

ADVENTURE OFFROAD CAMPERS GRAND TOURER

Creatively designed and engineered, this is a camper that would eat The Cape and then look around for dessert ... and meanwhile you'd be camping in grand style.

WORDS AND IMAGES BY GREG SMITH



Tough! This thing growls at you until you let it sniff your hand. But, it's also a softie – offering a number of quick and easy set-up configurations, an instantly accessible gourmet kitchen and a very comfortable night's sleep. Affectionately referred to as the GT in the factory, it's a great looking unit and you can even have it custom painted to match your tow vehicle.

This is one of the most unique camper trailers on the market and sports a

number of original, innovative features. I asked Paul Tabone of Adventure Offroad Campers how they came up with such a different concept.

He explained: "About 25 years ago Dad (Frank Tabone) had been away with a hired camper and came home with two big gripes. He was fed up with having to unload the tinnie every time he wanted to set up the camper, and he was well and truly over climbing up and down a ladder into an uncomfortable bed."

Well, both of those issues have been perfectly addressed in this Adventure Offroad Campers design. When you stop and think about it, most roof racks are added on after the camper has been built; but it quickly becomes obvious that this trailer has been designed from the roof rack down, and the result is a remarkably versatile and practical camper. Paul claims that this roof rack is the only one on the market that doesn't need to be unloaded, or shifted out of position to set up camp.



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01

The hip-height, swing-out, king-sized bed creates resort-style sleeping.

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Twin solar panels offer true remote-travel convenience, and there's even a mini-panel to run an internal exhaust fan.



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03



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The Redarc BMS offers at-a-glance power monitoring and sits between the twin water tank monitors.

04

One of the best stone guard systems I have ever seen.



05

A nice hot shower to wash the dust off.



05

It'll take a tinnie, which can be left on when setting up; and even the tilt angle of the fixed twin 65 watt solar panels can be adjusted without disturbing the load.

The other major design feature is the very clever, bigger than king-size, slide-out bed. It's huge! And it's the same height off the floor as your bed at home. No ladder to climb, and there's plenty of room to get in and out of bed without disturbing your partner's slumber. The mattress is a firm and comfortable 75mm high-density foam, and there's a mattress underlay that stops the condensation that most of us forget about between trips into those areas of extreme day and night-time temperatures. This was an inclusion which was more than an afterthought. Paul said they had to search for just the right underlay to do the job and eventually discovered it within the boating industry.

ALL THE COMFORTS OF HOME

As I said, designing the unit from the roof rack down has created a unique camper. To accommodate the roof rack, gullwing doors lift up to reveal a huge gourmet kitchen on the tent side, and an easily accessible storage boot on the opposite side of the trailer. The fully laminated easy-to-clean kitchen bench and the swing-out gas cooker/griller are at a practical working height – again, the same height as your kitchen at home.

Water is supplied to the stainless steel sink via a 12 volt mixer tap, with manual backup hand pump. There's ample storage for cutlery, cooking implements, pots and pans; and a 90 litre pantry. On the opposite side of the camper, the gullwing door covers a huge storage area which also houses the 120 amp hour battery and charger, and diesel/240 volt water heater with a 20 litre hot water storage tank.

Everywhere there is light, with LED strips in the tent, mounted on the kitchen and storage compartment doors, and under the lid to the fridge storage box on the 'A' frame. The Grand Tourer is delivered complete with an Engel 60 litre fridge/freezer, and here again we see the engineer's touch – with a mini solar powered exhaust fan evacuating the hot air from the dustproof fridge box to help the Engel keep its cool.

There's also a shade sail that quickly sets up to cover the 'A' frame ... handy when you need to get to the fridge in the rain or Outback heat.

VERSATILITY

It's worth mentioning that whilst the model supplied for this review was the fully optioned top-of-line GT, all Adventure Offroad Campers models are built on the same uniquely designed and engineered camper trailer. Only the optional extras vary between models. When you see the set-up configurations

available, it's pretty obvious that these camper trailers were designed by experienced campers.

