



OFF THE ROAD CAMPER REVIEW

Ozcape Slide-On Camper



HAVE CAMPER WILL CARRY

Turtles and tortoises have been doing it since the year dot. Carrying around their accommodation on their backs that is!

Ever since the humble automobile had its back cut off and a rugged form of accommodation was installed for a weekend in the bush, there have been all sorts of innovations built around this theme.

Flexibility has always been the main thread to any of these projects both in the way that add-on is utilised as far as living is concerned but also how flexible it makes the holiday-maker by not having to drag a trailer around with them. Think of the upsides. No trailer maintenance, no extra registration and insurance and the ability to get around in tight country without a lengthy appendage dragging behind. And what about the downsides? There aren't any.

Ozcape has been on the slide-on camper scene for around six years and after seeing one at the Brisbane Caravan and Camping show recently, we decided on a closer inspection on their model called the Optima.

These campers are constructed from the inside out which sees the skin being almost the last component installed before the electric legs are fitted.

The framework is constructed of square aluminium tubing that is joined by nylon connectors that are pinned in place. This system of construction allows the finished item to rack and twist to a certain extent when on the trayback of the host vehicle. That sort of movement on a welded frame would be its death knell due to the properties of aluminium; one of which is 'work hardening' due to stress which causes

brittleness and ultimately breakages.

The internal partitions, cupboards and walls are constructed of plywood whilst the outer shell is made from the aforementioned alloy frame with a plywood inner liner and an aluminium skin on the outer. A filling of styrene between these two sections provides a good amount of insulation from the heat and cold.

A camber lock chain dog holds each corner of the camper down to the host vehicle's chassis.

The camper lifts on four remote controlled electric legs which have graduations marked on them so one might settle it level when on a flat surface. Once lifted you will note two alloy tapered locating spikes which insert into corresponding holes in the vehicle tray. These square the camper up when it settles on the tray and prevents

any movement forward or back and side to side.

Once removed from the vehicle the camper may be lived in at that height though you will need a set of steps to get in and out of the door which is on the back wall. Settling it closer to the ground one achieves increased stability without the need to use a step and if you are leaving it unattended you will have increased security with the electric leg remote removed from the equation.

Entering the rear of the camper the bathroom is on the immediate right. Fitted with a Thetford cartridge toilet it also has a hot and cold shower, the hand rose for which extends from the vanity basin. The walls are smooth making for easy cleaning and with the airy window open the hand rose may be passed through for washing



The Ozcape slides off allowing you to camp and have access to your vehicle.



The kitchen is well appointed.



An easy to clean bathroom.

sand and dust off the body before coming inside, should you need.

A 90 litre three-way fridge is installed under the galley bench top which is made from thick laminated water proof plywood with a smart veneer over the top. A stainless steel sheet provides an easy to clean splash back around the recessed sink which has a good sized drain board on its edge and the entire unit is hidden under a stained glass top that offers more bench space when not in use.

The water capacity of the Ozcape is 86 litres and it also has town water connections so water is not cycled through that storage tank unnecessarily.

The cooker has three gas burners and an electric element as well as a drawer front grill and is plumbed to a 9kg gas bottle which features two safety valves.

A cupboard module overhead hosts the microwave cooker and a range hood which vents the steam off the cooker, externally. There is storage space for crockery and the like, here and down below the galley bench, are large pan drawers. Extra bench space is accessed by swinging up a flap on the forward end of the galley unit and locking it in place.

Large windows offer good ventilation each side of the kitchen and dining area and another each side of the double bed. These windows feature pull up insect screens as well as heat deflectors and may be fully or partially deployed in various combinations.

The dining table has a tri-fold top which tucks away as a coffee table or extends out for a full dinner table spread. The unit may also be removed from the wall ▶



Enjoying the shade under the awning.

► if need be. Seating on one side is on a short bench lounge with storage underneath and on the other a full bench lounge that runs across the length of the inside of the camper. That lounge also has storage below which enters a compartment also accessible externally via the offside wall. This lounge provides the step up to get one onto the double bed which is built into the 'cab over' section of the camper.

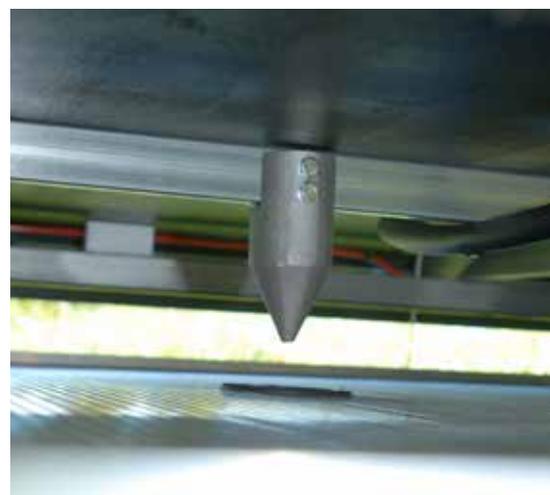
The bed is able to be used in an east west style or north south with the utilisation of the long lounge backs which lift up and rest on props adding extra length to the bed and alleviating the need for people to climb over each other getting in and out

of bed. There is enough head height in this section of the camper for the average adult to sit upright with plenty of clearance to the ceiling.

Whether a tent camp, caravan or camper of sorts, set up time comes into the equation when pulling up for a night or a fortnight. Leaving the Ozcape camper on the tray there is nothing to it; just open the door, climb the steps and you are out of the elements and insects.

When you need to shed the accommodation it is just a matter of 10 or so minutes and the Ozcape is on its legs and you are going about your business; simple as that.

Rick Huckstepp



A pair of locating spikes centralises the camper on the vehicle.



The remote control for the electric legs is handy.

SPECIFICATIONS

- Overall length:** 4.5m
- External width:** 2.260m
- Internal height:** 1.90m
- Cooktop:** Dometic 3 gas burner/ 1 electric element with front loading griller
- Fridge:** Dometic AES 90l fridge/freezer front door
- Gas:** 9kg
- Fresh water:** 86l
- Price:** POA

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