

One of the problems with camper trailers is that the bed is so high you almost need an oxygen mask to sleep at that altitude. Okay, that's an exaggeration, but many people need a step ladder or something similar to access the bed and that's inconvenient, especially in the middle of the night when nature calls.

The Adventure Camping camper trailer, designed and manufactured in South Australia, overcomes this height problem with a simple solution. The bed and canvas tent section of this camper are stored in their own container, down low in the trailer's 'box' section, rather than on top of the trailer.

Another advantage of this camper trailer's design is that it's very easy to dust-proof the storage area.

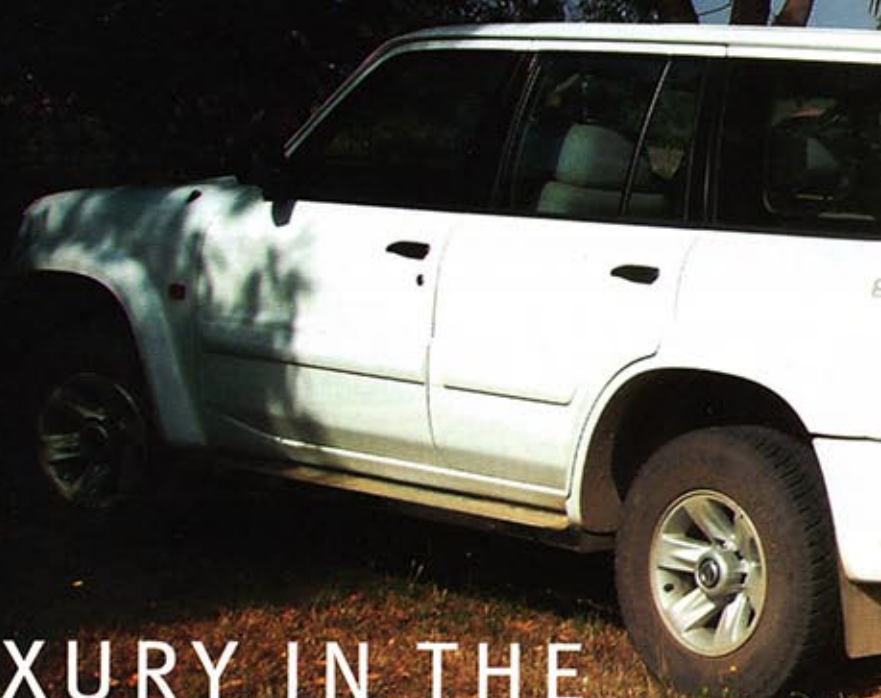
LUXURY IN THE PILBARA

There are three models of camper available from Adventure Camping, as well as a large vehicle tray slide-on unit for utes, all featuring the unique bed/tent box combo. We took the upmarket Pilbara Adventure model on our test.

The camper trailer is a simple sturdy box design on a tough no-nonsense chassis and suspension. The 50mm square axle is rated at 1500kg while the suspension consists of nine-leaf eye-to-eye springs backed up by good shock absorbers. Tyres were 16-inch Simex Road Terrains fitted to steel rims. We would have preferred to see an all-terrain tyre fitted. Brakes are a low-maintenance mechanical over-ride units.

The top half of the trailer is divided down the centre line with a kitchen area on one side

Among the many camper trailers on the market, the is big, unique and robust. **RON MOON** looks one over





From the outside the camper looks much the same as many others

and a mammoth storage area on the other. A boat and roof-rack carry basket, above the trailer's locked-down lids, allows the carriage of more gear, such as boat fuel tanks, assorted camping gear and another spare tyre.

On the A-frame a large box, on our Pilbara model, held an 80-litre fridge/freezer. On most of our travels we store a fridge unit inside the vehicle, so this box can become yet another storage area, capable of holding five 20-litre jerry cans.

A 9kg gas bottle is tucked in behind alloy checker-plate stone deflectors, which fold out of the way so the bottle can be accessed. The tow coupling on all Adventure trailers is a Treg off-road unit and three recovery points are provided at the front and rear of the trailer in case you become bogged.

Underneath its body the Pilbara version has two 59-litre water tanks, each with electronic water-level indicators located in the kitchen. A 100 amp-hour fully sealed battery and charger in the camper trailer's storage area feed three 12-volt sockets located around the camper. The kitchen and storage areas have fluoro lights.

In travelling mode, or even when on-site, this camper trailer looks very similar to other versions, but the set-up of its bed and tent is a little different.

First, once the rear tyre is dropped and the rear tailgate opened, you then slide the bed base and legs out and swivel the bed box through 90 degrees. Once in position the bed box is simply opened up. This exposes the tent canvas with its internal frame.