For a short pit stop, your gourmet kitchen is open and ready for business in a few seconds – with a roll-out awning that sets up in a minute or so. Setting up for the night takes four or five minutes to have your tent and larger than king-size bed rigged and secured. Part of the engineering wizardry of this unit is its unique, patented slide-out bed and accompanying fold-out tent. In a very simple, single-handed procedure, the spare wheel drops down; the bed and tent assembly slides out on rollers from the rear of the trailer and swings around 90 degrees, and is flipped open to full width; supporting legs are dropped down; and the spring-loaded tent is ready to be pulled into position.

There are a couple of frames that need to be clipped into place and extended to get the roof squared away; and unless it's really windy, two pegs are all you need to get the sewn-in floor into shape. It takes a little longer to rig the optional kids' side room off the main bedroom area. Of course both bedrooms have sewn-in floors. To set up for a longer stay, the kitchen awning and tent roof are Velcroed together; and annexe walls enclose the kitchen area – creating a spacious and versatile campsite which can be closed up for maximum privacy, or opened to take advantage of the breeze and the view.

TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH ...

Once you drop the Treg hitch pin into place you could almost forget that you've got a trailer on behind. Especially designed for the roughest conditions, rebound helpers and shockers assist the eye to eye nine leaf springs to keep the trailer right on track, and the rear spring hangers are greaseable to help keep things 'factory fresh'. Mickey Thompson 16 inch off-roaders are standard equipment (probably better rubber than most tow vehicles will be wearing), with the spare tyre sensibly mounted on the rear.

A solid 50 x 75 mm powder coated off-road chassis sits on a 50 x 50 mm solid steel beam axle that's rated to 1,500 kilograms. Underneath, all the vital parts are well protected – including the water tanks – with all vulnerable lines and circuitry covered, or encased

out of harm's way. A couple of rear recovery snatch points will help get you out of trouble if required, and quality seals do a good job of keeping the dust outside. In fact the bed is double sealed for good measure.

... AND ALL THE REST


Down below are two water tanks with 140 litres total capacity, and you can keep an eye on the levels with twin indicators in the kitchen. There's also a Redarc Electronics Battery Management System (again the readout panel is handy at a glance in the kitchen) plus an Anderson Plug. There are five hardwired 240 volt power points deployed throughout, protected by a power safety switch and circuit breakers.

Brakes are electric off-road drum, with handbrake. The stone guard is another unique Adventure Offroad Campers design and I reckon it's the best I've

ever seen. I first saw it a few years ago and have since spotted a number of attempts at copying the concept by both manufacturers and handymen alike. You won't want to Swap 'n' Go your gas bottle lest you lose your floating gas gauge which tells you at a glance exactly how much gas you have left. All the latches are lockable; in fact Adventure Offroad Campers present as some of the most secure campers on the market.

When you leave camp to go exploring, there's plenty of room to stow gear in lockable storage areas – leaving only the bedclothes subject to the honesty of the bush. For the tinnie, there's an optional outboard motor mount.

And after a hot day on the track, there's an outside shower waiting for you to wash the dust away.

Adventure Offroad Campers couldn't have named their top-of-range unit more appropriately. This is a fair dinkum Grand Tourer. 

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AS TESTED — MODEL: GRAND TOURER

PRICE: \$53,240

LENGTH: 4300mm

(including rear mounted spare tyre)

WIDTH: 1890mm

(not including wheel arches flares)

HEIGHT: 1500mm (Top of Trailer); 1800mm
(Top of Awning)

DRAW LENGTH: 1600mm

TARE: Up to 1050kg

GROSS: Up to 1500kg

TOWBALL WEIGHT: Up to 100kg (empty)

SUSPENSION: Eye to eye nine leaf springs,
rebound helpers, rear greaseable hangers,
shockers

BRAKES: Electric off-road Drum; Handbrake

TYRES: 3 x 265/75 R16 Mickey Thompson Tires

WHEELS: 3 x alloy rims

HITCH: Treg off-road and vehicle coupling

CHASSIS: 50 x 75 mm off-road
powder coated

AXLE: Solid steel 50 x 50 mm
— rated to 1500kg

Thank you to Brenton and Nadine for letting
us explore their beautiful Saunders Gorge
Retreat and amazing 4WD Park,
in Adelaide's southern ranges.

You can find out more about the Grand
Tourer at the Adventure Offroad Campers
website: www.adventurecampers.com.au ... or you can call their head office on
(08) 8276 5666 or FreeCall 1800 353 561.

*This is a fair dinkum
Grand Tourer*

