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THE VIEW FROM

INSIDE

03 | June/July 2013

**“We are all visitors to this time, this place.
We are just passing through.
Our purpose here is to observe, learn, to grow,
to love ... and then we return home”**

Australian Aboriginal Proverb

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COVER Volkswagen Kombi Camper courtesy Mark Stanek taken at Big 4 Easts Beach Kiama NSW. Photo by Daniel Linnet, www.linnetfoto.com.au.

Above: Port Wilunga, SA

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They were the first RV to conquer the planet – today they are more popular than ever. We salute the classic VW bus as the company prepares to halt production after 53 years.

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Rod Bruem

Do you remember your first trip in a Kombi? For me the memory goes back to the early 1970s and a journey to the markets in Sydney, stocking up groceries for my Aunt's corner store in Lithgow.

As we headed off over the Blue Mountains, I was intrigued by the mechanics and the heat of the engine under the floor, while at the same time focussed on summoning the strength to pull shut the heavy sliding door on the side in just one go.

My interest in Volkswagens had already been sparked years before by my Uncle John. He took great pleasure studying the gobsmacked looks on the faces of me and my brothers as he lifted the bonnet on his shiny new car and started loading luggage inside.

This year marks the closing of a chapter in engineering history we'd probably be celebrating if it wasn't for the unfortunate fact that it began with Adolf Hitler asking Ferdinand Porsche to design a car for the people back in 1938.

In December, the final descendants of this remarkable rear-engine, air-cooled car will roll off the assembly line in South America. It is a Kombi, but not quite as we knew it. Water-cooled radiators and other bits were added over the years to meet modern regulations. Even stricter pollution and safety rules have been cited as the reason for

VW finally pulling the plug.

In Australia the Kombi had a terrible reputation for chugging up hills, overheating and dying. No former frustrated Aussie owner from the 1970s could have imagined the near six-figure prices they're fetching at auctions these days.

As we began researching for our special Kombi feature and meeting avid collectors, we learned there's a global trade in these 'used vehicles', unlike any other, with Australia both an importer and exporter. Even the most rusted and dilapidated ones are sought after by collectors.

We hope you enjoy our special Kombi issue – a tribute to the world's first truly global 'RV'.

Rod Bruem
editor@timetoroam.com.au



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Wicked war continues



Wicked Campers – amusing to some, offensive to others

Australia's Advertising Standards Bureau has declared a new round in the war against the 'bad boys' of the RV hire business, Wicked Campers.

The Brisbane-based company has been

under fire since 2008 for the controversial slogans painted on its budget vans targeted at the youth market.

Some say the signs are amusing and politically incorrect, but critics say they

are downright sexist, racist and even homophobic.

The company seems to revel in the publicity and 'bad boy' image and it certainly doesn't seem to have harmed business. Wicked is now a global success story with its campers available in New Zealand, Africa, Europe and North America.

The CEO of Australia's Advertising Standards Bureau, Fiona Jolly, says she's frustrated by the continuing complaints.

She said Wicked always agreed to remove offensive signs after mediation, but were always too slow in actually complying and so the complaints kept rolling in.

Ms Jolly plans to lobby the Queensland Government to intervene to get the offensive vans repainted or off the road.

Wicked Campers declined to respond.

Tornado wipe out

The value of caravan and camping-based tourism has been brought home to the NSW-Victoria border region after a tornado wiped out three local tourist parks.

Corowa shire Deputy Mayor Daryl Davey said the region has suffered greatly from the March 21 tornado – one of the worst ever seen in Australia. The loss of tourism was especially felt over the Easter period with all three parks closed at what's normally one of the busiest times of the year on Lake Mulwala.

Although the region was declared a natural disaster area, Councillor Davey said money had been slow coming to help with the clean-up, with debris still scattered widely around the area.

Falling trees, flying glass and sheet metal injured more than 20 people, two critically. Many permanent residents of the parks were left homeless.

The Denison County Caravan Park was hardest hit with more than 150 vans and villas destroyed.

Owners Craig and Debbie O'Callaghan are



Caravan parks bore the brunt of the tornado, one of the worst seen in Australia

Shattered park owners Craig and Debbie O'Callaghan, still battling to re-open the business. Photos: Border Mail

still working to clean up and re-open, the task made more difficult by the presence of asbestos and the fact many on-site van owners were not insured.

In a further blow to caravan owners, they've announced the park will re-open as a cabin-only tourist complex, with owners of

any remaining vans on site asked to remove what's left of them.

Near Kyffins Reserve, a popular camping area used by RV travellers remains closed indefinitely, while the Sun Country Caravan Park finally reopened earlier this month.

Lunch, with a side of caravan nostalgia



Service with a smile: Owen, Rhys and Jessica Hart at the Left Bower

Family caravan holidays provided the inspiration for Sydney's latest café sensation.

'The Left Bower' is the closest thing to a Viscount holiday experience on solid ground -and it has the city's fickle restaurant critics buzzing about its yummy food and funky décor.

The name for the Sutherland café was taken from caravan holiday card games played by its owners, the Hart family.

The logo is a stylised version of the Viscount logo from the early 1980s. Outside there's aluminium caravan cladding and tail lights.

Inside, the caravan décor includes curved ceilings and retro cabinets filled with period nic nacs including board games to entertain diners on a rainy winter afternoon.

The Hart siblings reckon regular caravan holidays brought them closer together and also laid a good solid foundation for their business success today.

"We're a very close family and I think it goes back to the fact that when we were kids we always went on four holidays a year in the Viscount," Jess said.

They raided their grandmother's keepsakes to deck out their first café in the southern suburb of Engadine, then in November last year opened the Left Bower, their second café, right opposite the railway station in busy Sutherland.

The food is specially sourced from a mix of local and ethical suppliers. The coffee comes from northern NSW, the eggs from 11 year old rare hen breeder in Gerringong.

Food reviewer Jill Dupliex gave Left Bower a four star rating. The scrambled eggs, cooked to father John's secret recipe, are certainly not to be missed.

Plans for a third café are already well advanced, with work soon to begin on transforming the former Thirroul Post Office building in the trendy northern Wollongong beachside suburb.

Tassie tax abolished

Tasmanian caravan dealers are looking forward to an upturn in sales after the State Government agreed to scrap a 3 per cent sales tax.

Tassie caravan dealer Alan Gath, who lobbied for the change, predicts sales could now double as it is no longer cheaper for buyers to go to Melbourne.

Mr Gath is continuing to lobby for the State Government to halve a 4 per cent sales tax still being applied to motorhomes.

'appy travelling

A new iPad app has been launched by the Caravan Parks Association of Queensland to give travellers easy access to information on parks.

The Queensland Caravan Parks Directory 2013 takes the popular paper-based directory into the digital age, with videos, hyperlinks to parks and destinations, and special offers.

Operations Manager Kristy Ponting said the new app was the perfect travelling with information about great places to stay as well as local attractions.

The iPad app is available from the iTunes store for free. The paper directory can also be downloaded from the Caravanning Queensland website www.caravanqld.com.au

Victory for dogs

After overturning a 32-year ban on pets two years ago, BIG4 Holiday Parks has announced it now has 50 operators which are dog friendly.

CEO of the leading parks chain, Ray Schleibs, says the group recognises dogs are very much a part of the family for many guests.

Not only are there 50 parks now marked as 'dog friendly' on the BIG4 website, two parks also have cabins available to dog-owning guests. They are the BIG4 Port Willunga Tourist Park in South Australia and BIG4 Gold Coast Holiday Park.

Buyers beware – new scheme to weed out dodgy imports

The major players in Australia's caravan and recreational vehicle industry hope new quality accreditation system will help buyers steer clear of shoddy imports.

RVM Australia has launched the new system of self-regulation at a time when the high Australian dollar has made it more attractive for overseas companies to target local buyers with products that often don't meet Australian standards.

The CEO of the peak lobby group, David Duncan, said the organisation would now roll out an audit process covering its member base of 90 manufacturers.

"There is no mandatory regulatory system, pretty much anyone can set up and start selling – and who is to say the product is of sufficient quality?," Mr Duncan said.

Once successful, RVM Australia believes it could lobby Government to have the compliance system applied to imports, to create more level playing field.

"We're not a protectionist organisation, we have no problem with imports as long as they comply with Australian Standards. We'd like to see more rigorous checks," he said.



RVM Australia CEO David Duncan

Mr Duncan said RVM accreditation scheme was based on ensuring quality. It's hoped buyers will become familiar with the trademark and look for it when making a purchasing decision.

He said the cost to manufacturers was minimal and RVM Australia had the backing of the majority of RV builders.

With the high Australian dollar now edging down, Mr Duncan said it would be welcomed by Australian manufacturers with an eye to exports.

"Even with the dollar at record highs our manufacturers have performed well. They're building more than 20,000 new units per annum, which is a record. That's a higher per-capita figure than the US," Mr Duncan said.

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INDUSTRY GROUP DOES HAVE ITS PRIORITIES RIGHT

I want to congratulate you on a great and informative magazine. I note in your editorial (T2R April/May issue) you question if our strategic priorities are really in the right order when discussing our call for improved policy and research being listed at item nine of the Blueprint.

I can assure you and your readers the issue of improved policy and research in our caravan and camping industry is of the highest priority at both a Victorian and National level through our cooperation with Caravan and RV Industry Association of Australia (CRVA). One of our challenges in putting the Victorian Industry Blueprint together was to put so many important matters into a workable action plan. So the numbering in no way reflects the level of importance of some the key areas of the plan, in fact we are already working on a number of important projects.

The outcomes of these projects won't be seen for a little while but they are strategically important to the future growth of our industry.

Thanks for your interest and support of our Blueprint, it is much appreciated.

Robert Lucas, CEO

Caravan Trade & Industries Association of Victoria



5TH WHEELER GLORY

We picked up Time to Roam at a caravan show recently and we think it's great and about time Australian's got a FREE magazine. Look forward to more editions keep up the awesome work!

My partner and I purchased a 5th wheeler in January this year from a retired horse chiropractor who had custom built it for himself, his wife and their horses.

My partner and I run the family owned stud, Jangharm Arabians based in Toowoomba. We travel regularly competing at horse shows in QLD and Sydney.

Prior to the 5th wheeler we were staying overnight in hotels and travelling to and from the showgrounds and having to rely on other people to keep an eye on our horses overnight.

We talked about a buying a horse float with a kitchenette until the day we saw this beautiful big red rig for

sale near Toowoomba. We had a look at it and instantly fell in love.

The back half takes 3 horses comfortably and the front half has a step up bedroom and a super comfortable double bed.

The dinette is comfortable and there's more storage space under the seating which is great for riding boots.

The reverse cycle air-conditioning offers us comfort after a hot day of competing. There's a shower in the horse compartment which is rubber lined for the horses' safety. There are double doors that separate the living area and the horse area. The horse partitions remove easily creating an extra bedroom or an alternative dining area to outside. We had our 8 tonne Mitsubishi truck modified to tow the 5th wheeler. We are now proudly converted 5th Wheeler Travellers.

Stacey Smith

Toowoomba QLD

SHARING DAD'S TEARDROP

I'd like to share with your readers some pictures of my Dad's 'Woody Tear Drop', he built earlier this year. He was looking through some English magazines of the Woodys and because he has a caravan builders background, took on his little project. It has a double bed, kitchen and a timber roof covered in vinyl. To be honest I think he has more pleasure building and restoring the older style vans than the modern vans.

He has also restored a Wanda Caravan with wooden bonded side walls and an aluminium front and back. I love Time to Roam magazine it's fantastic, keep up the great work.

