

Trakka Trakkadu



Jack in THE BOX

Excellent use of space and clever technology make the Trakkadu a winner.



Trakka has always had an excellent relationship with Volkswagen as many of its successful campervan and motorcamper designs are based on VW vehicles. So it was no surprise for CW to learn that Trakka's latest campervan, the Trakkadu, was designed and built using the high-tech T5 van.

Most light commercial vehicle builders start with the assumption that the vehicle is going to be used commercially, mostly as a delivery van. But VW started with the proviso that the T5 was going to be used as a people mover. The T5 is something quite innovative, but the spinoff, a T5 as a campervan conversion prospect, is a definite boon to the RV world.

Trakka general manager Martin Poate introduced us to the Trakkadu and from the shining lights in his eyes, it was not difficult to



Above: For outside use, the table clips on to the sliding door.

Above left: Here's 2.5 litres of potent turbodiesel technology.

Left: All cupboards have neat, space-saving roller shutter doors. Note that when the bed is made up, you can still use the swivelled cab seats. **Opposite page:** Despite the small size of the kitchen bench area, there is a reasonable amount of storage.

THE CAMPER

In its original form, the T5 VW is a very stylish looking van. Its flush-fitted windows give the van a very streamlined look. In keeping with this, there are few indications on the outside that the Trakkadu is a campervan. The rising roof has been designed to be very streamlined and the only giveaway on the roof is the Fiamma awning, but even that has been designed to integrate into the roof moulding.

Trakka has also designed an optional fibreglass moulding to mount two 80W solar panels on the rising roof. The moulding has been designed so the solar panels sit off the roof and gain some benefit from air cooling (solar panels operate more efficiently at lower temperatures). Also in keeping with the streamlined look, Trakka has moulded a mounting for a TV antenna on to the inside of the roof.

Along the nearside, the only addition is a rail on the sliding door for the clip-on table and a gas cylinder compartment on the offside. Because of gas fitting compliance regulations, Trakka has previously mainly used methylated spirit cooktops in its smaller vans. Also fitted on the offside is a drainage point for the grey water tank.

The Trakkadu sleeps two but can easily be used as a passenger vehicle since it has

see his excitement about the company's new baby. Everything from the new rising roof design to the floor tracks for the rear seat/folding bed suggested the Trakkadu is the result of considerable research. Trakka had started from the ground up with the design, ensuring it matched the T5 with its new technology.

Something worth mentioning is the thoroughness of CW's briefing. No small detail was left out and the information kit supplied told us everything we needed to know. During our look around I was interested to note that the Trakkadu carries a NSW RTA vehicle modification plate. Martin told us Trakka is also in the process of applying for an ADR second stage of manufacture compliance plate.

ON THE ROAD

VW's T5 comes with a few options in the engine department, all of which are turbodiesel. There's either the 77kW 1.9 litre engine bolted to a five-speed manual gearbox or the larger 128kW 2.5 litre which comes with either a six-speed manual or equally interesting six-speed automatic gearbox.

Our review vehicle came with the 128kW motor coupled to the six-speed Tiptronic gearbox. Tiptronic means the gearbox can be used in full auto mode or driven 'manually'. It is a very potent combination and there is nothing sluggish about it.

Equally important, the front and rear axle independent suspensions provide a generally good handling van. CW tested the Trakkadu on the curves of the Old Pacific Highway north of Sydney and it performed a treat.

Behind the wheel, just about everything is where it should be. The very car-like steering wheel has multi-adjustment as do both driver and passenger seats.

Power steering, disc brakes, external mirrors and windows all make driving a breeze, as do cruise control, remote central locking and the very efficient cab air-conditioning.

The gearshift in the Trakkadu is dash mounted and out of the way and the handbrake is set low for manoeuvrability around the cabin but is not unreachable. If I was being picky, I'd say the gearshift in manual mode is too close to the steering wheel – I caught it a few times when using the left-mounted indicator stalk.

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BASE VEHICLE

Volkswagen T5

ENGINE

2.5 litre turbodiesel

MAX POWER

128kW@3500rpm

MAX TORQUE

400Nm@2000rpm

GEARBOX

Six-speed auto Tiptronic

EXTERNAL LENGTH

17ft 4in (5.29m)

EXTERNAL WIDTH

6ft 3in (1.9m)

EXTERNAL HEIGHT

6ft 11in (2.1m)

INTERNAL HEIGHT

Average on sloping roof is 6ft 5in (1.95m)

DRIVER'S LICENCE

C class

SEATBELTS

Four

COOKTOP

Cramer

FRIDGE

IndelB 85 litre

FRESH WATER TANK

50 litre

GREY WATER TANK

38 litre

GAS

3.3kg cylinder

BATTERIES

Two x 65 amp hour

HOT WATER

15 litre heat exchanger/240V

PRICE (AS REVIEWED)

\$81,200 (plus o/r)



seating for four – two in the cab and two in the bed/seat behind. The latter has two integrated lap/sash seat belts and child seat anchorages. Since the seat/bed can be moved forward and back on its floor mounting rails, the integrated seat belts are a very desirable feature for potential buyers.

Both the swivelling driver and passenger seats have armrests and adjustable lumbar support. It is features like the swivelling seats that make the difference between a good campervan layout and a not-so-good one. Space is very limited in a van like the T5 and it's a good design that makes effective use of it all.

