

AWD
Camper Trailer
TOURING

» VERDICT

[PROS]

- Huge bed
- Well-designed layout
- Rugged construction with good attention to detail

[CONS]

- Shock absorbers would be good
- Tent size is quite small
- Stoneguard restricts access



OFFROAD ADVENTURE

With a name like Adventure, this camper trailer has a lot to live up to

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY PENNY JONES





» Much simpler to set up than most trailers

The word adventure implies venturing into the unknown, discovery, and having fun, and we reckon this camper trailer is well named!

We tested the new mid-range Arkaroola, and our first opinion was that the camper was unique in many respects, with simple yet non-standard features.

We towed initially on the blacktop and got a bit of bounce on some rougher country roads, making us wonder whether shock absorbers should come as standard issue. Apart from that, it towed quietly and faithfully behind the 80 Series, both on and off-road, on the standard Treg hitch.

To set the camper up and pack away was a straightforward and logical process. Like any newcomer, it took us a bit longer than it would with practice. We particularly liked the way all work was at waist height, making it much simpler to set up than most trailers. The user-friendly locks and latches were easy to operate, and the dustproofing and sealing were excellent.

Storage space was not an issue, with tons of room (1100L to be exact) for a weekend

getaway or an extended trip. If you're planning lots of the latter, the optional roof rack can provide more space if needed. The front drawbar has a toolbox, dedicated fridge box and 9kg gas cylinder.

The bed (ie, tent) part of the camper is quite unique, in that it slides out of the body of the trailer and sets up at 90° to the back of the vehicle to make an 'L' shape. Our only issue here is that the floor area is 2300x2500mm, which would be a bit squeezey for the kids and a couple of overnight bags. Camp stretchers or bunk beds might be your best bet if you're travelling with children. An additional room can be purchased as an extra to the main tent.

Having said that, for the vertically unchallenged among us, the bigger-than-king-size bed is a welcome place to spend the night! We reckon if you had a couple of kids on the floor, you could put clothes bags on the end of the bed and still have plenty of room to stretch out. The high-density foam comes as standard and can be supplemented with 'Hypervent' – a mat that sits under the mattress allowing ventilation and extra padding.

There is also an in-built 12V light for the interior of the tent and pockets on each side of the bed.

Like most campers, there are many available optional extras. However, many accessories come as standard on the Arkaroola, such as internal LED lighting, four 240V outlets with safety switches, large 86L water tank (complete with both hand pump and 12V pump). An additional 60L tank can be added if requested. The camper also has a two-burner gas stove with windbreak and 100Ah AGM battery charged by a battery charger or Anderson plug from the car.

The kitchen is the biggest we have ever seen, with dedicated storage for plates, bowls and cutlery, and two huge slide-out drawers for heavier items. Two additional storage areas in the kitchen would cover most family holidays, and we loved the swing-out two-burner gas stove with automatic gas cut-off when packed away.

We particularly liked the 'no sink' policy – for starters, we reckon having a permanent sink just encourages family members to keep using dishes in some insane mission to fill it,



Through the mud



The bed is then opened up onto its own stand



Laying the tent out ready to open up



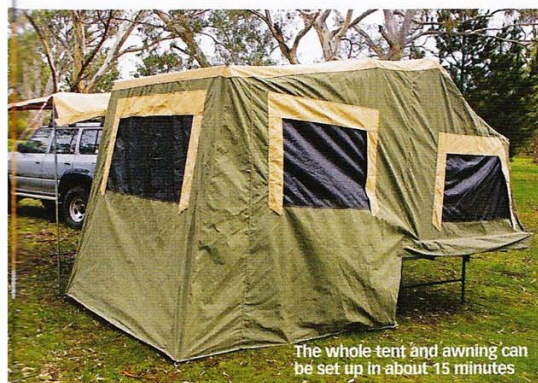
To set up the awning over the kitchen takes just a couple of minutes and can be done independent of the tent



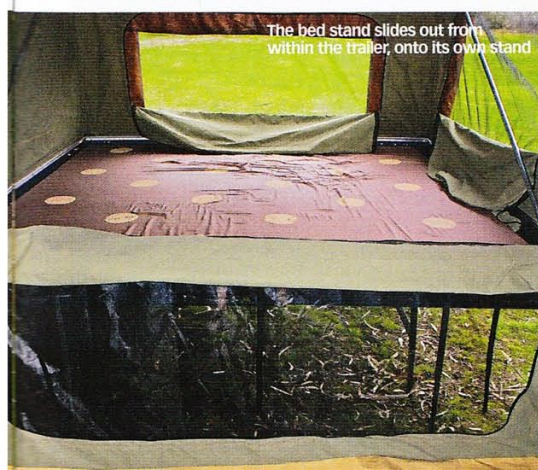
A kitchen is accessible even on the side of the road



An extensive stoneguard system is effective, but reduces access to the front of the camper and the back of the car



The whole tent and awning can be set up in about 15 minutes



The bed stand slides out from within the trailer, onto its own stand

» ARKAROOLA AT A GLANCE

Model: Arkaroola

Cost: \$31,490

Hard/Soft Floor: Soft floor hard-top camper

Dimensions (LxWxH): 4200mm (inc rear tyre) x1850x1500mm

Tare Weight (kg): 900kg

GVM/ ATM (kg): 1500kg

Towball Download (kg): 90kg

Material: Body panels zincaneal, sheetmetal welds cold galvanised then powdercoated

Coupling: Treg Offroad

Axle/Hubs: 50x50mm solid square-beam axle

Suspension: Nine-leaf eye to eye off-road springs

Chassis: 75x50x5mm drawbar, chassis 75x50x3mm.