Kelly Oldman

Berwick VIC

Time to Roam Australia welcomes letters and photos or contributions from our readers on just about any subject that relates to caravanning and camping.

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Catching the Kombi bug

AUSTRALIA'S ENDURING LOVE FOR THE VW VAN

By Ruth Morris



Ruth Morris with her much loved camper

We all love Kombis, apart from when we are stuck behind one. When did this love affair begin and why do so many people fall in love with a brick-shaped hunk of metal on wheels?

Everyone knows someone who has owned a Kombi, or wishes they did. Volkswagen fanatics often refer to catching 'The Bug', and we are not talking about chasing the other popular Volkswagen, the Beetle. The love of Kombis is as contagious as any disease, but there is no immunisation and no cure. Once bitten by 'The Bug' the victim is left helplessly in love, craving to own their own rusty brick-shaped symbol of freedom, regardless of how limited their mechanical knowledge is. But let the bug-bitten beware! The love now



Sunrise over Easts Beach, Kiama NSW. Photo Daniel Linnet

comes with a price tag that has changed the demographic of owners from travellers and hippies to the advantaged affluent.

Australians have always had a love of exploring their vast country during family holidays. From the vast coastline, inland rivers, to deserts and mountains, Australia offers such variety for those prepared to travel. Back in the 1970s, pioneers of television travel documentaries the Leyland Brothers' popularised this exploratory spirit with their Super-8 footage. They brought the far reaches of Australia into the lounge rooms of the common couch potato, inspiring the young nation to get up and see Australia for themselves, travelling the great brown land in a Kombi. Volkswagen Australia sponsored the TV show, Ask the Leyland Brothers, providing Mike and Mal with Kombis that

appeared to travel across terrain that no family sedan possibly could. Kombis have been circuiting and criss-crossing the continent ever since, although today the 'grey nomad's' vehicle of choice is a recreational vehicle that is often much more spacious and modern than the Kombi.

The standard family car does not offer the space, versatility, comfort and amenities required for extended trips and a nomadic lifestyle. The necessity of a motel greatly restricts where the car traveller can travel to and stay. Tents offer limited protection from the elements and the smorgasbord of deadly mini-beasts in Australia. Caravans are not easily towed through rough terrain and add significantly to fuel and registration costs.

Enter the recreation vehicle, or "RV", and welcome to a world of freedom. With

the introduction of the Kombi campervan it suddenly became possible to simply 'park and pop' your elevated roof and 'rock n roll' the bed, draw the curtains and enjoy sleeping or tea making wherever you pleased, regardless of the weather. When not in use, the Kombi demands just one standard garage space. Because it is so versatile, the Kombi can be used as a daily driver when it's not a holiday home on wheels, allowing the visiting of different locations every night without the trouble of setting up a tent, or hitching and towing a van. Because its size is comparable to a standard wagon car, it is still easy to park in the city and has an extremely impressive turning circle due to remarkable German engineering.

But what's behind this enduring fascination? Drive a Kombi past any group of children and there is bound to be a number of them who grin



Daniel Linnert

and tug their jaded parents' arms, pointing at the Kombi. It's surely not merely their remote resemblance to an ice-cream van that is attracting a new generation of fans. To the uneducated eye, from the outside, Kombis look similar. Their mysterious interior, when revealed, amazes the uninitiated. The compact campervan facilities rival the imagination of any modern day Swedish designer whose domestic layouts boast compact living in just twenty square metres. In a Kombi, it is all packed into a clever four and a half square metres. Elevating roofs popping up in all directions mean Kombis can maximise their space when stationary. They truly deserve to be leaders in the 'transformer' category of vehicles.

Kombis were mostly available in the form of either microbus, campervan, panel van or ute. The microbus was able to transport up to eight passengers, well before the 'people movers' of the modern day. The panel van was popular amongst salesmen and couriers and the ute satisfied the requirements of the Australian tradies.

Most Kombi campervans were fitted out with at least one double bed, storage

space, fridge, gas cooking facilities, a table for eating and a sink for washing up. Additional awnings to increase living space were available as optional extras for those whose needs were greater than the standard number of available berths.

Kombis were imported to Australia as a basic blank canvas and fitted out as campervans by companies in Australia such as Swagman, Sopru and Trakka. In the UK there was a wider variety of companies doing their own fit-outs, such as Viking, Devon, Dormobile and Danbury. They all varied in the details of the interior fit-out and had a range of elevating canvas roof styles. Only the Westfalia was available from the German dealership before 1973 if you ordered a campervan model. After this, Devon was also available through Volkswagen. Rather cleverly, Volkswagen ran a scheme called the Tourist Delivery Program, which enabled the foreign buyer to take a European holiday in their newly purchased Kombi van before VW would ship their purchase home. This scheme added to the popularity of the Westfalia in the USA, but fewer imports of the Westfalia model exist in Australia, making right-hand drive Westfalias

highly sought after and rare today in both the UK and Australia.

The excesses of social gatherings become easier to negotiate when a Kombi has been used as the means of arrival. The convenience to bed down in familiar surroundings immediately, rather than having to navigate into the cold of night, or trouble the host of the party after the coffee has been served, is another asset to owning a Kombi.

In the 1980s there were several mountain workers who combated the shortage of alpine accommodation, reduced their cost of living and hazardous daily travel to the NSW ski slopes by parking at the bottom of the ski slopes in their own self-contained mobile micro apartments, Kombis. Many Kombi owners and ex-owners over the years admit to extended periods of time living in their Kombi.

From one generation to the next, the habit is transferred. Those children whose parents owned a Kombi at some point have inadvertently planted a seed which germinates through feelings of nostalgia into a desire to

→ continued page 16

MEET THE COVER MODELS

Mark Stanek and Alex Lonnen became mates though their mutual love of Kombis and spent many years and went to great lengths to get their dream-mobiles.

Both have fond memories of Kombis from their youth. The camper featured on our cover shot belongs to Mark (far left). He grew up in Sydney's surfing culture and drove one in his teens. He says caught the 'Kombi bug' again when he looked to buy one for his son.

He then spent two years tracking down the camper. "It's from 1976, the same year I left school," he says.

Alex actually imported his 1966 deluxe bus from the USA and had it shipped over to Australia.

As Kombis have become increasingly hot collector items world-wide, an international trade has developed.

According to Alex, a lot of UK people who came to Australia on working holidays started shipping Kombis back to Europe, where the craze for collecting started much earlier, making them more difficult to obtain.

As prices have subsequently risen here – and the Aussie dollar soared in value, Alex said it made sense to import one from the US.

"It took four months to get it here and the electrician I bought it off in California thought I was mad."

He won't reveal how much the exercise cost, although it's worth noting that a 1967 VW similar to his sold at auction recently in the US for \$96,000.

Below: Inside Mark's 1976 Kombi Camper



The Floater



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VW KOMBI TIMELINE

1947 Dutch VW importer Ben Pon comes up with the idea for a workhorse van after visiting the Beetle factory. He completes some sketches, convincing management to go ahead with production.

1950 Volkswagen releases the 'Type 2' from its factory in Wolfsburg Germany. It's unique because it places the driver directly above the front wheels and is rear-engined.



1952 The utility flat top tray model is introduced.

1963 The rear door is widened and an option for a sliding door for the passenger/cargo section of the Kombi is created.

1949 Testing begins on the prototype, shown publicly for the first time at the Geneva Motor Show.

1951 Kombi goes RV – The Westfalia camper is introduced, taking its name from the German town where the a coach building company does the camper conversion.

1953 Kombis are imported to Australia for the first time and the following year they are assembled at VW's Clayton factory in Melbourne.

1968 The T2 Kombi is released with a larger 1.6 litre engine. This model swaps the split-front window for a bay window, for this reason the much sought after pre-1968 Kombis with their push out windows are known as "splitties".

own a Kombi, thus reliving their childhood. Many Kombi children have their first experiences of driving in a Kombi. Without power steering, ABS, electric windows, modern suspension, air conditioning and air bags, the driving experience is certainly more holistic. Kombi drivers tend to be careful drivers, partly due to the forward positioning of the driver, the vehicle's inability to corner at anything more than a sensible speed and to some extent, the ever increasing value of their asset.

Kombis have undergone some manufacturers' modifications over the decades. The basic 'splitty', 'bay' and 'wedge' varieties, referring to the windcreens, have been further altered by owners to form customised Kombis that are extreme adaptations, guaranteed to turn heads. They have been shortened to resemble 'Smart' cars, lengthened to stretch-limousine luxury, lowered to within an inch of the tarmac and heightened to resemble a double-decker bus. Some Kombis have even had the body of a VW Beetle grafted permanently to their roof resulting in headroom with extra windows.

The surfing culture has long since adopted the Kombi as its vehicle of choice, making imagery of waxed long boards, sand, surf and sunsets synonymous with the VW. This came

about due to surfers' nomadic lifestyle and the capacity of the Kombi to easily transport a longboard and accommodate the rider in the most remote and enticing of wave locations.

What began as the utilisation of a practical vehicle has become a social cult, meshed by a mutual love, where drivers wave at each other -despite their only connection being the Kombi they are both driving. Buying a Kombi is like being adopted into a family. Other owners will go out of their way to compare and contrast their vehicles and have the ability to talk endlessly about both their Kombi adventures and the arcane details of the mechanics and cosmetics of their pride and joy. Friendships are forged despite little other common ground, facilitated by nationwide and state clubs dedicated to the mutual passion.

The Kombi has undergone a transformation of ownership over the years, but it can't shake the hippie connection. A mere three days of Woodstock in the 'Summer of Love' of 1969 connected the Kombi with the young and free in the minds of the pedestrian mainstream, boosting its image to an iconic status that is firmly interwoven in popular culture. It's been there ever since, and will be for many generations to come. 🍷



1972 The T2B is introduced with disc brakes. Automatic Transmission becomes available with a Type 4 engine the following year. The blinkers on the front of the Kombi van are made square and fitted above the headlights. The famous VW emblem is reduced in size on the front of this model. Enlarged front bumpers and tail lights are introduced.

2012 VW announces South American production the Kombi will end in December 2013, even the most modern version cannot be upgraded to meet new safety regulations.

1976 Kombi production ends in Germany, although continues in South America. Assembly of all VWs ends in Australia, with VW selling its Melbourne factory to Nissan.

1991 Production of the T2C Kombi begins in Mexico, with a slightly raised roof and 1.9 litre water cooled engine.

Below, The line-up at a recent rally of Kombi clubs at Berry NSW. For more photos, turn to page 46.



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Keen for Kombis

THE SOARING LAND FORMATION KNOWN AS THE NIMBIN ROCKS PROVIDES A STUNNING BACKDROP FOR LORRAINE AND ANDY KEEN'S 'TREECHANGE' HOME – AND THEIR PRIDE OF FIVE RETRO KOMBIS AND TWO CARAVANS.

The collection began when Lorraine was about to celebrate her 50th birthday and Andy had a bit of making up to do.

Although they'd been together nearly 30 years, he admits he'd rarely bought her a Birthday present. So for the half century milestone, he told her she could have whatever she wanted.

It was an easy choice. Lorraine wanted to wind back the clock and re-live some glory days of her youth.

Not long out of her teens, Lorraine married a surfer and headed off on a round-Australia surfing safari in a Kombi.

They got as far as Ceduna and the Kombi died. Like Kombis tend to do. Lorraine always longed to own a Kombi again.

"When Andy asked me what I wanted and I said, "I want my Kombi back!" Andy had never owned a Kombi and had no idea what he was getting himself in to."