Before erecting the tent one of its unique design features, which allows the frame to be folded and stored in the box, comes into play. To fold in half, the tent's cross-members need to break in the middle. This is achieved quite easily by a sliding collar, which is activated by pulling a stainless steel cable. By pulling the cable and locking it in position the tent can

SET-UP IS AS EASY AS THIS



1 Drop the rear tyre and open up the tailgate



2 Slide out the bed base and extend the supporting legs



3 Swivel the bed base through 90 degrees



4 Open up the bed box to expose the tent canvas and its external frame



5 Lock the three cross-members and erect the tent



6 Once set-up, the tent is easy to access without having to climb



1 You can opt for a king-size or two double beds



2 The quality Lido Junior twin-burner stove and grill unit is stainless steel



3 There's plenty of storage spaces for all types of items



4 A 9kg gas bottle is tucked in behind alloy checker-plate stone deflectors



5 The 80-litre fridge/freezer is located on the A-frame



6 The back of the trailer is easily accessed through the tailgate



Separate from the tent area is a large awning that erects independently

be folded. Once the tent is erected these three cables (for three cross-members) need to be slipped off their locating pins so the collars slide into place and lock the two halves of the cross-member into a solid unit. It probably sounds more complicated than it really is – certainly it takes about a fifth of the time it has taken to read this paragraph!

With the collars in place the tent is raised into position by pulling the canvas up and out, which lifts the supporting frame into place. The tent floor is then pegged into position. A couple of internal cross-members are added and the frame is adjusted and tightened and the tent is now fully erected. Time lapsed, from pulling up at the campsite to a fully erected tent? About five minutes, although with practice you'd become quicker.

As the tent is lifted into place the large double bed is exposed. There's a choice of a king-size bed or two double beds but, as we've already stated, you don't need a ladder – these beds are at a similar height as the ones you have at home. Like most campers of this lift-up tent design the bed needs to be covered with a plastic canvas so it doesn't get wet if the tent canvas is wet.

Separate from the main tent area is a large awning, which can be erected independently and unrolls from its carry box mounted on the trailer just above the kitchen. The awning box is mounted on two spring-loaded uprights which, once released from their travelling position, lift into place. Undo the box lid, and roll the awning out. Two legs, incorporated into the leading edge of the awning fold down and support the outside edge. The awning on its own is set up in only a minute or so.

If the tent is up, a canvas joining section velcros between the awning and the tent to keep the rain out. Walls can be added to the awning while a couple of draught skirts around the trailer's base can also be



The kitchen is accessible at any time, canvas up or not

positioned to protect the camper's occupants from the wind.

The kitchen area is readily accessible at any time, canvas up or not. Simply flip two catches, drop the trailer's side-wall and lift the lid. This exposes a large bench area and at one end is the swing-out gas stove – in this case a Lido Junior stainless-steel twin-burner with grill. Two compartments with lift-off lids are located along the bench's front edge, a sink and tap are fitted at the far end. Three shallower compartments with locking lids in the kitchen's rear wall provide additional storage space for small items, such as spices and the like.

Most people will love the big area available in the kitchen and its handy storage areas. A few plastic boxes with other kitchen goodies or food can easily be stored in this large kitchen area.

The storage compartment on the driver's side of the trailer is huge and will carry a heap of gear but, to make the most of the cavernous space, you'd have to pack any smaller items in plastic boxes. As previously mentioned, battery and battery charger are here as well.

Unladen, the base model camper weighs in at about 750kg while the more feature-packed Pilbara camper tips the scales at closer to 800kg or more. Loaded and full of water, an all-up weight of a tonne or more is on the cards.

Towing this big camper proved to be easy and it tracked behind our tow vehicle – in this case a 3.0-litre turbo-diesel Nissan Patrol – very well.

The Adventure Camping camper and off-road trailer is a well-designed and -built alternative to other top-notch models available in the Aussie market.

The top-of-the-line Pilbara, at \$27,500, will provide years of trouble-free travelling and comfortable camping in style. **4x4**

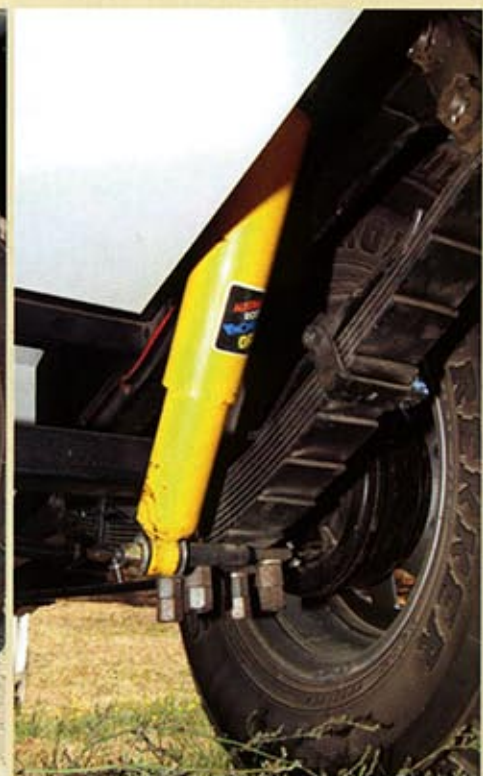
IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS



- 1** A roof rack on top of the camper allows plenty of extra gear to be stored, such as tyres, fuel or even a boat



- 2** All-terrain tyres would be better than the highway rubber fitted



- 3** Beam axle suspension with nine-leaf springs and quality dampers



For more information contact Adventure Camping and Offroad Campers, 100 Daws Road, Edwardstown, SA. Ph: 08 8276 5666; or check the web at www.adventureoffroadtrailers.com.au.

Victorians can check out the trailers at Outbound 4WD Camping Adventures, Sebastopol. Ph: 03 5336 0760.