

Winning Edge

Desert Edge's Outback hard floor camper
has the talent for hassle free
bush adventures.



It's always reassuring when you meet someone in the camper trailer industry who genuinely believes in the product they are selling. Tony Taylor at Austyle Campers and Trailers on the Gold Coast, the region's Desert Edge dealer, is one such man.

"It's a quality brand built by a company with a good name," he said "Once we got on board with them we've never looked back." And this isn't just sales talk — Tony fought to become a dealer for Desert Edge, certain that its campers combine quality, ease of use and value in a good looking package. Tony backs his beliefs up by personally adventuring in these offroad campers, and was keen to show me through Desert Edge's Outback rear fold hard floor offering.

QUALITY BUILD

Desert Edge is a brand of Telwater, manufacturer of Quintrex, Stacer and Savage aluminium boats. It is a busy manufacturer — producing 13,000 boats and 6,000 trailers annually.

The Outback made a good first impression; it has the looks, rugged build quality and solid specs to qualify as a true offroad proposition. Tare is 740kg and it is rated to 1400kg, giving a healthy 660kg payload. The chassis is hot dipped galvanised steel, while the trailer body is marine grade aluminium to keep rust at bay.

My test unit was painted a traditional and stylish black, but thanks to the company's access to Telwater's paint shop, a large colour range is available: somewhat of a rarity for camper trailers. While I'd probably steer away from the lime green offering — opting for a red, orange or light blue trailer will certainly help you stand out in the bush.

BUSH READY

The whole unit is over 4.5m in length, thanks to its extended drawbar, which makes reversing easier. A Hyland offroad coupling attaches it to the tow vehicle, while the free space atop the drawbar leaves ample room for two large gullwing storage boxes and a 4kg gas bottle holder. The stone guard and mud guards

are cost options (\$675), and I would recommend them to protect what is an attractive setup.

The underside suggests it is bush ready — with Al-ko galvanised independent rubber suspension, electric drum brakes and quality 16in alloy wheels with offroad tyres that are easy on the eye. You've got a generous 90L protected water tank as standard too, while the topside of the trailer looks equally robust — with aluminium checker plate and boat rack standard.

★ RATING

OFFROAD ABILITY	★ ★ ★ ★
BUSHABILITY	★ ★ ★ ★
SET UP	★ ★ ★ ★
ELECTRICS/LIGHTING	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★ ★ ★ ★
COMFORTS	★ ★ ★



EASY SETUP

Hard floor campers are the popular choice for couples not wanting to waste their holiday setting up. The Outback's tent is up in less than five minutes by my timing, with no stress, strain or fiddling. The hard floor is quality sealed and released with latches, and a winch system lowers it with minimal effort. Adjust the rear tent poles, put in two spreaders and basic camp is complete. It's a true one person job.

A standard stainless steel kitchen slides and then swings into place with its sink and two-burner stove, and is within easy reach of the wing storage box designed to fit an optional 60 or 80L fridge. My test Outback also had an optional kitchen extension (\$390) to offer a bit more food preparation space.

The opposing wing box is good for extra storage or a generator, and shows attention to detail by being carpeted. There is a further small storage compartment on the trailer's exterior, but your main storage (also carpeted) is under the queen bed inside your living quarters.

LIVING IT UP

There's a feeling of quality throughout the tent area, and it's a bonus that the trailer unit and canvas are both built in Qld. The tent is robust for its 12oz, and is well aired thanks to six windows and single door. The rear of the tent completely opens up for ultimate ventilation.

Even with the windows closed my test Outback was excellently lit thanks to its optional 12V lights; a must-have from the options list in my opinion (\$595). Inside are two ceiling light strips, there's one under the mattress to see into the storage area, and another in the fridge box. There's a battery box provided, but Desert Edge leaves it up to the customer to choose their own battery depending on their needs.

The queen bed is at a nice low height,

"A large colour range is available: somewhat of a rarity for camper trailers"

and while there is a slip-in step provided, most will have no trouble just hopping on. The hard floor is roomy enough to sleep a few more guests, but most would prefer the extra room offered by the annexe. It comes with a zip and velcro annexe as standard, with walls included at no additional charge. A tent room extension is also available if you need more space.

SUMMING UP

The model up from my test Outback is Desert Edge's Outback Deluxe using Vehicle Components independent suspension, but on our quite challenging

offroad excursion, the standard Outback seemed more than capable.

"The Outback is excellent offroad; anywhere I can take the truck (2000 Toyota LandCruiser with lift kit) I can take the camper," Tony said.

The Desert Edge Outback would be a great bush companion with its robust build, quality features for offroad use and simple setup. These totally Aussie-built units cost a reasonable \$27,295 through Austyle, with the options my test unit sported increasing it to \$28,955. If you're shopping for a hard floor in this price range the Desert Edge Outback is worth a closer look. ■

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SPECIFICATIONS

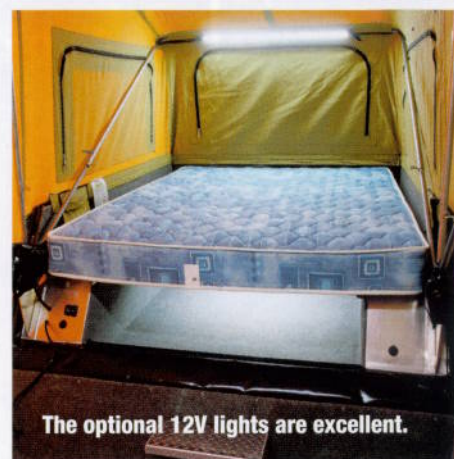
Desert Edge OUTBACK

Tare:	740kg
ATM:	1400kg
Suspension:	Al-ko independent
Brakes:	Electric drum
Coupling:	Hyland
Price (as shown):	\$28,955 (drive-away, ex-Qld)

Whilst not pictured here, annexe walls come as standard, meaning there is plenty of space for sleeping extra people.



The gullwing box next to the kitchen is perfect for a fridge.



The optional 12V lights are excellent.