A wattle-coloured 1974 Kombi camper christened Maggie was bought for the birthday. She was later traded for a totally



Andy and Lorraine Keen



(Top Left) Monty the 'show pony' and his partner Mildred; (Top Right): Ugly Betty and Happy: "We just like looking at them"; (Right) 'Blue Bus' – the former baker's van with intricate wood-lined interior.

original 1976 Sopru Campmobile model, almost the same as the one she owned at 21.

"Molly" was trucked to Nimbin from the far reaches of WA.

"We bought her on eBay, taking a big gamble on the sight unseen Kombi that looked green in the dodgy mobile phone listing photos and went with our gut instinct as she was a "one owner" with just 52,000 kilometres on the clock. When she arrived on the truck I said 'You've got to be kidding'. But once I took a look inside, I was hooked.... all the original features were intact in near perfect condition. Only the rear seat swab and the curtains had been changed. I've since managed to track down a set of the original fabric curtains."

Alongside Molly sits Blue Bus, a 1967 wood-lined panel van, originally used as a bakers delivery vehicle in outback Queensland

Monty is the pride of the fleet. The Keens refer to the 1977 builders van as their "show



pony" because it draws crowds and admiration from judges as they travel around to shows.

Andy says Monty was purchased for \$4,500 from a Canberra builder who'd had it since new.

"They were very popular builders utes because of the long (3.1 metre) tray. The high tray makes a good workbench and there are compartments underneath where you can lock up tools."

An immaculate restoration was carried out over many months, as with all their

projects, with the help of professional tradespeople in the Lismore area.

Today the VW flatbed ute is estimated to be worth in excess of \$25,000.

"They're very hard to find these days because they were usually just worked to death," Andy said.

"Because they're air cooled and the engine is at the back, they're notorious for overheating. The road service guy is never too far away when you own a Kombi."

Outside the garage and down towards the



(Top Left) Blue Bus looks at home in downtown Nimbin, the Keens insist they're 'happy, not hippy'. (Bottom Left) Molly the Camper. (Top Right) the immaculate interior of Blue Bus and (Bottom Right) engine compartment of Monty

end of the yard are two more VW vans – Ugly Betty and her mate Happy were rescued from rusty graveyards and are now continuing their decline in full view of the Keen's home. They have no intention of doing much with them.

"They'd cost too much to restore. I just enjoy sitting on the veranda and looking at them," Lorraine says.

Then there are the caravans, purchased with the aim of providing more comfortable sleeping quarters when they go to Kombi shows.

"We spent three and a half years looking for a suitable caravan and then found Mildred at our nearest neighbours place just over the road."

Mildred, now Monty's show partner, is a Culbert Cruiser 10 bondwood kit van, built by the father of their next door neighbour in the early 1970s from a late 1960s plan. Possibly one of the last kit vans of its type assembled.

"The name Mildred came from the fact that she was covered in mould and mildew. It took several months to get rid of all the black."

The newest addition to their collection is Babe – a 1953 all-fibreglass van bought from Grafton where she has been passed around the family since new. They're still unsure of its origins. Weighing in at just 250kgs, it cost just \$57 to register.

"We need to do a lot of work to restore her to her former glory and replace various "improvements" with original fixtures, a job we look forward to completing."

Andy says the Kombis have been the best value investment he's ever made and predicts classic caravans are heading the same way.

"Nothing else I've owned has increased in value as much as the Kombis. And since we've had Mildred accompanying Monty to shows and camp grounds, it seems as many people want to check out

the caravan as much as the Kombis."

The Keens obviously love their Kombi collection and showing them off to admirers. They regularly travel to shows, taking care to make plenty of stops along the way to avoid overheating.

A highlight of their calendar is helping to organise the annual Nimbin Kombi Convoy – a festival re-enacting the arrival of hippies to the former dairying town in the 1970s.

While they admit to being Kombi lovers from Nimbin, they say it does sometimes see them stereotyped.

"When you say you're from Nimbin and arriving in a Kombi, people just don't know what to expect. We prefer to describe ourselves as more happy than hippie."

As for Lorraine, she reckons she's discovered the secret of eternal youth.

"I love the fact that I'm 21 again whenever I'm behind the wheel." ❖



Slide Ons



NORTHSTAR

Northstar slide on campers are also known as ute campers, tray campers and truck campers. The Northstar slide on camper is available to suit small utes and trays from Falcon, Commodore, Hilux, Triton, Mazda and Rodeo etc., to mid sized; Landcruiser, Patrol etc. right up to Ford F series, GMC Chev and Dodge Ram.

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Adelaide All Stars



SOUTH AUSTRALIA PRODUCED MORE THAN ITS FAIR SHARE OF CARAVANS IN THE 1950S AND 60S

By **Susan and Keith Hall**

Most vintage caravan enthusiasts view the mid-20th century as the golden age of caravans.

After all, it was the dawn of an era when every family aspired to own a car and a caravan.

Taking family holidays by the beach or in the bush really became part of the great Australian dream.

But in the 1950, the era of hand-built wooden caravans, the states with the biggest caravan markets weren't actually the biggest builders.

South Australia punched way above its weight, producing many of Australia's iconic brands.

New South Wales and Victoria had a handful of manufacturers, but South Australia had dozens. Brands included Adelma, Adventurer, Broadway, Clipper, Furness, Globetrotter, Hardy, Harris, Jennison, Paramount, Quest, Road Cruiser, Roadmaster and Rowvan. Even the legendary Viscount started out in Adelaide

before moving to Sydney in the late 1950s.

Today Adelaide still has some tell-tale signs remaining from its glory days of caravan manufacturing.

In the suburb of St Marys there is a Furness Street named in honour of the former caravan builder, while the sign "Globetrotter Caravans" is still evident on the back of building in Hindmarsh.

The most enduring testament to the South Australian caravan industry is the high esteem in which these vans are regarded in the vintage caravan community. Beautifully restored and loved by their owners, they're testament to the original high level of craftsmanship of their builders.

But the most interesting thing about these vans is the way they all seem to reveal unexpected stories about different aspects of South Australian caravanning history.

Because the caravans were manufactured by small family-owned businesses, these stories are often also part of a family history.

A 1953 Jennison caravan belonging to Jeff Gill of Canberra is a good example. The company that built it was started by



Pictured: (Top) Larry and Judy Weeper's 1963 Roadmaster with a colour-matched 1967 Mercury Cougar. (Middle) The Weepers relax inside their 1963 Roadmaster. (Bottom) Ellen and Bob Haywood with their 1960 Adventurer caravan



(Above) Vintage van get-together in the Barossa Valley to celebrate South Australia's caravan heritage. (Below) Interior of a 1960 Adventurer with its double-camber canite roof.

John Jennison in the 1930s and based in Salisbury, SA. Advertisements from the 1950s describe these vans as "the aristocrat of the road". However Jeff acquired the van more for its family connection than its quality. John Jennison was his maternal grandfather. So Jeff can recognise the people shown in old Jennison caravan advertisements because they are all family and friends.

Ray Mossop of Adelaide also comes from a caravan building family. His father Bert built Broadway caravans, and Ray is the proud owner of a 1950s Broadway. Herbert Mossop began his caravan building business after World War II in his partner's backyard and went on to build about 500 caravans up until 1960. To maintain the family tradition, Ray built a custom teardrop caravan and named it "Broadway".

Yet another man with caravan building in his blood is Larry Weepers of Adelaide. His father bought the Roadmaster Caravan company in 1968 and today Larry is still in the caravan business, though carrying out repairs and maintenance rather than building new caravans. He has a passion for the Roadmasters of the 1960s, with their

typically South Australian style of double-camber canite roof. Larry's own van is a stylish 1963 Roadmaster which he tows with a colour-matched 1967 Mercury Cougar.

Another South Australian caravan brand which produced vans with a surprising resemblance to Roadmaster is Adelma. This brand was built from 1966 to 1980 by the legendary Coppola Brothers, using the

jigs and designs that had previously been used to build Roadmasters. To stress the South Australian origins of their caravans, the company name Adelma was a shortened form of "Adelaide Made".

The Coppola brothers, who were immigrants from Italy, were skilled craftsmen. They were also keen to embrace new technology, like aluminium cladding that





Pictured: (Top left) 1953 Jennison caravan with period memorabilia. (Top right) A modern teardrop continues the tradition of Broadway caravans. (Bottom) Two vintage Adventurer vans towed by Adelaide-made Chrysler Royals.

became common in the late 1960s. Mike Elly of Ballarat owns a 1973 15ft Adelma Luxury Liner which has only done 8,000km and is in near-new condition. When he acquired it, the caravan was still stocked with 1970s kitchen implements and orange Tupperware.

Another interesting historical connection is the link between Chrysler cars and vintage caravans. Chryslers were built in Adelaide and the luxurious Chrysler Royal is still a favourite with the Chrysler Restorers Club of SA. The owners of these large, finned vehicles sought out old caravans which they could use on club runs. So in South Australia you can see plenty of impressive rigs which have a Chrysler Royal towing a restored vintage van.

Chris Howes, a previous president of

the club, and his wife Cathy, the current president, are good examples. They have a two-tone green 1957 Chrysler Royal which tows a colour-matched 1964 Globetrotter Gold Coaster, both built in Adelaide.

At the last vintage van gathering at Tanunda in the Barossa Valley, attention centred on two striking Adelaide-built Adventurer caravans parked next to each other. Both were towed by Chrysler Royals and had a matching blue/grey colour scheme.

One rig was a 1960 wooden Adventurer towed by a 1962 Chrysler Royal, belonging to Ellen and Bob Haywood. The other was an aluminium 1965 Adventurer 14ft van, belonging to Neill and Joan Wormald, showing how much the design of caravans

changed in just five years.

But maybe South Australia's biggest claim to fame is that it produced the most awesome vintage caravan in Australia's history. The aptly named Highway Palace is a 42ft (13m) long fifth wheeler caravan towed by a 1946 Fargo truck. It was built in 1949 by the Adelaide construction firm of Grace Brothers (not the department store) as a one-off custom built van for a couple living in Pinnaroo, SA. The rig was way ahead of its time with luxury fittings including a bath and running hot water.

South Australians are justifiably proud of the pivotal role that their state has played in the history of Australian caravanning. The Caravan and Camping Industries Association of South Australia commissioned Trevor Gill

to write a book describing South Australia's caravanning past. 'Still Swinging the Billy', a lavishly bound coffee table book illustrated with historical photos. It led to a vintage caravan Grand Parade at the Adelaide Caravan & Camping Show in February.

In the 1960s and 1970s, caravan manufacture increasingly moved to the east coast, to be closer to both raw materials and markets. That left just a handful of South Australian manufacturers still in operation. But many of the caravans built in Adelaide over the previous two decades are still with us today. Just look around at any vintage caravan get-together and you'll find some of the most stylish van have their origins in SA. 📍



A still visible reminder of the Globetrotter caravan heritage in Adelaide

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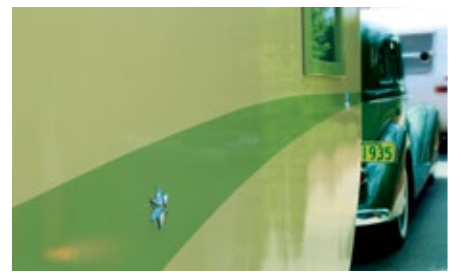
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WATER LEAKS ARE THE BIGGEST ENEMY OF CARAVANS. AS MICHAEL GREALY REPORTS, THIS RELATIVE NEWCOMER TO OUR ROADS HAS A WATER-TIGHT REPUTATION THAT IS HARD TO BEAT.