Welds cold galvanised and powdercoated

Wheels: Black steel rims with studs to match tow vehicle

Tyres: 265/75R16 Mickey Thompson ATZ

Brakes: Override drum

Tent Construction: Australian-made canvas. Walls 80z, roof 100z

Interior Accessories: Larger-than-king-size bed with no steps or ladders, tap connected to water supply with 12V pump, two-burner gas cooker with grill permanently connected to 9kg gas bottle

Exterior Accessories: LED tail-lights, rear recovery hooks, lockable latches to all doors, rollout awning over the kitchen area that can be set up without setting up the main tent, toolbox, 86L water tank

Electrical: Front box with 12V and 240V power to fit fridge (suits 60L Engel), external 240V power inlet and outlet, internal LED strip lighting to kitchen and storage areas wired to a 100Ah AGM battery charged by a 12A battery charger or Anderson plug from the vehicle. Two 240V outlets in the kitchen

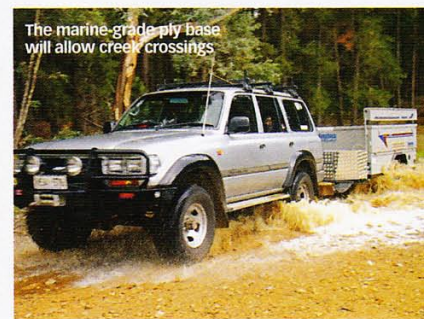
Optional Extras: Fridge, awning walls, roof-rack basket, hot water unit, solar panels. Anything on Adventure Offroad Campers's top-of-the-range Grand Tourer can be optioned onto this model



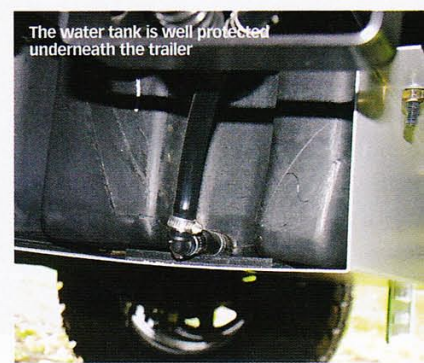
Mt Crawford Forest - A great place to camp



The unit comes complete with nine-leaf eye to eye off-road springs



The marine-grade ply base will allow creek crossings



The water tank is well protected underneath the trailer

and it wastes water and space. Instead, a portable wash bowl is provided.

You can access the kitchen when pulled up on the side of the road without unpacking the camper – very sensible when travelling with kids! A roll-out awning above the kitchen area would be well advised and only took a couple of minutes to roll out. Extra awnings around the front of the camper can be put up in a short time if needed.

The stoneguard was fantastic and did its job thoroughly, but made access to the back of the car and the front of the trailer difficult. Given that we would access these areas regularly, this could become a bit irritating.

Each camper is individually made to measure in the factory-cum-showroom, using all Australian-made local products. Adventure Offroad Campers has been around for 16 years, manufacturing, hiring and using its own campers, so the company knows its product well and has first-hand experience with it. If you're ready for adventure, give Adventure Offroad Campers a call! ■

» OWNER'S OPINION

With five kids, Jason (13), Cameron (11), Alex (10), Nathan (8) and Karla (4), Simon and Tara needed a camper trailer if they were going to keep travelling this great country by 4WD. We caught up with them in between their trips to see how their Adventure Offroad Camper is coping with their larger than normal family.

Q: How long have you owned your Adventure Offroad Camper?

A: Since 1993, six years. Although we hired a couple before we bought one.

Q: What model did you purchase and what accessories have you had fitted?

A: We initially bought a second-hand Cape York model and we now own the new Pilbara model. We have fitted solar panels and an extra battery charger.

Q: What vehicle do you normally tow it with?

A: A 100 Series Toyota LandCruiser (diesel).

Q: Where have you taken it?

A: Oodnadatta Track, Alice Springs, Kings Canyon, Flinders Ranges, Innamincka, the Birdsville Track, into North West Queensland and home. The Tanami Track, Fitzroy Crossing, Broome, Gibb River Road, Mt Isa, Kakadu, Darwin and Cape York and all around the Pilbara.

Q: What made you choose this trailer over the others available?

A: It is well designed for remote bush travel, with ample water, extra battery, and plenty of room for everything you need (especially when you travel with five kids).

Q: Have you had any problems with the trailer?

A: Absolutely none. We have never even had a flat tyre on it.

Q: Is there any way you think the trailer could be improved?

A: The stoneguard is a bit of a nuisance when you want to get to the back of the car, but we have almost no stonechips on the back of the car at least.

Q: Is there anything you don't like about the trailer?

A: My only complaint is that I wish we could go and use it more often.

Q: Would you recommend this trailer to someone else? Why, why not?

A: I would definitely recommend this trailer – it's got heaps of storage room, the kitchen is fantastic, and most of all you can't break it, it's as tough as you can get. Paul (from Adventure Offroad Campers) is fantastic to deal with, very professional and has also provided fantastic after-sales service.