh and eased the tension. The look on his face was priceless! No-one had told the poor guy that I was in there so it really was all just an unfortunate accident.

For me, it was another lesson in camping etiquette. If there is no lock on the bathroom door, and you want to avoid any embarrassment, make lots of noise! Safe travels everyone...ke



# Seaside Redux!



## Shellharbour is well worth a visit. Again....

by Richard Robertson

This story ran in Issue 75 in July 2015 as part travel yarn, part long-term test vehicle update for the Horizon Motorhomes' Casuarina we were living with just as Project Polly arrived. With a few changes I've decided to run it again because Shellharbour is a great, quick getaway from Sydney or Canberra, and the absolute waterfront location of the Shellharbour Beachside Tourist Park is unbeatable. With many summer days still ahead and the prospect of a long, warm autumn, it's simply a beautiful spot to escape to. Enjoy!

### The story!

**T**he good thing about having a motorhome sitting on the driveway and mostly packed is the ability to get away at short notice. Another impossibly clear





winter's day with a heavy morning frost presented itself as an ideal short-notice opportunity. Within an hour the pantry and fridge were stocked, the water tank topped and the iMotorhome office packed into a bag, 'just in case'.

We were gone by lunchtime and managed all of a kilometre before dropping into a neighbour's for coffee. Their driveway narrows in the final stretch, encroached upon by fruit trees reaching out to vehicles passing by. It's no place for a coachbuilt motorhome, but a smaller van conversion like the Casuarina is compact enough to thread its way through. This ability to reach more out of the way places makes exploring in a van conversion all the more fun.

Whizzing through Bowral and out along the Illawarra Highway to Robertson, we turned right at the famous Robertson Pie Shop – a dowdy tourist trap selling overrated and overpriced pies – and







onto Jamberoo Mountain Road. Barred to vehicles of more than 10 tonnes, trucks, cars with caravans, and any vehicle more than 10 metres long, this is a scenic ribbon of road that twists and plummets down the face of the Illawarra Escarpment, depositing you in the pretty village of Jamberoo. From there it's a short, winding and picturesque drive past lush dairies to Kiama and its famous blow hole; expect we turned left on to the appropriately named Swamp Road, a shortcut to Shellharbour.

A sleepy seaside town founded in 1817, Shellharbour awoke some years back to developers' bulldozers moving in to create an idyllic rural seaside community – for tens of thousands. The good news is that while the rolling hills and open grasslands surrounding Shellharbour have been urbanised, the township has escaped largely unscathed. Okay, it's now home to tiny boutiques and trendy cafés, where Yummy Mummies chose





must-have fashions and meet for lattes before picking the kids up from school, but it's still a one-main-street town with a historic pub at the end, across from the beach.

## Seaside Ambition

For years I've been meaning to visit the **Shellharbour Beachside Tourist Park**.

Occupying a small point jutting into the ocean and just a few minutes walk from town, it's the closest thing you'll get to absolute beach frontage in the region and its position is breath-taking.

It's not a big park and there are plenty of permanent caravans and holiday cabins, meaning RV space is at a premium. Being winter and just for a one night – albeit the beginning of school holidays – I managed to prebook a waterfront powered site with concrete slab for \$38 (\$45 from 29 Jan to 29 April 2018). There's only a \$5 premium for one of the dozen or so waterfront sites, which seemed pretty reasonable. I'd say about half the sites in the park were occupied that night and there were a couple of spares along the waterfront, too. This isn't a place for big rigs as the sites are smallish, closely grouped and the roadways twist and turn. Anything up to about eight metres – maybe nine – should be okay, but they ask when you book and will let you know if you won't fit.

The Park is pet friendly, has a mix of grass and concrete-slab sites, and also some non-waterfront drive-through sites. There's a single amenities block that's neat and tidy, a guest laundry, free barbecues and picnic tables, LPG and ice available from the shop and, best of all, the ocean is literally a stone's throws away. The Beverley Whitfield Pool (ocean baths), the historic Ocean Beach Hotel and town centre aren't much further!