John Haines

A widely-respected boat building and fishing identity, John Haines had talked about building caravans for years with his son, also called John, but they always seemed to be inundated with boat orders.

The Haines Group has been in the boating business since John Haines Snr AM and his brother Garry first started building a fiberglass version of tinnies in their backyard back in 1959.

John passed away in 2009 and it wasn't until two years later that son John, now heading the family business, was able to pursue the dream.

By then the Haines Group had grown to become Australia's largest fibreglass trailer boat builder with a major manufacturing plant at Wacol, south of Brisbane.

But a downturn in the boating industry in 2011 gave Haines the opportunity to look for new ways of diversifying off the back of their half century of experience in delivering marine-grade leisurecraft.

Push came to shove thanks to John's uncle, Hank, who believed a reliable range of light-weight off-road caravans would be a hit with buyers.

Hank Rojek knew what he was talking about. He happened to be managing director of Ipswich Lifestyle Centre, Queensland's largest caravan dealership west of Brisbane.

"It was a logical move, if we were to continue in manufacturing, to look at caravans," John Haines said. "We have a 9000 square metre undercover factory on a 10 acre site and we had under-utilised capacity."

Then there were the synergies that made the transition easier. Not only the capabilities of its plant and machinery, but also the Haines Group research and development expertise and its staff – expert boat builders and cabinet makers – as well as a full metal fabrication shop that allows it to build its own welded aluminium chassis and its computer-controlled overhead routers for assembly.

There are signs hanging throughout the Wacol factory that say 'Quality First – Build it as if you are going to own it'.

For John Haines the market niche he was aiming at was always going to be premium off-road fibreglass vans that would match the family's exacting standards for quality.



Firstly, at Hank Rojek's urging, he recruited Peter Russell, former owner of Boroma Caravans, for the integral role of gearing up the business as caravans project manager and general manager of manufacturing.

The Haines Group CEO says he's "absolutely ecstatic" with what the company has achieved in just a couple of years.

"I am exceptionally proud of our Seachange product. There are a lot of really good manufacturers out there – we set ourselves apart with our fibreglass construction."

At the Wacol plant, the Seachange 550, 595, 640 and 670 series caravans are built on the same production lines as the Haines Group's famous Signature range of boats.

The Seachange range has won wide acclaim on the show circuit this year. For many Sydney caravan lovers, their first look at the Seachange range was at the recent NSW Caravan and Camping Supershow at Rosehill where Peter Russell and Hank Rojek showed off a 640 Elite QB van and one of its 595 series.

More recently, the company showed off its latest release, a 420 Tough Nut van, at the Brisbane Caravan and Camping Show.

Tested Seachange 640 Elite QB Caravan

One of the first construction features you notice about the Seachange 640 Elite QB van is the impact of the fibreglass manufacturing.

Fibreglass combines versatility, durability and strength to provide the van owner with

a low maintenance, non-corrosive caravan that stands the test of travel and time.

The rolled roof and wall panels of the 640 Series consist of welded box section aluminium frames, insulated with a fire-resistant expanded polystyrene foam then lined with fibreglass. This delivers a lighter, stronger structure that's cooler in summer and warmer in winter months.

The design of the 640 Elite eliminates the need for the traditional J-mould joint. The objective with this technology is that owners won't have to worry about deteriorating joints that can ultimately leak water.

The Haines Group's Peter Russell said of the aluminium floor rails: "The aluminium frame gives us strength but saves us considerable weight in an off-road van. It's like a house – start with good foundations because everything is built on top of it."

He added that the fibreglass panels provide great resistance against hail damage or damage from trees but should it occur, they are repairable.

The 640 Elite uses the Cruisemaster all road coil suspension system for economical load protection and towability with twin shocks. Softer spring rates are aimed at protecting the van and its contents.

It has a full length, hybrid light weight 150mm chassis, combining hot dip galvanised steel and aluminium. Other general external features include 16 inch alloy wheels, roll out awning, two 9kg gas bottles.

The exterior looks stylish with the front and rear pods both custom-moulded fibreglass, shaped to reduced drag and allow air to easily pass over the top.

Stepping inside, it's smart and comfortable with clean lines and a polished finish down to its glossy white walls.

The bathroom has a full ensuite with a moulded fibreglass shower unit and exhaust fans, a porcelain toilet and a Caroma vanity sink.

There's plenty of storage space around the Queen size bed, underneath it, in cupboards above and in the hanging mirror-fronted wardrobes.

Even within the café style leatherette seating, there are pull out drawers for more storage.

In the kitchen area, the 640 Elite is finished in brushed stainless steel, and Duropol laminate benchtops with timber edging. The cabinetry is securely attached to the framework, the cooktop and grill has three gas burners and one electric plate and the Dometic fridge/freezer has a capacity of 184 litres.

The 640 has an extensive range of factory fitted options and the Haines Group will custom build to meet customer desires.

One of the standout exterior options that I particularly liked was a Webber Baby Q slide out barbecue that sits neatly under the awning. Another was the front through boot that has lockable doors, is galvabond lined and wide enough to fit things like deck chairs and inflatable equipment.

At the Sydney Caravan Show, the Seachange 640 Elite QB displayed had a wealth of features and a price tag of \$118,920. Its standard price is around \$97,000.

Maybe the last word should go to retired builder Aubrey McLean, of Splyard Creek,



pros

- > Experienced marine manufacturer
- > Light fibreglass construction
- > Luxurious interior

cons

- > Dealerships confined to Bundamba, near Ipswich serving Southern Queensland and Northern NSW; Kingsley in WA; and Bundaberg in North Queensland.

west of Brisbane, who's owned a Seachange 640 Elite van for almost a year that he pulls behind his Nissan Patrol ute.

Now in his 60s, Aub bought his first caravan in his 20s and he's had them all his life. The first thing that impressed him was the external finish and the way the front, back and top panels wrap around the walls and shut out the possibility of leaking water.

"The further I looked, the more I liked it, particularly the tremendous craftsmanship and beautiful finish. Everything is nice and simple and accessible and it's got great suspension."

For more information and full specifications:

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FRANKLIN INDULGENCE

Has all the extras you'd expect in a van with the name, but with a tough side as well. The Indulgence is solidly based on the features of an outback model including heavy duty chassis, 15 inch all terrain tyres and alloy wheels, shock absorbers, checker plate front and sides, and jerry-can holders. Brisbane sale price **\$94,000**



ELITE CARAVANS – MURRAY – DIAMOND SERIES

Elite is on a mission to get more luxury into caravans. They come with some of the most stylish interiors on wheels and a huge range of options. The Murray Diamond Series is a caravan more luxurious than many homes, complete with a home theatre system and 60 inch pop-up TV. There's a queen-size bed along with decent sized centre ensuite, fridge and leather lounge. On sale at the Brisbane Show for **\$113,000**



Kombi the next generation

Tested **Trakka Trakkadu** Report by **Richard Robertson**

THE KOMBI IS CREDITED WITH BEING THE FIRST GLOBAL RV AND THE SPIRIT OF THE VAN THAT CHANGED THE WORLD LIVES ON

The current incarnation of the Volkswagen van is the T5 (T for Transporter) and there are several Australian conversion specialists taking run-of-the-mill T5s and turning them into highly capable campervans.

Trakka is by far the best known, having just celebrated 40 years since its first T2 conversion rolled out the door and today its aptly named Trakkadu represents the pinnacle of the Volkswagen van converters' art. Stylish, practical and engineered with the full wisdom of those decades of experience, the Trakkadu is simple the best modern 'Kombi' you can buy.

Unlike its forebears, the test Trakkadu featured here is an All Terrain model that comes with VW's 4Motion all-wheel drive package plus a VW suspension upgrade from 3000 kg to 3200 kg, which in a vehicle this size is a chunky amount. In addition, Trakka has also fitted Seikel raised suspension that lifts the T5 by 70 mm. That certainly results in better ground clearance but has the side effect of making the Trakkadu a little less easy to get into undercover car parks.

For the actual conversion, the most obvious items on the outside are the elevating roof and the Fiamma F45 Titanium awning. The roof, made from a composite construction, has a very low profile and is fitted with gas struts, making it very easy to lift from inside. More subtle are the table

rail fitted to the sliding door and the water tank outlet on the mid off-side. Out of sight externally are the water tanks and the external shower, which is actually mounted inside the Trakkadu at the rear, but very much for use outside, unless of course you like water running through your camper!

Of course, the T5 Trakkadu comes with all the cab comforts we've come to expect. In making that comment, I'd make the nostalgic observation that we've come a long way since the days of the T2s that were used in the early Trakkas! Extras include the radio/CD player with an iPod connection and the optional stereo upgrade with satellite navigation and rear vision camera.

In the safety department, the T5 comes with front airbags as standard but this



Trakka founders Sally and David Berry

vehicle came with optional side and thorax airbags. Naturally, ABS disc brakes are fitted all round and the T5 also comes with an Electronic Stability Program.

ON THE ROAD

Getting behind the wheel of the Trakkadu means a fun ride. Yes it is a van, but the gutsy 132 kW turbo-diesel VW delivers plenty of power and the seven-speed DSG gearbox is a very smooth performer indeed. On the bush tracks I tried, being an AWD, there was little scrabbling for traction and the ride was surprisingly smooth. All the controls are closed to hand, including those on the multifunction steering wheel, which are really handy. Rain sensing wipers are part of the VW package. The external rear view mirrors on the VW are good but the rear vision camera certainly aids when reversing around. A neat little addition are the folding rear-seat head restraints that would otherwise block the internal rear view. A bonus is that they are easier to move out of the way when making up the bed.

The living area of any van conversion is going to be considerably smaller than a

coach-built motorhome, but it's more than adequate for this light weight camper, as well as being very versatile for an around-town machine. Both cab seats swivel around; there's a kitchen bench/wardrobe unit along the offside; a day/night lounge seat mid-van and a large shelf in the rear. With the roof up, the large screened windows offer plenty of ventilation. There is a rear tent available for the Trakkadu but I have to say given the lack of opening windows, I might well be considering Velcroed insect screens for both the sliding and rear doors. Light weight Euro Ply is used for all the cabinet construction. General storage is a bit limited, but there are both good sized wardrobe and under-shelf areas in the rear, as well as the kitchen cupboards.

Simple is the word to best describe the Trakkadu's catering facilities. A Webasto diesel fired cooktop is used for heating everything up; an underbench Waeco 80 litre fridge keeps things cool and the stainless steel, glass-lidded washing up bowl keeps things clean. General storage consists of large cutlery drawer and two cupboards, both with space-saving roller shutter doors.

In the larger cupboard are two drawers; a nice and convenient way of stashing everything. At the forward end of the bench, above the fridge, are both the Trakka electrical control panel and the Webasto cooktop controls. I like the electronic control panel, with everything neatly in one place.

AFTER HOURS

Making up the 1.95 m x 1.25 m bed is quite simple, a matter of folding the headrests back and releasing the seat back by pulling on the centrally located strap. The seat can be moved forwards and backwards a fair bit, so it is quite easy to fill the gap between the folded-down seat-back and the rear shelf. There's one reading light, centrally located at the rear, so guess where the pillows are going to go! If extra sleeping accommodation is required for children an optional roof bed is available.

Insulated curtains are fitted all round, except for the cab windows, where a custom made, press-studded curtain is used – quite a simple arrangement but one that works quite well. LED lighting is used throughout, with a mixture of strip and reading lights.

A tricky little feature is the LED strip lights fitted inside the awning mounting at each end. Not overly brilliant but still good enough to see what you are doing and not in your face either.

