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products so while the interior configurations of the Prima, Optima and Charisma options are offered as a starting point, they are always open to any specific requests from a potential customer. A rod holding tube mounted in the front of the camper is just one that would be of special interest to anglers.

With an Optima model mounted on the tray of a 4WD Mazda BT50 3L turbo diesel, Joe and I hit the road towing a 3.9 Ally Craft tinny to experience the joys of travelling with a slide-on. The vehicle had no trouble maintaining the 100km/h speed limit on the open road when loaded with both boat and camper. Fitting pump up shocks or airbags can enhance the ride and stability of a full load but most standard suspension systems will adequately handle the weight of the camper.

On arrival at a pleasant spot in the Tweed valley, we unhitched the boat before unloading the camper on a piece of uneven ground adjacent to a launching area. The four legs on the camper are adjusted via electric motors that can be operated either together or individually. It was a simple matter to adjust the height of each leg so that the unit was level before lifting it from the ute tray, then driving the vehicle clear.

In less than five minutes, the boat was reattached to the tow ball and we were ready to go fishing! It took another couple of minutes to roll out a side awning and set up a table and chairs for a cup of coffee.

Of course, we could have had that coffee inside if we'd preferred. The interior of the Optima is stylish and classy and reflects Joe's European heritage. It's compact, yet spacious, and offers a level of luxury that is usually only available in caravans or motor homes.

A large double bed is sited at the front of the camper in the section that extends over the vehicle cab. Cushions on the settee that back onto the bed can be raised to increase

the sleeping area if required or the settee can be used as a second bed.

The kitchen area includes a three-burner gas stove, sink, 90L fridge and microwave plus heaps of storage drawers. Both the sink and burners have glass covers fitted to maximise bench space. A moveable table and seating are opposite, along with a wall mounted LCD television.

This Optima camper comes with an electric flush toilet and shower cubicle plus its own grey water tank. There is also the option of having an exterior shower and screen, if preferred.

The camper was airy and bright thanks to four large windows and two roof vents.



The strength of the unit is maximised and the building process simplified, by constructing the internal fittings on the camper base before the exterior walls are attached.



Each leg of the camper can be adjusted, enabling it to sit level on uneven ground.

All the windows were double glazed with insect screens and blinds. Air conditioning and heating units are also popular options.

Joe advised that all gas and 240 volt installations comply with Australian standards, but for extra safety, a smoke alarm and fire extinguisher are fitted as standard to all models. Unlike motor homes or trailers, slide-on campers require no registration for on-road use.

Loading the camper back on the ute was a breeze thanks to a couple of locating pins mounted on the base of the unit. This recent innovation means that the camper always

comes to rest at the same spot on the tray limiting adjustments to the turnbuckles and catches that secure the unit to the vehicle body.

When you consider that there are camper trailers on the market that are as expensive as the top of the range Ozcape models, then these slide-on campers are a very interesting option. With prices starting in the mid \$30K range; they represent excellent value for money in today's marketplace.

After reviewing the Optima, I can certainly envisage the slide-on concept being readily accepted by the next wave of travelling anglers.



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