We reversed up to the waterfront, pulled out the camp chairs and enjoyed a drink watching dolphins play as the sun set. The sound of







waves crashing on rocks and rolling onto the beach were the only distraction – oh, and the magnificent rumbling spectacle of a Lockheed Super Constellation flying back and forth on a training flight from nearby Albion Park Airport!

A small, thermostated fan heater kept the seaside evening chill at bay, while the microwave proved its worth heating frozen home-cooked dinners brought with us. We spent a relaxing evening in 'Cassie' and after dinner and a dose of TV, retired to the sound of breaking waves and the scent of sea salt.





## The great adVANtage...

Our homeward journey demonstrated another advantage of a smaller, manoeuvrable motorhome.

Shellharbour is a thriving southern suburb of Wollongong and has a large shopping centre – Shellharbour Square – which is home to a well known and highly regarded seafood market, and fruit and veggie store. Although the centre has rooftop parking I parked out on the street while Mrs iM dashed inside and indulged her culinary shopping desires.

Some time later (we won't go there) she emerged, laden with seafood 'bar-gains' that filled the fridge, while bags of fresh fruit and vegetables were stowed for the drive home. There's something terrific about being able to grab perishable bargains on-the-run even when you're not touring, or towards the end of a trip, and carry them home. Does a motorhome's flexibility know no bounds? 🚐

## Shellharbour Stopover

**Where:** Shellharbour Beachside Tourist Park

1 John Street, Shellharbour. NSW. 2529

T: 02 4295 1123

E: [info@shellharbourtouristpark.com.au](mailto:info@shellharbourtouristpark.com.au)

[Click for Google Maps](#)



### Pros...

- Seaside location
- Waterfront sites
- Walk to town
- Reasonably priced

### Cons...

- Not for big rigs
- Smallish sites
- Crowded when busy



# Italian Pasta & Peas





Like The Force with Luke Skywalker, the temptation to eat out when travelling is strong. Not only does it become expensive, it's easy to eat too much of the wrong foods and rapidly gain weight.

Fortunately, retired chef and self-confessed foodie Jess Ciampa – he has full size wood

fired pizza oven in his fully equipped outdoor kitchen – has offered to share some simple recipes that are quick, nutritious and affordable.

This issue we kick off his new column with Italian pasta and peas, which Jess reckons works out about \$1.20 per person for a generous serve. How good is that? 🍷