THE VERDICT

It might look small and simple but the Trakkadu AT is a very sophisticated piece of machinery. Whilst not being the size of say Trakka's Jabiru motorhome, it does offer tremendous versatility in the ways it can be used. It certainly can be used very easily around town, with its capacity to carry four people or large loads. Alternatively, in the

bush it's kitted for remote campsites, along with the ability to get to those same places with aplomb and without difficulty. Being a relatively light weight camper it's also good for the environment, by having a minimal impact on several fronts.

Manufacturer	Trakka
Model	Trakkadu AT
Base Vehicle	2.0-litre 4-cylinder turbo-diesel (AWD)
Engine	3.0-litre 4-cylinder turbo-diesel
Price – Drive-away	\$131,410.00

For full details and specifications go to: www.trakka.com.au



pros

- > VW Transporter base vehicle!
- > Setting up is quick and simple
- > Good carrying capacity
- > Hi-tech and energy efficient electrics
- > Economical

cons

- > Not cheap but you get what you pay for
- > Bed tight for taller people
- > Raised ground clearance not suitable for some car parks

OR YOU MAY LIKE TO TRY



FRONTLINE PIONEER

The Toyota Hiace and Frontline have enjoyed a popular and successful combination that goes back to the 1980s. Frontline can offer the Hiace in six different layouts and can be purchased with either diesel or petrol engines, also with a choice of Manual or Automatic gearbox. The Pioneer is a five seat capacity camper offering a versatile solution to touring and everyday use. The Hiace Pioneer with diesel automatic sells for around **\$65,000** drive away, NSW.



FRONTLINE ADVENTURER

The VW Transporter Frontline is available in All Wheel Drive, catering to an increasing band of drivers looking to getting out among the rough and exploring out of the way tracks. The Frontline Adventurer provides four safe seating positions for the family or a couple of mates. A great feature of the Frontline Adventurer is the front seat swivels to expand the living area and maximise useable space. The drive away (NSW) price for the Frontline VW Adventurer AWD Diesel is **\$77,000**.



Budget beater

Tested **Blue Tongue Campers Off-Road Trekka**

THE NEWEST CAMPER FROM THE BLUE TONGUE RANGE SETS A NEW STANDARD IN AFFORDABLE FAMILY CAMPERS, BY **DAVID COOK**

Ask any Aussie camper trailer manufacturer how they started out and there's usually a common thread to their story. Either they weren't happy with what they could find already available, thought they could do a better job, or were keen to get involved in a business that was already their recreation. Usually it's a combination of all three.



Karl Geddes

It was this exact trail that brought Karl Geddes and Andrew Walter to the business of building and selling one of the best finished budget camper trailers on the market. A reputation they've established in a relative short time.

Blue Tongue Campers are built in their workshop at Kirrawee in Sydney's south. Previously both men worked in the construction industry, Karl being a builder and Andrew handling the plumbing work on his jobs.

"We just didn't want to make our living doing that sort of work anymore," Andrew explains, "but we carry with us the builder's ethic of trying to use the right tools and components on every job and providing customer service, because we come from a background where customer satisfaction is paramount.

"We were all campers. Karl still has small kids while mine have all grown up, but we all enjoyed the pleasures of sleeping under canvas. I'd never been involved with camper trailers, having come from a background in tents, but we were all looking for something

to do that we enjoyed. When we started up four years ago there weren't as many import campers around and it seemed like a good thing to get into.

"We researched the market and found that while there were already Australian trailers with imported canvas tents on the market, many were of poor quality so we set out to raise the bar. We have an aim to make continual product improvements and add detailed features, while some of our competitors are reducing the quality to make them cheaper."

While camper trailers can range in price from \$3,500 up to \$60,000 and more, Blue Tongue is firmly embedded in the lower price range.

"This end of the market is family territory; it's what they can afford," Andrew says. "The \$40,000 to \$50,000 units are out of the reach of most and so we set out to build a quality product at an affordable price.

"We mostly aim our products at families, mostly those with kids. We have massive tents for those people and smaller tents when we are selling just to couples. We have



light trailers for those with smaller cars and heavier trailers for those who want to go off road. We try to cover the gamut of experiences that people will cover with a camper.”

They also offer a 9 foot tent with all aluminium poles which has been very popular with the “grey nomads” and those just wanting a fast easy setup. It is available on any of the Blue Tongue range. The guys obviously hit the right note in their quest for value for money and sold over 300 campers in their first year in business. Production has remained at the healthy level of 300-400 units per year since.

Most sales go to NSW but they have been finding a ready market in Queensland and Victoria and in the next 12 months plan to start attending shows in Queensland to support their new dealer outlet there.

The one non-Australian aspect to the Blue Tongue campers is the tent, which is imported. Using this as their basis the guys began researching campers and have continued to modify their products in line with customer feedback and their own experiences with them.

The Blue Tongue range features seven different campers, from \$3500 to \$10,500 in price. The tent essentially remains the same and it’s the nature of the trailer underneath which determines the price. If you want no more than to stay in caravan parks on major highways then the bottom of the price range is likely to suit, essentially

as a tent transporter, but for those who want more gadgets or want to go offroad and so require tougher suspensions and a heavier chassis, then the range can encompass that as well.

“It’s an ever evolving product line,” says Andrew, “and we’ve just released our new trailer to try to offer more space for our customers.”

The latest addition to the range is the Trekka, which, like all the trailers from Blue Tongue, is a side-fold soft floor in which the canvas tent pulls off the side of the trailer and the vinyl floor sits on the ground next to it.

It is designed as either an off-road or semi-off-road trailer with mechanical brakes, smaller rims with highway duty tyres and seven-leaf slipper springs on the semi-off road units. The off-road versions come with electric brakes, all terrain boots on larger rims and eye-to-eye shackle spring sets.

Essentially the Trekka trailers offer a range of features not available all together in other Blue Tongue campers. This includes increased storage, fridge slide, luggage racks, bike racks and a drawer which slides through the middle of the camper to access internal storage capacity and can be accessed outside. It’s much more heavy duty construction all round, topped off with enamel paint rather than hammertone for a more durable finish.

There are three kitchen options with a basic powdercoat finish, a 304 grade stainless steel set-up and a top of the range

slide-out stainless steel unit with two-burner cooktop and grill.

There are two choices in colour: a grey and a blue with grey roof.

There is a choice of three tents, all free standing and requiring pegs and ropes only for windy conditions.

Option 1 has a 25 square metre tent with side awning to accommodate four or more people.

Option 2 covers a huge 40 square metre to sleep eight or more

Option 3 covers 20 square metres with aluminium poles for easier set-up for up to four people.

All have external walls and flyscreens available to enclose the awning, with some ground level windows featuring lower half clear poly windows to prevent splash from the ground wetting the interior in heavy rain.

The trailer is assembled to order to suit the customer and the waiting time is between a day or two, or up to a month, depending on demand and the level of fitout.

These are smart looking and well finished campers, able to take you into the bush with security. Features such as space for up to four jerry cans in a lockable compartment, rear mounted spare and silver polyurethane coated 14 ounce canvas roof to reflect up to 98 per cent of UV radiation and heat for internal comfort make these well equipped to take on the Outback.

As with all Blue Tongue campers they offer full electrical fitout as an optional

extra because of the great variability in what people want.

"We will often say to customers that if they're not sure what they want or need to take the camper away a few times and then we can undertake whatever it is that they want when they get back," says Andrew.

"Our basic standard range of trailers does not have a lot of items on it because if you put everything on people think why should I pay, say, for a fridge slide if I already have a fridge set-up in the back of my car? We don't like having lots of things on display and then having to tell customers, 'Oh, that bit's extra, and that's extra.' 📍

pros



- > Value for money
- > Good finish for budget price
- > Australian made trailer
- > Good range of options
- > Reflective canvas roof for cooling

cons



- > Imported canvas
- > Spreader bar tent set-up takes time
- > Lack of a stone guard as standard

Manufacturer **Blue Tongue Campers**
 Model **Off Road Trekka**
 Price **\$9900**

For full details and specifications go to:
www.bluetonguecampers.com.au

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GIC EXTREME RANGER

A similar range and format to Blue Tongue, with locally made trailers and imported tents of a similar nature and size. Detail and finish is not as high as with Blue Tongue, without automotive pinch weld rubber seals, fridge slide, luggage rack, alloy wheels, internal drawer and some other options. GIC tents do offer a skylight roof window over the main bed and the Extreme Ranger comes with independent suspension and stone guard. **Price \$11,900.**



EXPLORER LAWSON

Soft floor design similar to the Blue Tongue Trekka and GIC Extreme Ranger, but with all Australian canvas. Very similar in fitout and layout to both the GIC Extreme Ranger and the Blue Tongue Trekka. It has optional side lockers and a standard steel roll-out kitchen and full length roll-out drawer beside the kitchen. There is no cooker offered as standard but two and three-burner cook tops are available as options. Two-year warranty. **Price \$16,950**



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Living the dream

STEVE AND STELLA POTTER AND THEIR KIDS DARCY AND RAINE LEFT THEIR HOME IN THE SMALL COUNTRY WA TOWN OF BOYANUP TO EMBARK ON THEIR IDEA OF THE FAMILY DREAM – TRAVELLING AROUND AUSTRALIA IN A 51 YEAR-OLD CARAVAN. STEVE TAKES UP THE STORY.



A moment of reflection. Hiking to Arkaroo Rock. Flinders Ranges, SA

I awake and part the orange coloured curtains of the van to inspect another new morning in paradise, hoping for another clear day.

Paradise can take a number of forms while travelling. Sometimes it's a beach vista, sometimes a lush green forest, sometimes a desert. On the other hand, when free camping on a roadside truck-stop, the view of paradise may be the side of a truck trailer next to a busy highway.

It is usually our four year old daughter Raine who wakes first and I hear her each morning as she chatters away to herself in a whisper, playing with her toys at the other end of the van behind the curtain.

I often lie there and listen to her as she creates make-believe worlds, her soft toys as the characters. She will often tiptoe up to



Steve, Stella, Darcy and Raine in Boyanup, WA, about to embark on their eight month trip.

our bed and clamber between Stella and me, usually with freezing toes, smothering us in kisses and cuddles, with the primary objective of waking us up and getting us out of bed.

It is, however, the opportunity to have moments like these that made us leave in the first place.

Although we always had an idea in the back of our minds that we might do a trip like this one day, a number of factors aligned which caused us to feel that the time was right to turn our dream into reality.

Stella and I were both busy working flat out, the kids were growing up way too fast and we felt that time was disappearing and the chance may pass us by.

We also felt that the ages of our children, four and six, was perfect. Old enough to be out of nappies, young enough to be flexible and go with the flow.

In the end we made the decision to go. Within three months we were on the road, having obtained a period of leave from work and emptying and renting out our home. The adventure had begun.

One of the factors enabling us to get going

reasonably quickly was that we already owned a caravan. Although prior to this trip we'd only taken it on a number of one or two-week holidays not too far from home.

We were a bit apprehensive about taking the van on such a long road trip and even considered getting a different one – mainly due to its age.

It's a 1962 plywood clad "Raven" which we bought about five years ago when I spotted it online on the Trading Post. We weren't even in the market for a van at the time, however fell in love with the old girl at first sight and found ourselves driving her home the next day.

Once Stella and I discussed it, we decided that buying a new van wasn't an option; not only did we need the funds for the trip, but in our hearts we knew that the trip wouldn't be the same without her. For better or worse the van was coming around Australia.

