

Adventure Camping

Words by Cathy Anderson



Jack in the BOX

**Clever thinking and surprises
in a tight package.**

Among other things, Adventure Camping has built a solid reputation on its slide-out bed units, which slip out easily from the main body of its three camper trailer models and its Tray Top Camper.

Company director Frank Tabone says he received considerable comments from caravan and camping showgoers that they loved the slide-out bedding system on the camper trailers, but just weren't keen on towing. In response, he decided to manufacture a model for utilities, hence the introduction of the Tray Top Camper.

The model has become quite a success story for the company, tapping into a niche market. In February this year, however, the slide-out bed was given a 'makeover' with the innovative addition of a wind-down winch, which makes it only as high as your bed at home – much lower, and safer, for users.

TOP NOTCH

At 2.3m long, 2.1m wide and 1.1m high the camper is a very neat unit. It slides onto the tray of a utility easily and is

fastened on all four corners by metal tie-downs. The trailer body is made from powder-coated Zincanneal painted 'precious' silver – the most popular choice of Adventure Camping's customers.

It's more appropriate to say that the unit is 'revealed', rather than 'assembled'. The bed slides out from the rear, the kitchen space and swing-out bench is held securely under the gull-wing door with gas lifters on the passenger side, while a generous storage area measuring 2m x 1.2m x 900mm high is under another gull-wing door on the driver's side.

Adventure Campers' two-point pickup jacking system means the unit can be easily lifted off the tray top for extended stays, and is supported by poles from each corner jack.

Frank says many travellers are also buying bigger tinnies above 4.5m in length, which are cumbersome to load on top of the trailer. These buyers are attracted to the Tray Top Camper because it offers more freedom, says Frank. "They can unhitch their accommodation and tow their boat to the water every day."

DROP DOWN, ROLL AROUND

Most of his customers for the Tray Top Camper are 45 years of age and older. This got Frank thinking about safety for these 'empty nester' and semi-retired travellers, especially in the bedroom.

It's his personal opinion that many beds in camper trailers are too high, and present a safety risk for climbing out of bed, particularly on late-night 'nature calls' in remote areas far away from medical attention.

The slide-out bed previously sat to sit around 1.2m off the ground once pulled out from the rear of the camper, sliding easily on heavy duty bearings.

Now there's an extra step. Once the bed unit is pulled out from the main body, a mechanical hand winch lowers the bed base to a height of 700mm off the ground. Users can then unfold the very generous 2.1m x 2.1m (a little bigger than king size) bed out with two extra stabilising legs supporting the bed at the far end. (A word of advice: the bed is so large that fitted king-sized sheets will be useless – bring flat sheets instead.)



A sewn-in skirt and 2.3m x 2.1m tent to serve as the living area is attached and ready to erect. Simple! Frank says the winch idea took more than 12 months to 'nut out', and only takes an extra 1.5 minutes to assemble.

Fintex screens on all four windows in the tent as well as on the door will keep out even the smallest and most annoying of insects.

PULL-OUT KITCHEN

Camping cooks will love the space in the Tray Top kitchen. A swing-out bench pivots 90 degrees out to form an L-shape



with the vehicle. The bench holds the Lido Junior two-burner gas stove and optional fridge or you can choose to keep these in the unit and use the bench as working space.

A spring-loaded mechanism helps the bench swing out easily and also slot into place with minimal elbow grease required. There are two overhead storage cupboards, 12V lighting, a 240V power outlet and a gravity fed or electric water supply from the unit's 57 litre water tank. A 100 amp hour battery with charger is also tucked away in the kitchen space.

"We get a lot of comments about the size of the kitchen," says Frank. "Some people come up to us and say, 'That's bigger than the one we've got at home'."

There's also a standard 2.3m x 2.3m kitchen awning as standard although walls are optional.

Should you require even more room for your camping gear, powder-coated mesh steel storage baskets are available for the roof.

SUMMING UP

Anyone who owns a utility and wants to head offroad or just down the road on a fishing trip towing a tinnie should seriously consider the Tray Top Camper. It's a user-friendly jack-in-the-box-style accommodation designed and built with safety and comfort in mind. ■

Left top to bottom: The detached Tray Top; the bed is slid out and lowered; and then folded out; the attached tent folds out. **Top:** Fintex mesh windows stop insects. **Above left:** Gull-wing door provides shade when in the kitchen. **Above right:** Stove and fridge revealed.



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Manufacturer
Adventure Camping
Model
Tray Top Camper
Advised Tare weight
610k
Advised ATM
N/A
Advised ball weight
N/A
Price as reviewed
\$22,290

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