## You'll Need...

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 can diced tomatoes

¼ cup fresh basil leaf chopped

½ medium onion chopped

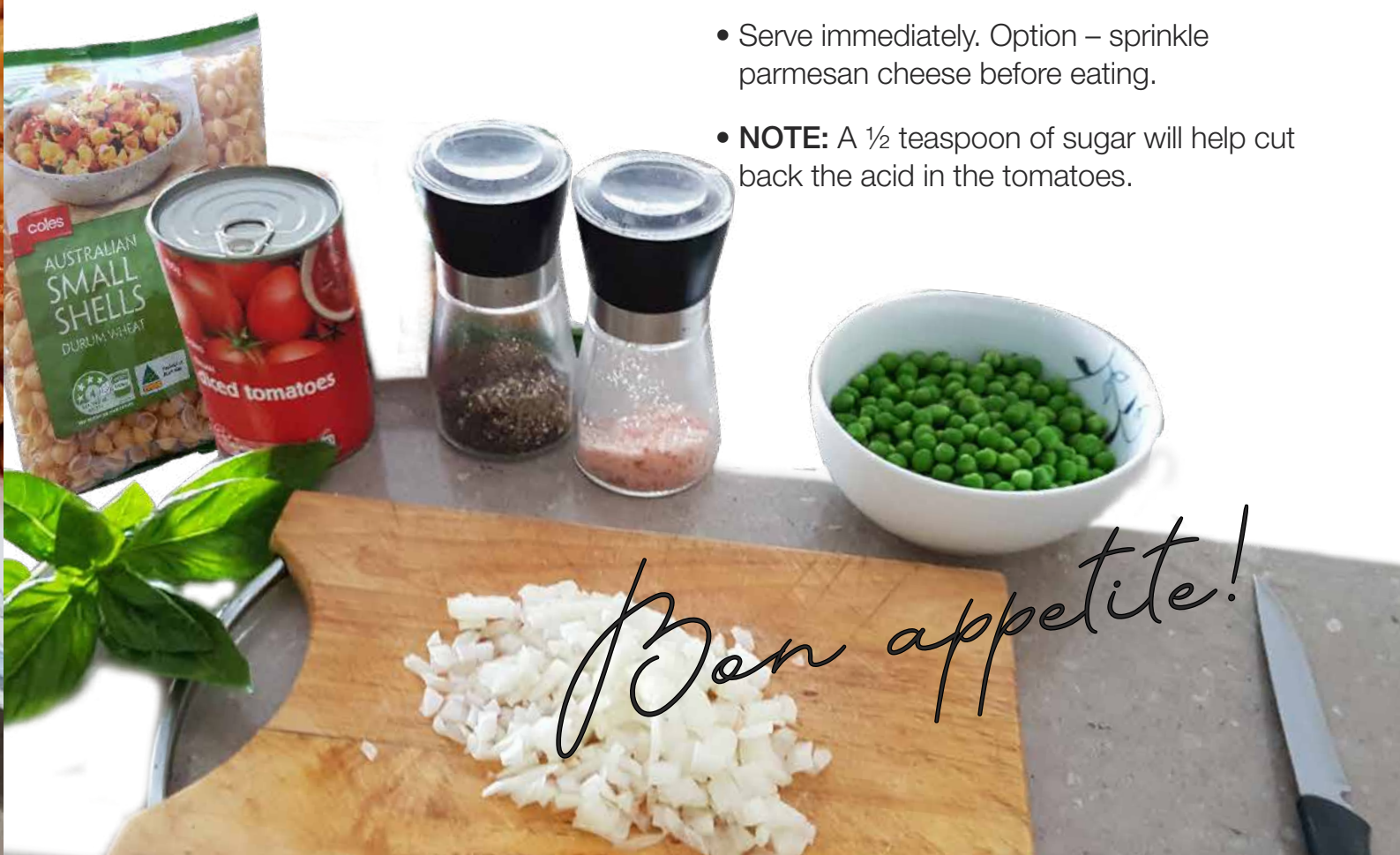
¼ teaspoon salt, ¼ T-spoon fresh cracked black pepper

1.5 cups frozen peas

250 g pasta (I use small shells)

## Then...

- In a pot, cook the chopped onion in olive oil over medium heat until it becomes tender
- Add the diced tomatoes, basil, salt and the pepper and bring to the boil for couple minutes and then let it simmer for 15 minutes.
- Cook the pasta in salted, boiling water until al dente. Two minutes before the pasta is finished, add the frozen peas to the boiling water. Drain the peas and pasta.
- Add the pasta and peas to the sauce and toss through to coat with the sauce.
- Serve immediately. Option – sprinkle parmesan cheese before eating.
- **NOTE:** A ½ teaspoon of sugar will help cut back the acid in the tomatoes.







# CMCA RV FRIENDLY TOWNS

The RV Friendly program is a **Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia Limited (CMCA)** initiative aimed at assisting RV travellers as they journey throughout this wonderful country. An RV Friendly Town™ (RVFT) is one that provides a certain number of amenities and a certain level of services for these travellers. When

RV tourists enter a town displaying the RVFT sign they know they will be welcome. Certain services will be provided for them that may not be available in other centres, and they will have access to a safe place to stay overnight and possibly for a longer period. This month's featured RV Friendly Towns are:





## CLIFTON, QLD

Clifton is in the Darling Downs region of Queensland, approximately 158 kilometres south-west of Brisbane. The fertile, agricultural land surrounding the town has seen it build a successful economy around cereal crops, vegetables, cattle and horses. Clifton's country charm is evident through the warm, friendly welcome from the locals. The town has been a farming community since its settlement in 1840, however its original development was planned with consideration to the railway route.