Prior to leaving we did undertake a few jobs to make the van a bit more comfortable and roadworthy. This included mounting an internal curtain to separate the kids' end of the van, replacing bearings and tyres, re-painting the A-frame and installing an

aluminium storage box on the front. We also resealed the roof with an epoxy-based paint and pulled out the old gas fridge which was replaced by 240 volt electric one. Still pretty basic, but ready to go.

In terms of the car, once again we weren't too sure about our old Commodore with 260,000 km on the clock. We handed the keys to a mechanic mate who replaced everything he thought it might need to get us back home. We also installed a dual battery and once again put on new tyres.

We thought the lack of 4WD might be an issue, but as it's worked out, we haven't had time to see all the places we have wanted to see on the bitumen so far, let alone the off-road stuff. Besides, there's always the next trip (and the one after that) to see the places we might not get to this time around.

So, how has it gone so far? In a word: unbelievable. It is not often in life that experiences live up to one's expectations, but in this case it has proven to be true.

Each day is different and we get to enjoy our kids all day every day, seeing them from first thing in the morning



Darcy, Raine and their friend Archie from Ulladulla, NSW, racing along the beach at Hellfire Bay, Cape Le Grand National Park, WA.

until we tuck them in at night.

When Darcy asks to kick the footy or Raine wants to play Barbies, we invariably have the time and head space to join in.

We feel as if this trip has given us the opportunity to get to really know our kids better than we could at home, simply because we have ample time to spare.

People often ask us about the kids' schooling. They are enrolled in SIDE (School of Isolated and Distance Education) through the WA Education Department who send us packages of schoolwork as we travel about which are returned for marking once complete. Admittedly, we are always behind schedule (sorry Mrs Davitkovska), however justify this by telling ourselves that the kids are learning a number of things on the road that could never be taught in a classroom.

At the time of writing we're in Coffs Harbour, taking a week's R & R after our first few months of fairly constant and regular moving about. We are hoping to follow the warm weather as we head north

to Queensland and back over the top to WA, where I am due to return to work in October.

Although we thought the old van might raise a few eyebrows along the way, it has been amazing the amount of interest we have had.

On an almost daily basis people are coming up for a chat and have even had people taking photos from the roadside as we drive on by.

Quite often it is the oldies that appreciate her the most and we have heard many a story of family holidays in old plywood vans from a time when life was simpler.

The personal memories and emotions the caravan evokes in others have shown us how special she really is.

Our family has learnt a lot about life on the road, and ourselves, as we have undertaken this journey.

If I could presume to provide one bit of advice to any young families out there it would be this: if in the back of your mind you have a dream of doing something similar, then it is up to you to make it happen knowing that it may take a certain level of sacrifice. An extended

road trip is not a sensible financial decision and there is nothing to show at the end of the day except a bunch of photos. Life on the road is at times difficult and sometimes uncomfortable.

However, if you dream of driving on wide open roads, hiking through rainforests, cooking marshmallows with sticks over camp fires and creating family memories and bonds that will last many lifetimes, I would highly recommend doing whatever you can within your power to make it happen.

You don't need the most expensive car or caravan to do so and we have met many young families doing their own version of the dream in various levels of comfort, depending on what they can afford. What you do need is the will and motivation to make it happen.

To quote from Goethe:

"Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now."

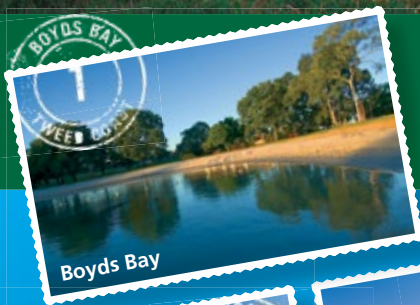
See you on the road.

→ continued page 42

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Steve and Stella's Top Five so far

1. MONA (Museum of Old and New Art), Hobart, Tasmania
2. Twilight Beach, Esperance, WA
3. Scenic Flight over Wilpena Pound, Flinders Ranges, SA
4. Alum Cliffs, Tasmania
5. Australian War Memorial, Canberra, ACT

Darcy and Raine's Top Five so far

1. Wave Rock, Hyden, WA
2. Sovereign Hill, Ballarat, Victoria
3. Adelaide Zoo, Adelaide, SA
4. Scenic World, Katoomba, NSW
5. Butterfly House, Coffs Harbour, NSW

Time to Roam looks forward to catching up with the Potters again at the other end of their journey.



Pictured: (Clockwise from top) A free night's camping in a rest area by the Barrier Highway, Hanson, SA; Nullabor Plain, WA; A nightly ritual: bedtime story in the van; The kids share a quiet moment under a towering swamp gum at Mt Field National Park, Tasmania.



Pelican Rescue

WILDLIFE RESCUER **JUNE LE PLA** LOVES TO ROAM AUSTRALIA AND IS ALWAYS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR TROUBLED CREATURES WHEREVER SHE GOES.

At her home in the Hastings region of NSW she's known as 'The Pelican Lady' for her efforts in saving and protecting the big white birds.

Here she writes about her love for camping and her most daring rescue.

Pictured: June rescues yet another bird from the Port Macquarie waterfront, hooked by a fishing line

Camping is a lifetime passion. I can't think of anything better than sitting under a coolabah tree in the back of nowhere, where the ground is red and the spinifex glistens in the brilliant sunshine, Snuggling up in my little tent on a cold night and listening to barking owls having a chat, the pungent smell of the Gidyea in flower, or watching the estuarine crocs in the wild – living as they have for thousands of years.

Cassowaries walking on the beach at ETTY Bay and the red kangaroo and their magnificent blue flyer females at Riversleigh and the interior deserts are all true survivors of long ago.

While camping trips are all about soaking up this magnificent country, I would never leave an injured animal.

Pelicans are comical, clever, beautiful, and definitely intelligent.

They can fly as high as a jet plane and travel hundreds of kilometres to places like Lake Eyre, and the Wilson River in Queensland when

conditions out there are good.

They work as a team in fascinating formations that would make an Olympic synchronised water swimming team envious when rounding up fish, taking turns to feed. Yet they are amazing prehistoric survivors and very tough with a massive pain tolerance.

It is humbling to see the shocking injuries that so many bear, yet they struggle against all odds.

One bird that I attended hit a power line, which completely severed the top beak in half, yet it managed to outsmart me for three months, before I could end its suffering. The bird was barely able to feed itself. Lice were in the shaft of every feather, biting and causing unbelievable pain.

Although devoted to pelicans, my toughest rescue involved a little red marsupial.

It happened in outback Queensland back in 2006. Travelling in our trusty Mazda, my husband Ron and I picked up a friend from Thargomindah Airport and the three of us



(Top Right) The rescued joey, in safe custody after its desert ordeal; (Opposite Top) June rescues another injured pelican; (Opposite Middle) Road trains pull in at Whitulania Creek, June grateful they weren't heading her way earlier; (Opposite Bottom) The trusty Mazda rescue vehicle.

June's Top 5 rules to protect pelicans.

1. **Stop trashing our beautiful country with bottles, cans, plastic and other junk.**
2. **If a bird is hooked or caught by a lure, minimise injury by cutting the line and immediately call a wildlife hotline.**
3. **Never use braided fishing line.**
4. **Oppose foreshore high rise developments adjacent to waterways.**
5. **Keep your distance – over familiarisation with humans results in begging for food, occasional violence from humans and birth defects from inappropriate food.**

Time to Roam is grateful to Jane Flood for her assistance with this story. Jane and June are fellow members of FAWNA (For Australian Wildlife Needing Aid) in the Hastings area of NSW. Jane recently shot and edited a short video called "June the Pelican Lady" which can be viewed on the ABC Open website www.open.abc.net.au

camped at the Nuccundra Pub on our way through to Cooper Creek at Windorah.

It was unusually cold with heavy cloud. We broke camp early in morning and headed out into the Stony Desert, which was a pretty stupid thing to do considering the weather.

We were about 30 kilometres out when I spotted a circle of cattle on the bare stony ground and I knew straight away that some poor creature would be in the middle of that circle.

Ron is used to sudden instructions; stop, back up, turnaround, pull over. To my horror it was a Big Red male joey. He was bleeding substantially and the cattle would certainly have killed him.

I leapt from the vehicle barefooted onto the cold sharp stones, (again very stupid) and separated the cattle. The little guy saw his chance and took off with me in hot pursuit. No sign of a mother dead or alive anywhere.

Eventually I caught him. He was cold, bleeding and coughing with fear and pain. The flash of black and white on his muzzle was so beautiful. Heading back to the truck, the stones got colder and sharper, but I had caught the Joey, so it was worth the pain. I wrapped him in a towel and put him inside my only thick coat, holding him close to me

to warm him up. Before long he relaxed and went to sleep.

The weather was now looking increasingly threatening and I thought maybe we should turn back as we were heading into the Diamantina Basin, which is well known for quickly becoming dangerous after a bit of rain. Conditions deteriorated and suddenly we were following the deep tyre ruts of a previous vehicle, probably a ute. The ruts got deeper and then we were in a sea of water as far as one could see.

The vehicle was beginning to slide in the slippery conditions, Troy Cassar-Daley sang happily away on the DVD as the water got deeper, with little waves running across the Channel Country. I knew that the worst was yet to come as we approached Monkana Station. Within minutes we were on full lock, broad siding from one side of the road to the other. Not a word from the back seat. I wondered if my friend had fainted from fright and whether I might too as I considered the possibility of meeting a road train or three heading towards us.

The water was now just below the headlights and it was difficult to sit without holding on and I had Red to hold. As we approached Monkana Homestead the truck gave an almighty



cough, Troy Cassar-Daley kept singing the same track on the disk as it had jammed, and I held my breath waiting to stall and be washed away, but the Mazda was not beaten yet. The broad siding continued, Troy kept singing, and my friend had still not made a sound in the back.

Finally after 40 kilometres of continuous mud and water we pulled over at Whitulania Creek, took a deep breath, as we knew we were now out of it. Time for a strong coffee

The little joey was still sleeping, the bleeding had stopped and after about nine hours we finally arrived at Bedourie. We called at the Council Office to see if we could find a carer for the orphan and to my delight the librarian was the unofficial wild life carer for that vast area. I was relieved to know he would now be in good hands.

We finally made camp in the dark and observed five road trains fully laden with cattle lined up at the road house ready to head off to Windorah, back along the road that we had just travelled. How lucky can you be? Fortunately there is now a high level road diversion to the south of Monkina station replacing the former low lying road.

