



WORDS AND PICS IAIN KENNEDY

**Opposite page:** The chassis and A-frame are cold rolled for extra strength. **This page:** The Safari's OZtrail Camper 8 tent is made from canvas waterproofed to its core; Iain took the Safari to Thunderbird Park, near Eagle Heights.



# Ride the WAVE

The rust-resistant Desert Edge Safari DLX is light and tough.

**D**esert Edge campers are made at Telwater, the same company that builds Quintrex, Stacer and Savage boats, so you can understand how this has influenced the materials and construction techniques used.

For a start, the body is made from

2mm-thick marine-grade aluminium, and the full-length, cold rolled chassis and drawbar reek of boat trailer – constructed from hot-dipped galvanised, dual grade 100x50x3mm RHS.

### SMOOTH RIDE

The Safari's aluminium body keeps the weight

to a minimum. With a Tare weight of 570kg and a ball weight of 60kg, you hardly know you're towing it except for when the 10in Al-ko offroad electric drum brakes operate.

The suspension is Al-ko Independent Rubber Torsion Bar (IRS), rated at 1100kg. I've never seen or used it before, so it was a good experience for me. It provided the



### PROS

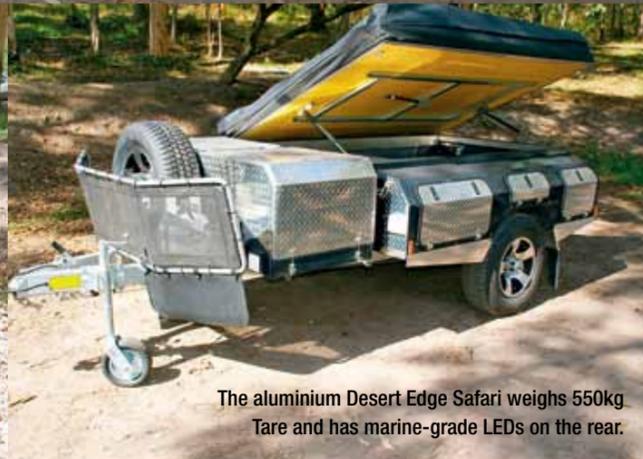
- Lightweight
- Strong, solid construction
- Stabilisers are strong enough to jack up camper on uneven ground and can be angled in or out as well

### CONS

- Fridge outside, not under annexe
- Mattress is covered in a vinyl rather a material that breathes



The 9ft tent has with six windows and two doors for ample ventilation. Below: One of three access points to the main storage compartment.



The aluminium Desert Edge Safari weighs 550kg Tare and has marine-grade LEDs on the rear.

Safari with a very smooth ride. CSA alloy mags (15x 7in) are supplied standard and are fitted with 235/75 All Terrains, and really set off the camper.

A Hyland hitch is secured to the drawbar, as well as the 4kg gas cylinder holder (excluding cylinders), rubber jockey wheel, spare wheel, stone guard with rubber extensions and two checkerplate wing storage boxes with gas-strut assisted lids. Both are sealed using automotive bubble seals, and one

is designed to house a fridge (fridge not included) while the other is a storage box. To the rear are two stabiliser legs that are able to jack up the trailer on uneven ground, and can be angled left or right. A 90L, 9mm polyethylene water tank is underneath behind the rear axles. The tank doesn't require protection due to the thick plastic, but a checkerplate protection plate guards the pipe leading from it.

Marine-grade LED lights adorn the

rear and are mounted on a checkerplate backing.

### AMPLE STORAGE

The body is 2100x1800mm, but is not a traditional design. It has storage pods with angled checkerplate tops affixed to both side walls of the body. The sealed doors open to undedicated storage, lockers suitable for likes of a battery (battery not included, box with isolator only) and a slide-out kitchen.

The kitchen is an aluminium box with a



Adjust the tent polls at waist height, before placing into the ground for easier installation.

Dometic two-burner stove and a sink with a mixer-style tap that operates the 12V pressure pump.

Both the stove and the sink have hinged, tempered, smoked-glass lids.

The carpeted storage area measures 2100x1200mm and can be accessed via the gas-strut assisted plywood bed base, through the tailgate and a hatch under the 150mm thick, queen-sized, open-cell foam mattress.