Clifton offers many services including a newsagent, bank, coffee shop, service station,

chemist, post office and butcher. Many historic buildings still remain, including a picture theatre more than a century old. The town's streetscapes have been used as a backdrop in many Australian movies, including *The Thorn Birds*.

The Clifton Recreation Reserve on Davenport and Morton Streets offers RV parking for \$10 per vehicle per night. There is a generous two week time limit and showers, toilets, power, bins and covered seating are available. Visitors also have access to the free dump point and potable water at this site. 🚚

### Tourist/Visitor Information Centre

### Clifton Railway Station Information Centre

Clark St, 07 4612 3087

[www.cliftonpa.org](http://www.cliftonpa.org)

### Casual Parking (near retail centre)

Cnr Mowen & King Sts & along Edward St

### Short & Long Term Parking

Clifton Recreation Reserve, Davenport & Morton Sts, \$10 pvpn (payable to Council during bus. hrs or after hrs to caretaker's cottage), power, showers, toilets, bins, water, c/seating, mobile coverage, pets on leads (2 weeks max).

### Dump Point

Clifton Recreation Reserve  
(Lat Long: -27.9264, 151.9121)

### Potable Water

Clifton Recreation Reserve



## PORTLAND, VIC.

Portland is a vibrant harbour-side city 362 kilometres west of Melbourne. It was established in 1834 by Tasmanian, Edward Henty, and was Victoria's first settlement. The profile of the Shire reveals a diverse economic base including fishing, pastoral and agricultural industries. The city of Portland also had substantial involvement in manufacturing, community and health services, tourism, education, transport and retail.

Portland's commercial centre is based around Percy Street, with a number of retail outlets and

eateries spilling over into Bentinck Street, which overlooks a grassy foreshore and the marina. Visitors can enjoy an array of activities including fishing, whale watching, tours to local aboriginal sites and the botanical gardens.

The Portland Visitor Information Centre can be found along Lee Breakwater Road. The dump point can be found at Henty Park, on Bentinck Street. There you will also find free parking for up to 48 hours, with toilets, bins, water and mobile coverage available. 📶

### Tourist/Visitor Information Centre

### Portland Visitor Information Centre

Lee Breakwater Rd 03 5581 2070

[portlandvic@glenelg.vic.gov.au](mailto:portlandvic@glenelg.vic.gov.au)

[www.glenelg.vic.gov.au](http://www.glenelg.vic.gov.au)

### Casual Parking (near retail centre)

Woolworths car park, 95 Percy St & Lee Breakwater Rd

### Short Term Parking & Long Term Parking

Henty Park, Bentinck St, no cost, (48hrs), toilets, bins, water, pets on lead, m/coverage

### Dump Point

Henty Park, Bentinck St  
(Lat Long: -38.354846, 141.607278)

### Potable Water

Between the VIC car park & bus park on Lee Breakwater Rd





## YASS, NSW

Yass is in the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales, 279 kilometres south-west of Sydney. With the picturesque Yass River running through town and the rolling hills of the Yass Valley, visitors will be taken in by the charm and beauty of this historic country town.

The town's colonial history can be explored on the Yass Historic Walk and Drive, which includes the well-preserved main street with buildings dating from the 1840s, along with beautifully restored Victorian buildings, churches, the court house and railway station

museum. Yass made its beginnings as a town servicing surrounding farmlands, but while agriculture remains an important part of its economy, tourism is fast becoming a major focus as the region builds a reputation for fine food and quality cool-climate wines.