In 2012 we travelled the new road through that magnificent country again where there were so many Big Reds. I smiled and wondered whether one was my little guy. 🐾

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Peter Horton & his 1965 model



VW's



Polly & Scarlet with Rabbit



Renate & Sandra Englert



Polished

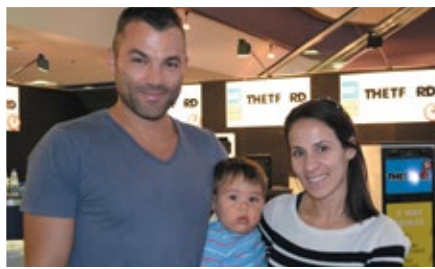


Natures paint job

NSW Caravan and Camping Supershow Rosehill – April 20 -28



Alan Graham



Andrew Olivia and little Alexander McKinnon



AVIDA Beauties



Cameron Harrison



Clayton Kearney



Dianne & Terri



Glenn & Felicity



Gold digger Dave & Prospector Pete



Helen Barker & Jodie Oberg



Hugh Bialas



Jason Tresider



Kris Watson



Natalie & Francesca



Trish & Keith Demmenz



Will Taylor & Steph Ward

Mackay Caravan and Camping Expo – May 17-19



Lisa Smith



Tina & George Samios



Jack & Trish Pace



Greg Dunn - Rolling Home Caravans



Jodie Joyce



Demitry Malahoff & Joe Jacobsen



Phill & Benjamin



Trudi Jensen - Tullmack Caravans



Kylie & Darren Smart



Jade Simpson is roaming Oz



Kate



Kay Lewis



Charlie Crocker



Noel, Peter & Pävla - Engel



John & Alan - Motorhome Conversion Co



My Favourites

Some of my favourite things



Colour _____

TV Show _____

Holiday Destination _____

Toy _____

Sport _____

Dinner Meal _____

Number _____

Rainy Day Activity _____

Drink _____

Friend _____

Flower _____

TV Character _____

Teacher _____

Car _____

Cousin _____

Movie _____

Colour _____

Pet Animal _____

Zoo Animal _____

Australian Animal _____

Ice block _____

Breakfast food _____

Music _____





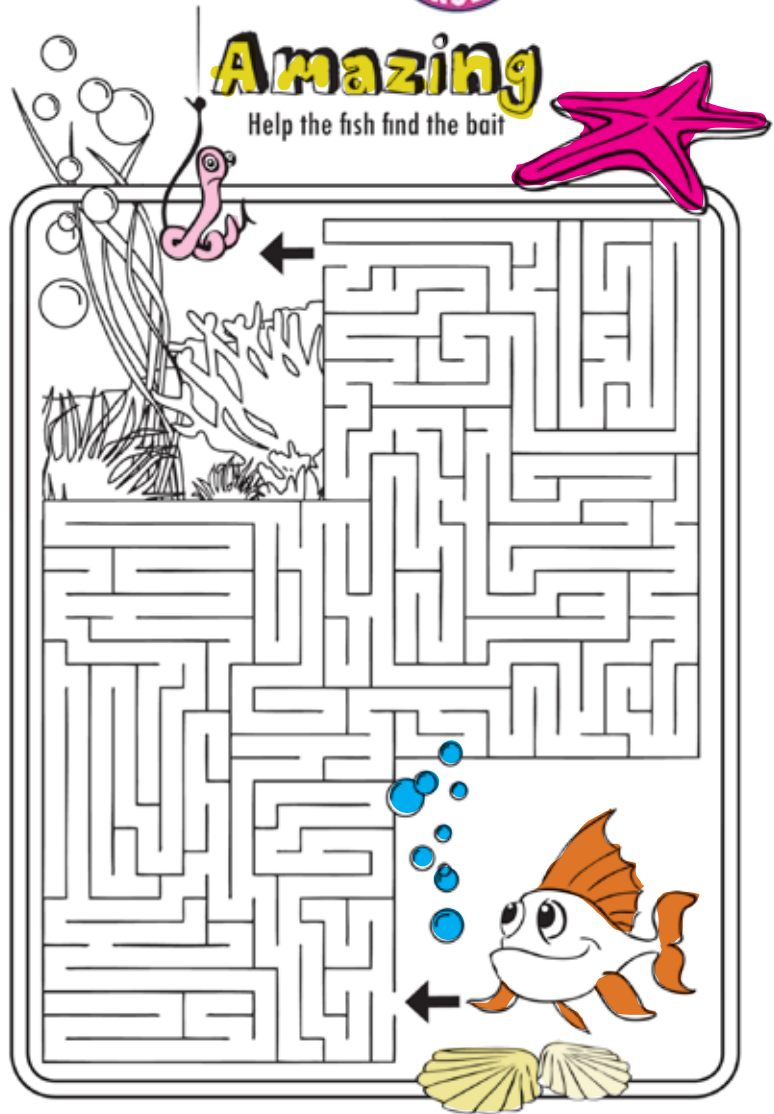
Let's play Two Truths and A Lie

A great game to play with new friends...
Players sit in a circle and one person tells three things about themselves. Two of the things are true and one is a lie.
The other players have to guess which is the lie.
The game continues around the circle.



Amazing

Help the fish find the bait



Jokes

Where do you find a dog with no legs?

Wherever you left it!

What cereal does a mouse eat?

Mice Bubbles!

What do you call a penguin in the desert?

Lost

What would you call a dog with no legs?

Nothing it wouldn't come to you anyway

What do you call a fish with no Eye?

Fsh

How do Elephants smell?

Really Bad

Whats a wombat for?

Playing Womball

What do you call an elephant in a phone booth?

Stuck

Why did the dog go to court?

He got a barking ticket

What do you call a deer with no eyes?

No Eye Deer





Tea Towel Travelogue

The best in foreign-made Australian souvenirs. This month, the Kookaburra



Toying with Caravans By Alan Stevens

Louis Marx and Company was an American toy manufacturer in business from 1919 to 1978. Its products were often imprinted with the slogan, "One of the many Marx toys, have you all of them?"

Founded in 1919 by Louis and his brother, they produced a very wide range of toys, first in tinsplate and later plastic. They even sold 100 million yoyos during the 1920's. Marx and Cos capacity to make cheaper toys than competitors actually saw its revenue grow during the Great Depression. At its peak, Marx had 3 manufacturing plants in the USA, but by 1955 was manufacturing toys overseas as well. A variety of factors contributed to the demise of Marx which saw its last factory close in 1980.

Many toys are now very collectable, especially the early tinsplate types. This Lonesome Pine house trailer is typical of the lithograph styled toys.

Alan Stevens is an avid collector and caravan historian. He can be contacted at www.vintagecaravanhire.com.au

Odd Spot

Note to thief: ditch the caravan

A man described as a habitual bad driver is behind bars after making the mistake of stealing a car hitched to a caravan.

Declan Dowsing had never passed a driving test in his life, but still lead British police on a merry chase through the streets of the town of Oadby, Leicester.

He managed to reach speeds up to 100 km per hour behind the wheel of a Vauxhall Vectra.

Dowsing was finally arrested by a policeman on foot and later sentenced to 14 months jail.

Remarkably, the caravan sustained only \$1000 in damage.

Beatle caravan rediscovered

A psychedelic yellow caravan formerly owned by Beatles John Lennon and Ringo Starr has been rediscovered after 40 years locked away in a shed.

The Gypsy caravan was repainted to Lennon's far out designs after he bought it for his son Julian's fourth birthday, in 1967. It was actually used by Lennon and his first wife Cynthia for holidays.

Ringo Starr acquired it after Lennon's assassination. He put it in the shed at his Surrey home and promptly forgot about it.

Now rediscovered, there are plans to restore the van it and then auction it to raise money for charity.

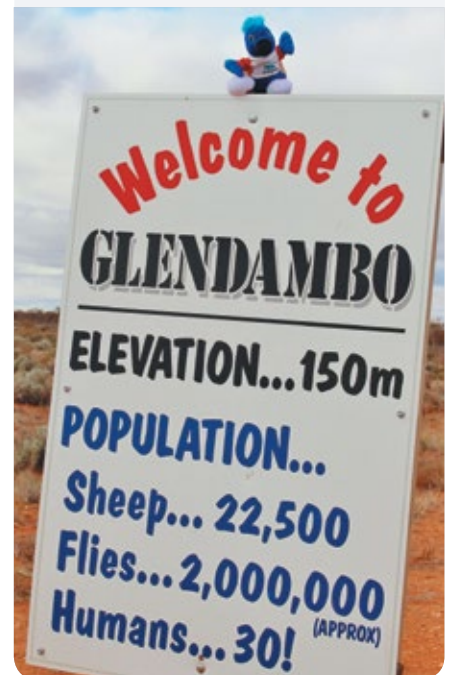


Say Cheese

1970s vintage melamine cheeseboard

Glendambo SA 5710

A popular stop on the Stuart Highway, 600km north west of Adelaide, Glendambo has a small population, with a big sense of humour. Photo courtesy A. Hayden www.highwaydreams.net



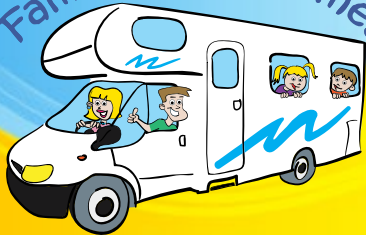
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WHAT'S ON



NIMAs Darwin Amphitheatre

ACT

Runs to October 13

Glorious Days: Australia 1913, National Museum of Australia

A nostalgia-filled exhibition exploring the fashion, cars, design and ideas that expressed the nation's dreams in the year Canberra was founded. It features vehicles, photographs and newsreel footage to immerse you in Australian life as it was 100 years ago. Info: www.nma.com

June 21 to July 28

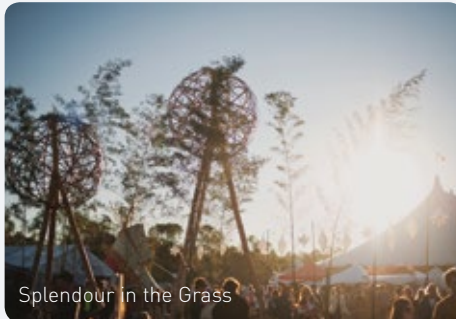
Canberra and Capital Region Truffle Festival

Learn from celebrity chefs and other truffle experts. Join a truffle hunt or simply indulge in the special flavours and intoxicating aromas of the truffle dishes at local restaurants, cafes and wineries. Info: www.trufflefestival.com.au

August 1 to 31

Fireside Festival

The Fireside Festival is a series of events celebrating winter, including degustation dinners, wine tastings, performances, special exhibitions. The festival takes place in regional venues across Yass, Hall, Murrumbateman, Bungendore and the Canberra region. Info: www.firesidefestival.com.au



Splendour in the Grass

NSW

June 30

Whale Census Day, Booderee National Park

The ruins of Cape St George Lighthouse on the south head of Jervis Bay is the venue for this event, counting Humpback and Southern Right whales as they begin their northern migration to warmer waters. Look for whales while enjoying damper, billy tea and cultural stories from Aboriginal traditional owners. Info: www.booderee.gov.au

July 6

International Tartan Day, Maclean and Aberdeen

It's a great day to be Scottish and NSW Scottish Heritage Week concludes with traditional Highland Games in the Hunter town of Aberdeen. Maclean on the Clarence also celebrates International Tartan Day with the Kirkin 'O' the Tartan – an old tradition where the Scots have their tartans blessed. Info: www.aberdeenhighlandgames.com



July 26-28

Splendour in the Grass, Byron Bay

Known as the 'holy grail of camping festivals', Splendour in the Grass is Australia's most popular mid-winter festival. More than 70 big names in local and international alternative rock and indie music head to Byron to perform for 18,000 people at the three day festival. Info: www.splendourinthegrass.com

NT

July 7

Darwin Beer Can Regatta

The Lions Beer Can Regatta is one of those great NT traditions and a spectacular show for visitors who line Mindil Beach, cheering as the home made boats of cans wallow, flounder and sink. The fleet includes all kinds of boats; some with secret weaponry. Info: www.beercanregatta.org.au

National Caravan & Camping Shows

Coffs Coast 4WD, Caravan, Camping & Boat Show

16 - 17 June . Coffs Harbour Racing Club
www.grimmopromotions.com.au/4wd/

Rockhampton Hunt, Fish, 4WD Show.