Lifting the rising roof is quite a simple procedure. Trakka has changed from its previous system of a two-stage catch, to a simple press-button operation. When the button is pushed, the roof rises, assisted by two external gas struts. Two large screened windows are fitted on either side of the vinyl gusset.

In a van like the Trakkadu the lounge, kitchen, dinette and bed are almost one integral unit. Almost, but not quite! All cabinet work is made from a lightweight ply that Trakka imports from Europe. It is high pressure laminated on both sides and is strong and water resistant.

The simple kitchen sits along the offside behind the driver's seat and consists of a combined three-burner cooktop and sink, both with separate glass covers. There is even a moderate amount of bench space beside the sink which would house the optional microwave oven.

Under the cooktop is a 12V IndelB compressor-driven fridge. At 85 litres, it's about the largest size that will fit easily in a camper this size. Next to the fridge is a single shelf cupboard, the lower half occupied by a Porta Potti. Further along under the bench space area is a single large drawer with a small cupboard underneath. Trakka has opted for

Above: The rear cupboard has 'his and her' clothes hangers.

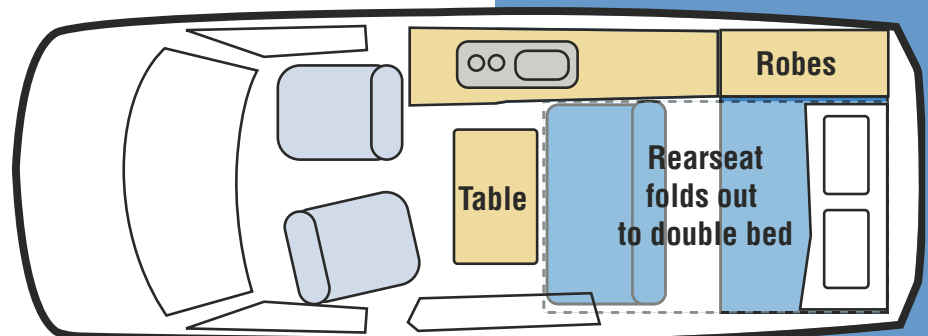
Above left: Gauges under cooktop show tank and battery voltage levels. Rear seat can be moved backwards and forwards.

the European idea of roller shutter doors on all its cupboards. While taking a tad longer to open, they do have the distinct advantage of not needing space for the door to open – a problem when the cupboard sits slightly behind the seat as it does here.

In keeping with the multi-function theme of the Trakkadu, the table can be used inside or out. It simply clips on either the side of the kitchen bench or the van and can be slid either way.

A twin fluorescent fitting provides good light immediately above the cooktop and sink area and there's a second fluorescent light in the rising roof. A twin power point at the end of the kitchen bench supplies 240V power.

Setting up the bed is easy. The rear seat has been designed to have an angled back – several angles in fact for relaxation – and an angled squab for travelling comfort. However, it folds out flat for a bed. In conjunction with the foam cushion in the rear of the Trakkadu, it forms a bed of 6ft 5in x 4ft (1.95m x 1.22m).



Making the bed is simple: the table is lifted out and the seat drawn forward

Storage is not going to be extravagant in a camper like the Trakkadu but it has been carefully planned. There's a rear hanging cupboard with roller shutter doors and 'his' and 'hers' hanging rails. Under the rear seat is a large drawer (it moves with the seat) and there is also a similar-sized drawer under the rear platform. Both make convenient use of the storage area available. Trakka has also done the same thing with the fresh and grey water tanks. Both are custom designed, sit in the van (not underneath it) and make an effective use of an otherwise redundant space.

Even for a small campervan, the power system is quite sophisticated. The Trakkadu is wired for both 240V and 12V, with the 240/12V battery charger, like the vehicle

alternator, supplying both the house batteries and the VW starter battery. A standard Trakka feature is the override that allows an emergency vehicle to start from the house batteries – there are two of those, one under each cab seat. LCD gauges mounted on the kitchen bench give voltage readings for all batteries and also indicate water tank levels.

Sitting in the rear corner by the water tank filler is an external shower. Hot water for the sink and rear shower comes from a 15 litre heat exchanger/240V tank. A rear annexe will be available later this year for the Trakkadu if you are a little shy about showering with the neighbours watching.

BOTTOM LINE

The Trakkadu is impressive! Everything from the quick-to-make-up bed to the swivel seats that make up a relatively spacious lounging area all add up to make a very attractive rig.

Campervans are often seen as the lower end of the motorhome market but the Trakkadu has been engineered to be a very sophisticated RV that will find a comfortable niche in the marketplace.

WE LIKED:

- Driving the T5 VW
- General layout which gives room to move, sit around and an easily made up bed
- Ease of lifting the roof
- Good storage in a van this size
- Space-saving roller shutter doors

WE WOULD HAVE LIKED:

- More time to play with it
- Reading lights above driver and passenger seats
- Sink drainer

It's not going to suit everybody's pocket, or an RVer looking for a larger motorhome, but anyone interested in a comfortable around-town machine and a luxury campervan will not be disappointed with the Trakkadu.

For more information contact Trakka, 9 Beaumont Road, Mt Kuring-gai, NSW 2080, (02) 9472 9000, info@trakka.com.au or visit www.trakka.com.au

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