Joe O'Connor Park is situated along the river on Laidlaw Street, and self-contained vehicles are welcome to stay for up to 48 hours at no cost. There are no facilities in the park, however a dump point and potable water are accessible nearby at 1428 Yass Valley Way. 🚚

### Tourist/Visitor Information Centre

### Yass Valley Information Centre

259 Comur St

02 6226 2557

[www.yassvalley.com.au](http://www.yassvalley.com.au)

### Casual Parking (near retail centre)

Lead St, Yass

### Short Term Parking

Joe O'Connor Park, Laidlaw St, parking at rear, (48hrs), nil charge, pets on lead, m/coverage, S/C vehicles only

### Dump Point

1428 Yass Valley Way (Lat Long: -34.8215, 148.9057)

### Potable Water

1428 Yass Valley Way



# Be Inspired - Watch, Listen, Learn, Grow!

Personal experiences and  
knowledge are the new black...

By Emily Barker





When it comes to tracking trends, you probably have a better chance of hand catching fish. One thing is becoming strikingly evident though, we are actively and collectively turning from accumulating 'things' in favour of gathering personal experiences and knowledge. And there's never been a better time to seek more knowledge than now. Technology and connectivity have given us a brand new learning space more accessible than any library, university or school, and that space is often in the palms of our hands.

The problem is we are bombarded with volumes of information on a daily basis. Some we actively seek, others actively seek us, and it can often be hard to distinguish fact from fiction or indeed, advertising from news.

The following are two popular apps designed to share a wealth of information on a wide range of topics; one is arts-based for the 'creatives' and the other loosely science-based with a generous mix of fundamental human insight, emotion and wonder. Both are transparent when it comes to content sponsorship and sale, and as one critic noted, "The people we want to learn from are teaching us the skills we want to know".

## CreativeLive

**Platform: iOS only (so far)**

**Size: 57.8 MB**

**Cost: Free with in-app Purchases**

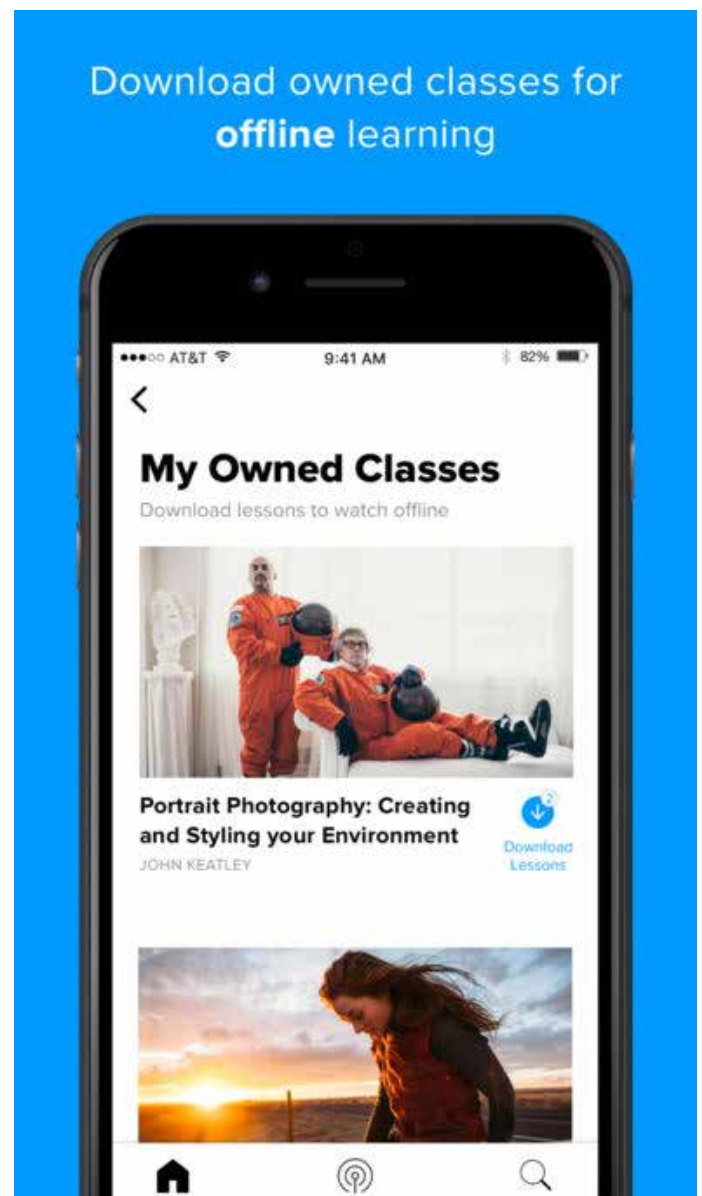


CreativeLive is currently the largest live-streaming online education platform in existence. With over 1500 classes on offer you can enhance your career, improve your skill set or simply fuel your imagination. Each class is carefully curated and presented by industry experts across a broad range of topics including photography, design, music and