19 - 21 July. Rockhampton Showgrounds
www.campingshow.com.au

Midyear Caravan, Camping, Boating & Fishing Expo Parklands,

26 - 28 July. Southport, Gold Coast
www.australianevents.com.au

Mid North Coast Caravan, Camping, 4WD, Fish & Boat Show,

9 - 11 August. Wauchope Showgrounds
www.campingshow.com.au

Border RV & Camping Expo

August 16-18, Wodonga Racecourse
Info www.ciavic.com.au

Wide Bay & Fraser Coast Home Show & Caravan, Camping Expo

16 - 18 August
Maryborough Showgrounds
www.australianevents.com.au

July 13

Lasseters Camel Cup, Alice Springs

The Lasseters Camel Cup is a race like no other. Come along to watch the race and have a good laugh. It's guaranteed no two races are the same and there's plenty of entertainment and interaction between races. Info: www.camelcup.com.au

17 August

Henley-on-Todd Regatta , Alice Springs

Now in its 51st year, the Henley-on-Todd Regatta is one of the world's most unique sporting events - a 'regatta' 1500km from the nearest large body of water. Watch seemingly sane people race in bottomless makeshift boats through the deep coarse sand of the Todd River.

Info: www.henleyontodd.com.au

August 8-25

Darwin Festival

Local and touring performers feature in events including outdoor concerts, workshops, theatre, dance music, comedy and cabaret, film and visual arts. A highlight includes National Indigenous Music Awards on Saturday August 10, this year celebrating the musical legacy of Yothu Yindi.

Info: www.darwinfestival.org.au

August 9-11

Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair

A unique opportunity to purchase works at affordable prices from over 40 Aboriginal owned community art centres. Experience the rich diversity of these beautiful works from the country's most remote desert and coastal regions to rural and urban communities.

Info: www.darwinaboriginalartfair.com.au

QUEENSLAND

June 22 - 23

Laura Aboriginal Dance Festival

A biennial gathering in Cape York Peninsula, highlighting the many diverse Communities, language, song, dance and stories. Over 5,000 people travel to Laura from across the nation to enjoy this Festival for three days, with up to 500 traditional performers participating in the program.

Info: www.lauradancefestival.com

August 16-18

Cairns Indigenous Art Fair

A celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, dance and music. It is the nation's premier art fair, with both commercial art galleries and Indigenous art centres selling artwork by Queensland born or based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. Info: www.ciaf.com.au

July 26 - August 3

Australian Festival of Chamber Music, Townsville

The Festival of Chamber Music is held over 10 days each year and has an enviable global reputation for the quality of its programming. The Festival is a happy meeting place for locals and visitors, who enjoy the opportunity to hear and meet international musicians in a wonderfully inviting tropical winter setting.

Info: www.afcm.com.au

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

August 17-18

Barossa Gourmet Weekend

Less than an hour's drive north from Adelaide, the Barossa Gourmet Weekend is a celebration of the region's world famous food and wine. The event involves over 20

wineries offering fabulous food, wines and live entertainment. Info: www.barossa.com/what-s-on/barossa-gourmet-weekend

TASMANIA

June 22-24

Tastings at the Top, Cradle Mountain

Tastings at the Top is a three day gourmet extravaganza celebrating the very best in Tasmanian produce. It includes degustation dinners, cooking demonstrations and decadent spa treatments at the famous Waldheim Alpine Spa.

Info: www.cradlemountainlodge.com.au/food-wine/tastings-at-the-top/

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

July 11

Mowanjum Festival, Derby

The Mowanjum Festival near Derby boasts the title of Western Australia's largest Indigenous performance featuring more than 100 artists. Celebrating the rich heritage and culture of the Worrorra, Ngarinyin and Wunumbal peoples of the West Kimberley, the festival also features boab nut carving, Didgeridoo playing workshops and Wandjina art.


Info: <http://www.derbyboabfestival.org.au>

VICTORIA

to Sept 8

Melbourne Winter Masterpieces, National Gallery of Victoria

The exhibition features more than sixty works from the Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris, devoted to Claude Monet's iconic garden at Giverny. It traces the evolution of his painting and presents a series of rarely seen late works by Monet.

Info: www.ngv.vic.gov.au 



Andrew Mcfarlane

– camping started out as a child drover

ANDREW HAS BEEN A STAR OF AUSTRALIAN TELEVISION SINCE HE FIRST APPEARED IN THE ACTION-PACKED DETECTIVE SERIES HOMICIDE IN 1972.



He became a household name thanks to his role as eldest son John in the hit series *The Sullivans*. The show was on air for seven years, although Andrew stayed for only the first 18 months on the series. The fact he's so well remembered is testament to both his great acting and handsome looks – TV Week dubbed him 'The Housewife's Favorite'. It probably also had to do with the fact John Sullivan's disappearance at the height of World War Two, keeping viewers hanging on for good news for many years. *The Sullivans* went global and even now, 30 years on, *The Sullivans* is about to be shown dubbed in German and show on cable TV there.

Andrew's other TV credits include *Patrol Boat*, *The Flying Doctors*, *Water Rats*, *Blue Heelers*, *Home & Away*, *Neighbours*, *The Alice*, and *Underbelly: A Tale of Two Cities*. The NIDA graduate has been a regular presenter on *PlaySchool* for the ABC and is currently filming a new drama series to be shown on Foxtel in early 2014.

On top of his success in numerous telemovies and miniseries the hard-working actor has also won acclaim in regular roles on the stages of every state theatre company

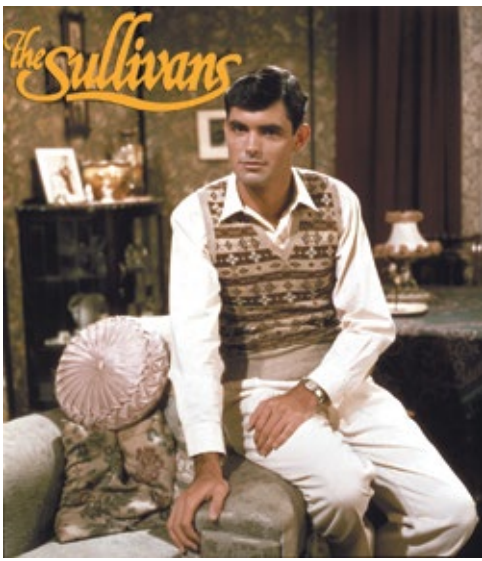
in Australia. Now he's sharing his experience and love of drama with a new generation of actors as the course director at a major Sydney theatre school.

Did you go for camping or caravan holidays when you were young?

We didn't really do the camping/ caravanning thing when I was little. I grew up in a small country town in W.A. right on the coast and surrounded by bush, so I guess our holidays were spent right where we were!

When we moved to Brisbane however, we did do some pretty long trips back to Adelaide where my grandparents lived. It was the 1960s and dad drove a massive powder blue Chevrolet...he would stash a makeshift tarpaulin and some groundsheets and rig up a sort of tent/lean-to attached to the car where we would put down swags for my parents, while my sister and I slept on the back seat.

I think that all came to a stop after one trip when dad had filled the billy with water from a nearby creek and after dinner, when she took the dishes down to wash, mum found a dead sheep in the water.



What was your favourite place to visit and why?

Obviously that trip to the Outback was a favourite memory; also bushwalking in the Stirling Ranges and seeing acres of wildflowers during my childhood in Albany. Also when I worked on the TV series The Alice which we shot in Alice Springs, we went to some truly beautiful locations and saw some of the best sunrises and sunsets

Do you have camping tips? Must dos and don'ts?

Tip 1: if camped by a creek always check that the water is running and clear if you are going to boil water for tea. Also check that there are no dead sheep in it.

Do you still like to get out and explore Australia? If so, what locations are on your wish list?

I love the Australian landscape and I try

to get out in it as much as possible. I had a great campervan holiday in the southwest WA a few years ago. Revisited Albany where I was born and drove through the Karri forests and into the Margaret River area, staying in campsites and caravan parks along the way.

I want to hike in the Flinders Ranges, re-visit beautiful Tasmania (and the Freycinet Peninsular and Bay of Fires) and get to the Tiwi Islands – some day. ♦

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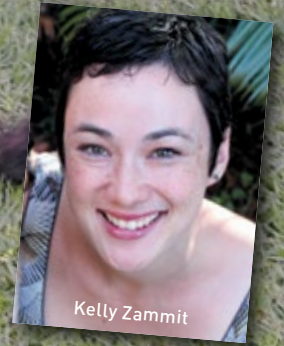
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Campsite doggy dos and don'ts



Travelling with your dog can make your getaway even more enjoyable as you get to see the world through their eyes, experience their excitement, plus you don't have to miss them while you're away!

KELLY ZAMMIT has some tips to make your trip easier and more relaxing for all.

DO

- Make sure your dog's microchipping details are current as it will be hard for him or her to find their way home if they gets lost. It's also a good idea to put a collar on with an identification tag listing your mobile number.
- Update your dog's flea and worming treatment, and find out whether you are travelling to an area where tick prevention is recommended.
- Pack enough of your dog's regular food to last the whole trip plus a couple of extra days in case of emergency. Otherwise you could end up buying pet food from the nearest convenience store that may upset his gut. Diarrhoea or flatulence is definitely not what you want when travelling in the car with your dog.
- Invest in a good quality tether and lead for your dog so that he can be contained to your camping area when you need him to be; for example when you are busy cooking dinner and another dog walks by.
- Find out the location and phone number of the nearest vet to your campsite.
- Pack a doggy first aid kit containing bandaging material, betadine, small nail scissors, tweezers, Rescue Remedy for treating shock, probiotics for gut upsets and antihistamines for insect bites. If your dog is on medication, make sure you pack enough plus some extra just in case.
- Keep your dog on lead in camping grounds and always pick up waste and dispose of it in a bin. This may seem unnecessary in the bush, but dog poo contains nutrients such as phosphates that our Australian native plants do not like; therefore. By leaving waste you create patches of soil where weeds will outcompete the native plants.
- Remember to pack a water and feed bowl; collapsible bowls are available.
- Pack some of favourite toys.
- Bring some of your dog's own bedding but make sure it is waterproof and has enough padding to provide comfort if he's sleeping on the ground.
- Bring a few extra old towels, even if you're not expecting your dog to get wet.

DON'T

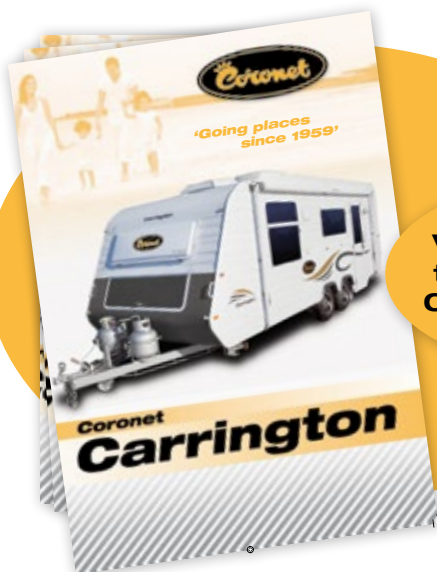
- Let your dog bark as this will make you unpopular with your camping neighbours.
- Let your dog forget his manners and investigate other people's campsites uninvited, particularly when they're cooking or eating dinner.
- Feed your dog too many leftover sausages from the barbie as this can cause diarrhoea and at worst can lead to a serious case of pancreatitis.
- Let your dog go wandering through the bush on his own as he may encounter some dangerous wildlife, or conversely he could hurt a defenceless native animal.
- Forget to bring your dog's warm coat for those cold nights out in the open; another good investment for summer camping is a cooling vest to keep your dog's body temperature down and prevent heatstroke.

If you keep these things in mind when taking your dog away with you, it will make the trip more enjoyable for all!

Kelly Zammit is a veterinarian at All Natural Pet Care, Russell Lea NSW
www.naturalvet.com.au



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