### WAIST-HEIGHT INSTALLATION

Setting up the camper is a straight forward task, and is simply a matter of folding the tent out to the rear, adjusting the bow poles and pegging it down. The only difference from the norm is that the rear-side bow poles are loosened off and detached from the camper body after setting up. The poles are then relocated, and the ends are inserted into pockets on the floor. It's done this way so you get everything right at waist height, rather than

## TAMBORINE MOUNTAIN

This Desert Edge Safari DLX review was the perfect excuse for my wife and I to revisit the Tamborine Mountain in the Gold Coast Hinterland after 20 years. We met Desert Edge's production manager Stuart Morgan who explained the camper's operation, before we headed off to our destination, Thunderbird Park. Taking exit 57 on the M1 motorway, we found ourselves on the Tamborine-Oxenford Rd (route 92), along a food and wine trail through some very scenic countryside, which eventually led us to Eagle Heights on Tamborine Mountain. We chatted with locals to learn about the nearby attractions: it turns out that Tamborine Mountain has changed enormously in the past 20 years. The area has plenty of wineries, including one at Cedar Creek Estate where glow worms are bred and released into the wild, and of course, there's the wide range of native flora and fauna.

The "Skywalk" purpose-built foot bridge weaves through the Tamborine Rainforest canopy, and there are walking tracks at ground level as well. But first we strolled along the main street known as the "Gallery Walk". We found several galleries and craft shops showcasing paintings, sculptures, ceramics and porcelain, glass, jewellery, and German Cuckoo clocks. There were plenty of restaurants and cafes to enjoy a coffee, light refreshments, or a substantial meal, there was even a vineyard with a cellar door.

It was too early for a tippie, and we were short on time, so we bid Eagle Heights farewell and set off to find Thunderbird Park, a further 15 mins on.

We stopped at the Park's entrance, and I read the sign. I had no idea there were so many different activities available. We were headed for the creekside caravan and camping area, but there's also accommodation at the Cedar Creek Lodges.

Activities at the on-site Adventure Parc include laser skirmish, mountain biking, abseiling, restaurant/gallery/bar, trail rides and a crystal mine.

At the caravan and camping area, the fees were very reasonable. Unpowered sites cost \$9pp and for powered sites \$12pp, and children \$4. Dogs are allowed with a \$10 charge.

Our site was large enough for a trailer, with room for a tent or two, and to top it off it was dead level.

For more information, visit [www.thunderbirdpark.com](http://www.thunderbirdpark.com)

bend down to make the adjustments.

Desert Edge uses a commercially available tent from OZtrail called the Camper 8. OZtrail uses Saturated Canvas that is purportedly waterproof to its core to maintain its waterproof integrity. The tent is 9ft long with six screened windows and two screened doors. Once the tent is set up, it's time to erect the awning with walls. Once again this is a straightforward task, which involved attaching the awning with a zip, and setting up a selection of poles and spreader bars, and pegging down the corners with guy ropes. Attaching the walls is also relatively easy if you have two people. They attached with large velcro strips, with not a zip to be found except on the entry door flap and screen, and window flaps. No ground mat is supplied and it isn't an optional extra, so you will have to source this yourself if you want one.

**SUMMING UP**

The Safari DLX enabled us to have a wonderful weekend experience. Its greatest asset and feature is its light weight. So much so you will hardly notice you are towing it, and it is just about impervious to rust due to its aluminium construction. It is very easy to set up, looks stylish due to its unique design and has an excellent suspension system in the form of the outback IRS from Al-ko. It has a two year limited warranty, and the standard price is \$15,861, but as reviewed here with the optional wing storage boxes, stone guard with rubber extensions, and full annexe with walls, the price is \$18,227 (excluding on-road costs).

Desert Edge Campers (a division of Telwater), 53 Waterway Drive, Coomera, Qld 4209, Ph (07) 5585 9885 (please ask for Desert Edge Campers). For more information, including your nearest dealer, visit [www.desertedgetrailers.com.au](http://www.desertedgetrailers.com.au) ■



**Clockwise from above:** The Skywalk weaves through Gold Coast hinterland rainforest canopy; the locals were friendly; the Al-ko IRS suspension handled the Desert Edge Safari with aplomb.



**SPECIFICATIONS**  
Desert Edge  
**SAFARI DLX**

- Tare:**.....570kg
- ATM:** ..... 1100kg
- Suspension:** ..... Al-ko IRS
- Brakes:** .....10in electric drum
- Coupling:**.....Hyland
- Price as shown:** ..... \$18,227 (excluding ..... on-road costs)



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**DO35 Coupling As Used By**

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