



TOUGH TOURER

Fancy a trailer with TARDIS-like space and go-anywhere ability? Read on...

Words and photography by Greg Cartan

Some reviews are just more interesting than others... simple as that. And with dirt-road camper trailers there seems to be a 'sameness' creeping into the design. Sure, there are exceptions, but on the whole it's more of the same.

So it gave me a buzz to check out something a little different, and the Adventure camper is certainly a cut above the rest. We spent a relaxing, ahem, gruelling two days testing the Adventure camper on the banks of the Murray River. Here's the result.

On The Outside

Make no mistake, the Adventure camper trailer is built to last. The chassis, which is 75x50mm, is cold galvanised and then powdercoated, with a solid 50x50mm beam axle rated to 1500kg slung underneath. The nine leaf springs and shockers

provide fantastic load-bearing capacity, but won't break the eggs.

While we refrained from belting the Adventure camper trailer along particularly rough tracks, I was impressed with its ride behind the car and in the way it tracked. We experienced some high winds on the blacktop, lots of gravel roads, a little cross-country driving and it sat beautifully behind the Nissan.

Other positives include a Trig coupling, for maximum flexibility, 16in rims with stud pattern to match your vehicle (essential for long-range touring) and snatch strap recovery hooks. It's also fitted with an override, mechanical breaking system. These are simple and very effective.

Two 59L water tanks are heaps, even for longer remote work. Each is well protected with a metal stone guard. And speaking of stones, I'll guarantee the mesh stone guard won't let anything

through. Everything up front is also protected by aluminium chequerplate – the 9kg gas bottle, the fridge and the outboard. It looks pretty mean too.

The unit is powered by a 100Ah deep-cycle sealed battery with charger, located on the driver's side. It's powered from the main battery through twin 5mm cables connected with an Anderson plug. This makes good sense, as your standard nine-point pin just isn't enough for the sort of current you need.

On The Roof

On top of the trailer, every inch of space can be made use of. The static boat racks will handle a medium-sized tinnie. Plus, as an extra-cost option, keen fishermen can have an outboard motor bracket mounted up there as well.

Tucked in between the boat rack is a



Above: There's more room than you can poke a stick at... and as you can see, I spread my stuff around

Above right: The Pilbara trailer has a king-size bed, not bad at all



large metal carry basket. This will fit most 16in tyres, but it's a great spot to store firewood. There's a handy tread step on the draw bar so you can get at the gear easily.

In The Tent

Now, the reason you can have all this 'up-top' space is because of the brilliant design of the tent and bed area. Believe it

Below: Looking like a toolbox on wheels, the Pilbara is the sort of camper that will go into the wild and return unscathed

Below right: The spare tyre is mounted at the back of the unit and can be accessed even with a boat on the roof



or not there are two double beds and a huge sealed tent folded and packed inside the centre of the trailer. And it's a simple job to slide out and set up. Here's a quick rundown on the basic steps:

Level the trailer and lower the rear tailgate and spare tyre. Slide out the timber box and supporting frame that holds the bed and tent. Spin the box 90° and open it up. Pull out the canvas, whack a couple of pegs into the ground, fit a few internal poles for stability and that's all folks. With practice it's a comfortable 10–15 minute job. I must admit it took me a little longer the first time through, but it was raining, I had various sources of advice (not always helpful) and I'd finished off a couple of beers before setting up – not a good combo.

Don't be concerned about the set-up procedure, as Adventure has produced a very friendly booklet that covers every

step – if only I'd read it.

The result is a bed measuring 2.1 by 2m, and living area 2.3m by 2.4m... and that is big. The entire area is sealed, the bed is comfortable, high-density foam and the five windows offer excellent ventilation. A bed coversheet is supplied so the poles and canvas doesn't come into contact with your bedding – another simple but very useful addition.

By the way, the bedding stays on when you pack up, so you don't have to remake it each night. This is an excellent design and you don't even have to take the boat off the top.

In The Kitchen

To get to the kitchen, lift up the top wing (it has gas struts) and drop it down to the side. It comprises an innovative swing-out Lido junior two-burner stove,





Above: This storage compartment is opposite the kitchen and has plenty of room, although tie-down points would be nice

stainless steel sink, tap (manual and 12V pump), several small cupboards for cutlery, crockery and other bits and pieces, and a large (1.3sq.m) laminated bench-space. The space is well lit, includes power outlets and independent electronic water level indicators. All up, a bloody good tuckerbox.

The 80L Waeco fridge/freezer is more than adequate for the family. As I mentioned earlier, it sits on the drawbar and is protected by a lightweight chequer-plate aluminium box, which is lockable and easy to access. There's also a 240V adaptor for the fridge.

A retractable awning over the pantry velcros onto the tent, providing excellent wet-weather protection. This has detachable walls, and a front strip over the fridge, which means you can move from bed to the fridge and not be exposed to the elements. This is essential if you need to top up the bedtime champagne and

caviar (or beer and chips, if your tastes run that way).

On the other side is a general storage area. And at 3.5sq.m, if you can't fit everything you need in here, then you're carrying too much. Again, power and lighting are supplied to this area. I'd like to see some tie-downs in here, but if you fill it up and pack it in tight then nothing will move, touch wood.

Worth Buying?

At \$27,500, the Adventure camper trailer won't be within everyone's budget, but it well and truly deserves its price tag; it's strong, user friendly, a smart design and a quality build.

If you're thinking about durability, don't worry. These trailers have been developed and tested in the Adventure hire business over an eight-year period. One was used for over five years, which, when you consider the rough treatment rental units get, says heaps about structure and design. **C&M**



Above: Setting the tent up takes no time at all once you get the hang of it

FACT FILE

Manufacturer:	Adventure Camping and Off-Road Trailers
Model:	Pilbara Adventure
Length:	13ft (3.9m)
Width:	6ft 2in (1.8m)
Weight:	950kg
Price:	\$27,500 (Plus ORC)

Thanks to...

Frank and Paul Tabone,
Adventure Camping and Off-Road Trailers.
Tel: (08) 8276 5666,
Fax: (08) 8276 5662. Or visit:
www.adventureoffroadtrailers.com.au.