entrepreneurship. Developed by a professional photographer, CreativeLive emphasises the nurturing of the artist inside us all by providing the practical skills required to succeed both artistically and professionally. Divided into five channels – Photo & Video,

Art & Design, Music & Audio, Craft & Maker, and Money & Life – there is something to interest everyone across all experience levels.

Classes range in cost from around fifteen to several hundred dollars each, but once a lesson is purchased you own it and can download it and access it whenever you like. This can be a lot of investment though for a casual curiosity. Creative ambition is great, but the price should not be prohibitive.



1,500+ classes  
at your fingertips



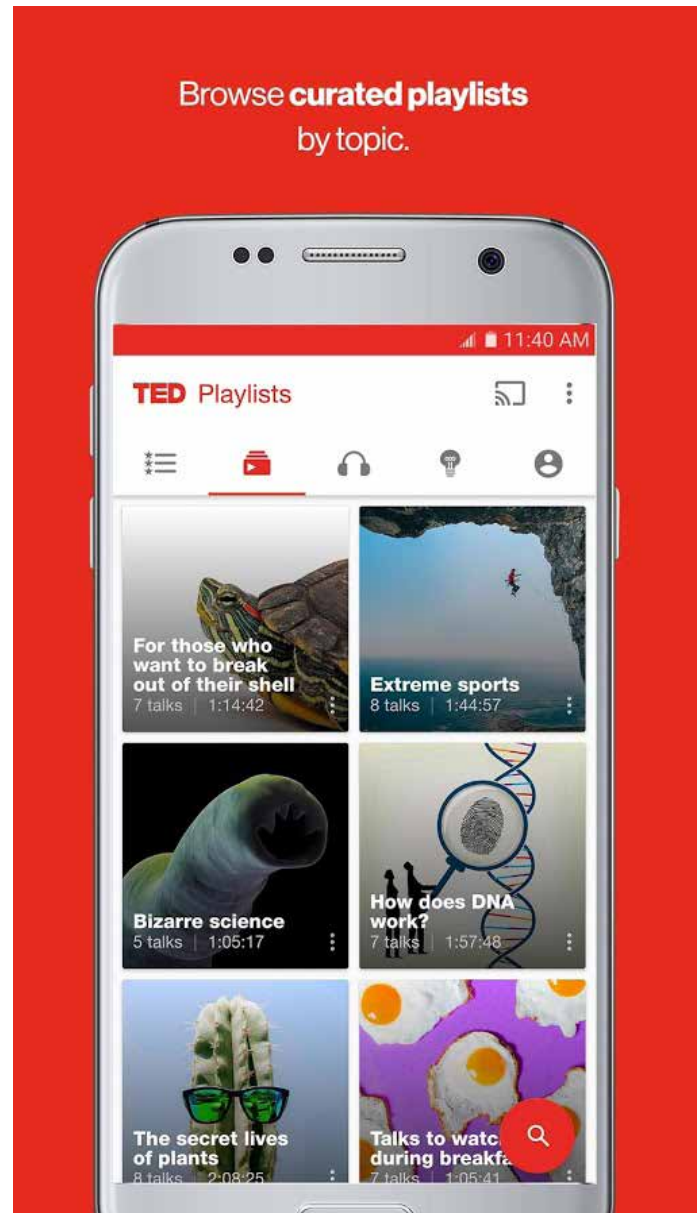
The good news is, you can watch live streams and on-air broadcasts for free, all day, every day, across every channel. The CreativeLive app, optimised for iPad, makes catching the classes you're interested in when they are free, incredibly easy. You can RSVP to join upcoming live broadcasts (or replayed classes) by viewing upcoming content up to a week in advance. You'll need to create a free account and have a pretty good data allowance or access to WiFi, but for those seeking to learn from passionate, inspirational and successful industry leaders, it's a worthwhile investment.

