

A Charismatic Camper

The Charisma is the latest slide-on model from the Ozcape team

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY GIL SCHOTT



Slide-ons don't seem to have the popularity of other marques of RVs. I guess from one point of view they are limited in size, and from another they are seen as a poor man's RV, a box shoved on the back of a ute. Snobbery in the RV world? Surely not!

Yet, there are some very practical advantages in slide-ons. For a start, if you want to tow a decent boat (not just tote a tinny), the slide-on allows you to do just that, and launch it easily. It's also easier to sneak into less populated areas, especially if the ute is a 4WD.

The limiting factor with slide-ons has always been the weight that can be carried by the ute, and the spatial limitations demanded by the ute's dimensions. Making a slide-on that is spacious and yet conforms to those limitations is tricky, but the crew at Ozcape seem to have managed it well with their new Charisma.

ON THE INSIDE

The first impression you gain as you look inside is space. The Charisma is very well laid out and it shows in a layout that is both practical and comfortable.

The limitations of a ute mean that the bedroom area must be positioned in a brow over the cab. Right behind that is a dinette, then the kitchen and bathroom.

KEY ASPECTS

- Innovative self-centring system
- Space-saving kitchen storage
- Slide-out dining table
- Clever bed conversion from east/west to north/south
- Remote control stabiliser leg operation



The rear living area is surprisingly spacious



The bathroom is tucked into the rear driver's side corner



Inside/outside access for the under-seat storage



The bedroom has plenty of head-room and under normal circumstances is an east-west sleeping configuration. However, a clever innovation in the Charisma is the ability to convert the bed to a north-south set-up. This is achieved by removing the backing cushions from the dinette and positioning them on a rail that runs across the van at the end of the bed, converting the bed into a massive sleeping area.

At the head of the bed, you'll find a couple of oval-shaped hatches, and the area is well lit by overhead lights, curtained side windows and a skylight.

The dinette is positioned immediately behind the bed and easily accommodates two people. There is good storage under the seats, which is also accessible from external hatches. Between

the bench seats is a coffee table, with a main dining table extension tucked in behind. This is another clever idea, with the big table out of the way while you are lounging around watching the cricket, making the dinette double as a comfortable lounge.

Above the dinette area are overhead lockers, and in a floor hatch under the table is the electrical control box.

The kitchen runs along the passenger side behind the dinette and is choc full of cupboards and storage areas. There's also a pull-out bench extension if you are cooking up a gourmet meal on the three-burner gas stove. Another clever trick is a pull-up 'splashback/splashboard' that shields the dinette upholstery, just in case you slop something when washing up. In the rear passenger corner you'll

A VERY COMFORTABLE AND SPACIOUS RIG THAT LOOKS TO HAVE PLENTY OF ROOM FOR A TRAVELLING COUPLE



The bedroom in the brow is spacious and can be adapted to a north-south configuration

find a wardrobe and more storage. Opposite the kitchen is a fridge cabinet with a bench above, and a flat-screen TV positioned above that.

The bathroom occupies the rear driver's side sector, and while only small, it's very functional. The shower head is positioned in the vanity and is a pull-out model. You can also pull this outside if you like showering in the great outdoors.

Above the kitchen/dinette area is an air-conditioning unit and good lighting.

All in all, there are a lot of features packed into the Charisma, and it's surprisingly roomy.

ON THE OUTSIDE

The Charisma is a good-looking slide-on with attractive decals and clean lines. The rear door has a safety screen



The main dining table is concealed behind the coffee table

THE CHARISMA IS A GOOD-LOOKING SLIDE-ON WITH ATTRACTIVE DECALS AND CLEAN LINES

» RATINGS

ON THE OUTSIDE:	8/10
ON THE INSIDE:	8/10
IN THE KITCHEN:	8.5/10
AT THE DINETTE:	8/10
IN THE BEDROOM:	8.5/10
KEEPING CLEAN:	8/10

» SPECIFICATIONS

MANUFACTURER:	Ozcape Campers Pty Ltd
MODEL:	Charisma
BODY LENGTH:	(4.5m)
WIDTH:	(2.26m)
PRICE:	From POA

» THANKS TO

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and flyscreen, and windows all have insect screens. Access hatches are on both sides and a side awning is fitted.

One clever feature is the locking turnbuckles. These can be a bit of a pain when you are loading and unloading the slide on, but on the Charisma they have a 'quick release' clip that takes some of the drama out of this task.

While we're on the subject of taking the unit off the ute, the corner jacks are remotely operated and make setting up camp very easy.

Ozcape is also developing a 'self-centring' option for its slide-ons, whereby machined aluminium cones fitted to the underside of the slide on guide the unit onto the ute. Keep your eye out for that one.

WRAP-UP

As a fisho, I like the idea of being able to tow a decent boat behind the slide-on, so its practicality is fairly obvious there. So too is the comfort.

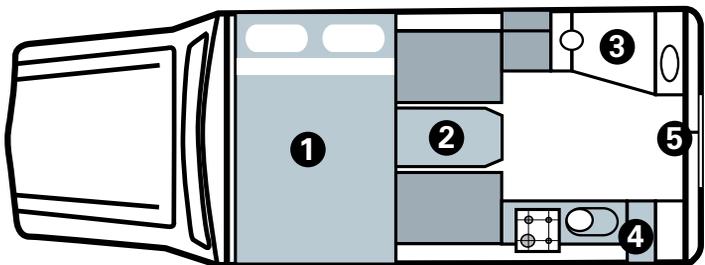
The Charisma is a very comfortable and surprisingly spacious rig that looks to have plenty of room for a travelling couple. It's also full of interesting little innovations that demonstrate that a lot of thought has gone into the design.

Niggles? Not many. I think I'd find the fold-out bench a little annoying, because it blocks off the doorway. And I'd like to see a rear awning on this rig, as I would with any rear-door RV.

All in all, I reckon the Ozcape Charisma is a pretty good thing, with plenty of design innovations, lots of practicality and loads of space. ■



Remote control makes lowering the legs easy



» KEY

1. Double bed
2. Dinette
3. Ensuite
4. Kitchen
5. Entrance

