

Letter of the MONTH

Write to: Caravan World Postbag, Locked Bag 12, Oakleigh, Victoria 3166; or email: caravanworld@bauertrader.com.au. Please include your full address (not for publication). Letters chosen will be edited for publication and may be shortened.

CUSTOM DREAM

We are new caravanners about to embark on the open road dream. We were campers when the kids were young but wanted more comforts as time rolled on. With retirement looming in March 2016 we have signed up for a new Billabong 21ft 6in Wanderer van. As part of our vanning education we have been regular readers of CW.

We have an adult son with mid-range cerebral palsy. He needs a wheelchair in the main but can walk short distances with grab rails or our assistance. My wife and I have had the grey nomad dream for some years, but were hesitant to jump in given the need to cater for our son and the need to make the caravan world a great experience for him as well. We attended the annual Brisbane van shows for a few years and spoke to many of the key van players, outlining van modifications needed to make it all work for us. We have to say we found the desire to accommodate our needs was somewhat frosty in many cases. Modular seems to be the priority and, we assume, the cheapest option. Outside the square did not seem to be available.

Thankfully, we came across Billabong Custom Caravans (our local dealer is Coastal Caravans at Burleigh Heads). Billabong had a family van with multiple bunks as part of their range that was generally to our liking. From the get-go, the company and dealer were very positive and willing to listen to all our needs. Nothing seemed to be a road (caravan) block to them.

Can you fit grab handles throughout the van? No problem. Shower seat? No problem. Can you do away with upper bunks and widen the lower bunk? No problem. This bunk modification will affect the robe and washing machine layout. No problem. Can we cut a nook in the robe beside the bunk to store remote controls, mobile phone, chargers, etc.? No

problem. Can you replace upper bunks with overhead storage? No problem. Can you do away with the under-bunk drawer and make it into an external drawer to store an all-terrain wheelchair? No problem. They also suggested other ideas when our modification requests proved restrictive.

We have now signed off on final drawings and the build is underway with delivery planned for the end of March. We are confident that the modified van will help the three of us achieve our dream. To anyone out there with special/disability needs, we recommend putting Billabong Custom Caravans on your list.

*Peter, Glenda and Steve Freemantle
Cleveland, Qld*

T-PLATERS

What are your thoughts on my idea for having a green 'T-plate'? This is for people who have little or no experience with towing and should be an optional choice for motorists when towing. The design would be a green 'T' on a white background.

If a green T-plate was displayed on the rear of a trailer being towed, this would send a warning to other road users to allow more patience and give a wider berth when passing the rig.

The T-plate should be displayed in addition to P-plates, of course. I would like to see the introduction of a green T-plate become legally-recognised Australia-wide.

*Mark,
via email*

Hi Mark – thanks for your email. I think your idea has some merit if the idea of the green 'T-plate' was to send the message that the driver was an inexperienced tower and to therefore be a little bit patient.

We would be interested to hear some feedback from other readers on this topic, too.

– Ed

Congratulations to Peter, Glenda and Steve, whose submission has been chosen as the Postbag *Letter of the Month*.

They win a Topargee water tank gauge, valued at \$95.

The Topargee water tank gauge takes the guesswork out of your maintaining your water supply and displays the precise number of litres remaining in your tank – not just an estimate, such as whether it is a quarter or half full.

This is just the thing for people who bush

camp as you will always know how many days' supply is left in your tanks. This is a valuable safety feature, especially in remote areas, as you will know if you need to conserve water or if you will safely make it to your next destination to fill up. It is also a handy way of ensuring you won't run out of water mid-shower!

Installation is remarkably easy as nothing is fitted to the tank.

For more information, visit www.topargee.com.au or phone 0418 767 967.



NOT SO SECRET

I've been catching up on news noted in CW541 the River Coast, and now a camp is mentioned. No, no, no, we don't want everyone will know about this spot now! Ah well, it's a bit late.

And then, to our surprise we had made the Topargee well. So I thought I'd mention the River Camp (located near the river).

We have been coming a year since 1995 since tent trailer, and then

Margaret