## TED

Platform: iOS and Android

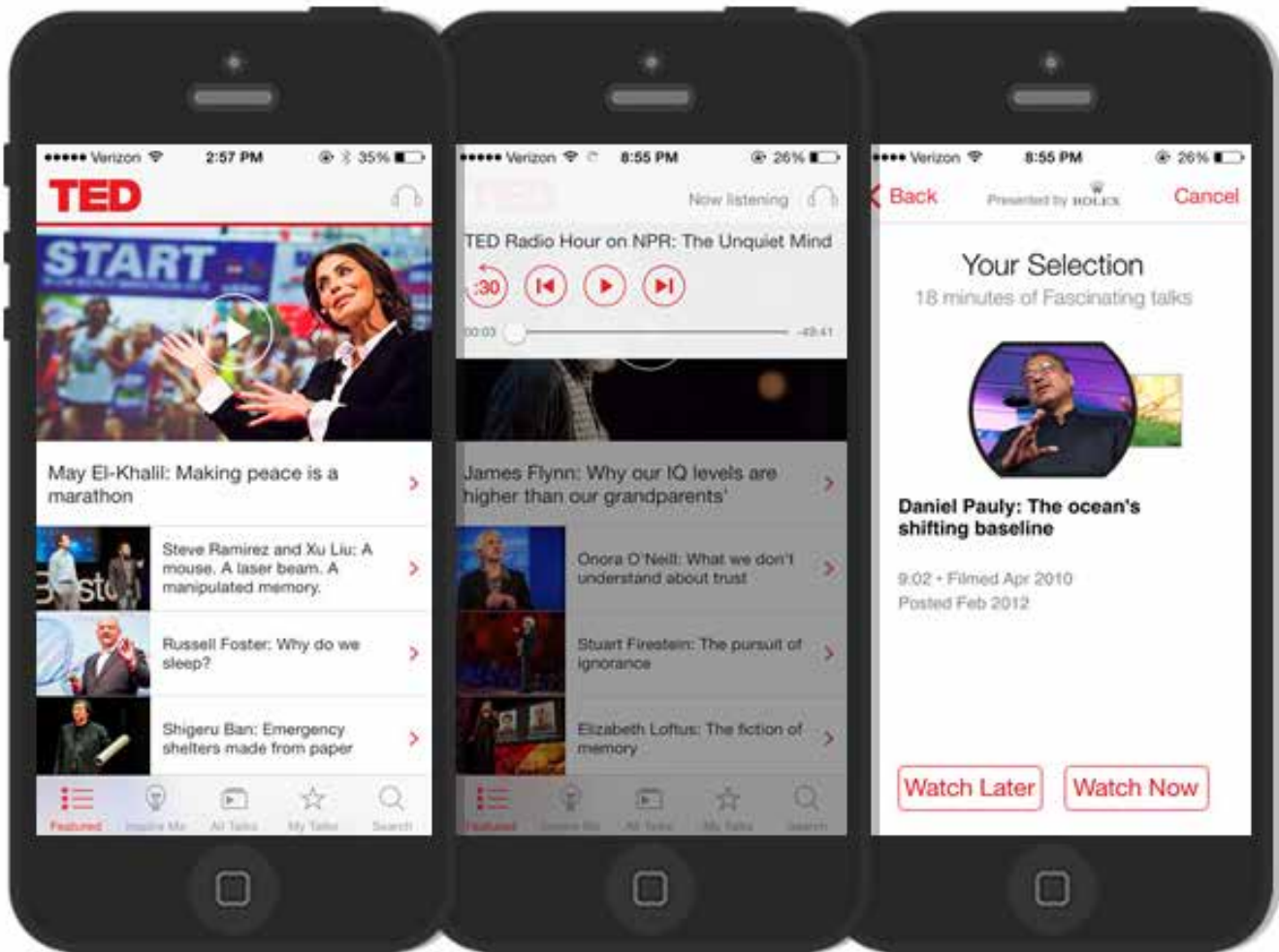
Size: 133.2MB

Cost: Free – no in-app purchases



TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) talks or conferences originated as an annual event in Silicon Valley in the early 90s. They were a chance for the world's most influential leaders and thinkers to impart their knowledge to a hungry audience. Like technology itself, TED has evolved and transformed over time and is now a global phenomenon, complete





with spin-off TEDx conferences held all over the world. For some experts and innovators, being invited to giving a TED talk has come to be viewed as the ultimate professional achievement. For many, the myth of the TED talk is a return to the ancient roots of storytelling, which is consistent with the underlying motto of “Ideas worth spreading’.

Videos of talks have been freely available online for many years and now, with natural progression, there is an app – and its totally free. Topics are incredibly diverse and range from business, science, technology, spirituality and creativity, to global issues and human psychology. It’s a playground for the curious where you can dive in as deep as you like or simply paddle in the shallows for

entertainment, education or inspiration.

The app itself has an engaging layout, with some unique search functions that are all easy enough to use. Given the sheer volume and diversity of content, finding something to watch can be a challenge in itself, but the app approaches this with the use of tabs. The ‘Featured, Surprise Me and Discover’ sections are all quite self-explanatory; catch not to be missed talks, discover content by topic, filter by how much time you have or delve into a carefully curated playlist. Content can be streamed or download depending on your connection and although the app itself is a hefty 133 MB it’s a worthwhile experience, even if it’s just to discover what all the fuss is about! 📺

# TAKING THE FIFTH...







Next issue we bring you our first fifth-wheeler review! Malcolm is checking out the Australian designed but American built Emerald Coast from Spectrum RV



on the Gold Coast. Around 10.5 m long and with an interior style like a modern apartment, his report should make interesting reading.

By contrast, from across the Tasman we'll have the Bürstner Nexxo T685 motorhome. Compact at just 6.99 m and yet featuring an island bed plus a split bathroom, it's German-built for 2 (and a kid) and well worth investigating.

The March issue will be out on Saturday the 3rd. Until then enjoy the last month of summer and please stay safe. Right now, why not join our more than 32,000 [Facebook](#)  Friends and followers on [Twitter](#) , [Pinterest](#)  and [Instagram](#)  ?

**March 16-18**



## Covi Motorhome Caravan & Outdoor Supershow

ASB Showground 217 Green Lane. Auckland.1051.

- Open 9:00-5:00 daily
- Parking: \$10
- Day Pass: \$16
- Multi-Day Pass: \$25.00
- Kids: U16 free

[Visit Website](#)

Click for Google Maps



**March 21-25**



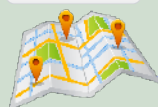
## Perth Caravan and Camping Show

Claremont Showground  
1 Graylands Rd, Claremont.  
WA 6010

- Open 9:00-5:00 daily (Last day 4:00 pm)
- Parking: \$5 (free weekend)
- Adults: \$19.50
- Seniors: \$14.50
- Kids: U16 free with adult

[Visit Website](#)

Click for Google Maps



**April 24-29**



## NSW Caravan Camping RV & Holiday Supershow

Rosehill Racecourse  
James Ruse Drive, Rosehill.  
NSW. 2142.

- Open 9:00-5:00 daily (Last day 4:00 pm)
- Parking: Free via Griffiths Rd
- Adults: \$25
- Seniors: \$20.00
- Kids: U16 free with adult

[Visit Website](#)

Click for Google Maps



Know of a local or regional show coming up that attracts and promotes motorhomes, campervans and the great RV lifestyle in general? Drop us a line at [info@imotorhome.com.au](mailto:info@imotorhome.com.au) and we'll happily promote it in this calendar.