

Angler's retreat

Trakka Jabiru Remote 4X4



The Jabiru Remote 4x4 is a smart looking motorhome with excellent accommodation – and the ability to traverse bush tracks.



Dirt ramp launching was trouble-free, though manoeuvring room is required.

Trakka's new Jabiru Remote 4x4 has the looks and the layout of what you might expect from a luxury motorhome, but with a big point of difference – it's got four-wheel-drive ability. With that comes a range of options as to where you can take this RV, and the possibilities for off-the-beaten-track fishing – in comfort – are extended.

Sally Berry from Trakka agreed that we should take this exciting new vehicle into the field for a few days to truly put the Jabiru

through its paces. This was an offer too good to refuse so, with Sally's help, we were off to the NSW High Country where I knew we could give the Jabiru a chance to perform – and also maybe catch a late season trout or two.

Trakka is a family-owned and operated company that started in 1973, and today it has a well-deserved reputation for quality and innovation. The release of the Jabiru Remote 4x4 is the next chapter in the Trakka story. The Jabiru is built on a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter LWB vehicle and, at just under seven metres in length, it's an impressive unit.

We left the Trakka factory at Mt Kuring-gai on Sydney's outskirts to head down the Hume to the Canberra turn-off. Cruising the highway was both easy driving and comfortable. Engine noise from the six-cylinder 2987cc turbo diesel was more than acceptable, and in no time Canberra was left in our wake – that's always a good thing! Our plan for the first day was to head through Cooma to Adaminaby, and then up to a small camping ground at Three Mile Dam. This drive would give the Jabiru a good test, given that our destination sits at nearly 1400 metres above sea level. The road, while sealed, has many good climbs and sharp corners, and added to that, we were towing a 4.6 metre boat and outboard.

Well, I am able to confirm that the drive was a breeze, and big climbs were handled well by the Mercedes with the turbo working as you would expect. It's not a trip to be underestimated, given that the Jabiru weighs in at 4490kg



Open the door to absolute luxury.



Full-width king size bed, with handy reading lights.



The kitchen is compact but it works.

GVM, and the towing limit is up to 2000kg with a braked trailer. On the fuel and supply stop in Cooma, the Jabiru with boat in tow caused quite a few turned heads and raised more than a few questions. It's a smart looking outfit.

Having set up camp at Three Mile Dam, and after a great dinner, we set about planning the next couple of days. The concept behind the Jabiru was to produce a well-built, comfortable camper for Australian conditions. This means it must be able to get off the bitumen because being restricted to the black stuff means you can miss so much of what this great land has to offer. With this in mind, we were keen to engage 4WD and take the Jabiru on tracks that are usually only the domain of SUVs, and also to launch the boat and maybe find a trout or two.

The days dawned cold but clear, so we

headed down to Lake Eucumbene to one of the many dirt boat ramps that are located around this High Country lake. Launching the boat, even on a dirt ramp, proved easy for the Jabiru but you do need some manoeuvring room given the total length of the camper and boat.

After our lake fishing trip, we retrieved the boat and headed off to set up camp in the area around Long Plain Road in the Kosciuszko National Park. This is a truly great off-road touring and camping region, from where the famous Murrumbidgee River starts its long journey. The drive back up from the lake into the national park was another chance to test the driving credentials of the Jabiru, with plenty of climbs and winding mountain roads, before heading onto the dirt and into 4WD for the first time.

The Jabiru uses rear-wheel-drive for normal

conditions but all-wheel-drive is just a push of a button away and makes all the difference when the blacktop is left behind. The Jabiru also has low range 4WD for more difficult terrain. While clearance, and approach and departure angles are more than okay, you still have to remember that it's still a seven metre long vehicle.

The camp chosen for that night was Bull-ocks Hill Horse Camp where, after unhitching the boat, we took the camper on a run down the track to the Murrumbidgee River. At this location the mighty river is not much wider than most people could long-jump over but it was a fun run in the camper – and the Jabiru did surprise a few fishermen parked down on the river with their LandCruisers and Patrols.

With the temperature dropping, a good campfire was the order of the night, along with





Setting up camp is as quick as getting out a chair and sitting down with a cold beer.

fresh fish for dinner and a few cold ones. The Jabiru does have ducted diesel heating but there is something special about a campfire. Apart from heating, the Jabiru is fitted with an impressive list of other creature comforts, most of which are standard, though there are also some options. A hot shower to finish the day is a camping luxury one could quickly get used to.

The plan for the next day was to drive more of the park's tracks and maybe wet a line somewhere. While the day dawned bright it did not last, and the rain set in with a vengeance. After watching a mob of wild brumbies for a while, we packed up and headed west on the Snowy Mountain Highway towards Tumut. Along the way we managed a few photos between showers and at Yarrangobilly put the Jabiru through a small river crossing (yes Sally, we checked the water depth before crossing). Again, we were impressed with the way the camper handled all that we took it through. The drive down the mountain before passing Blowering Reservoir is



Blacktop touring is easy and comfortable, and no problem when towing.

at times very, very steep and with boat in tow and heavy rain it was another test for the Jabiru, which I am pleased to say it passed.

Now to the interior layout. Starting in the driving position we have two seats that swivel both forward for travel and back for dining or watching TV etc. Next, we have a compact kitchen with stove and sink, plus storage options on the left hand. Bench space is somewhat limited but having cooked with it I can report that it works fine. A microwave and 136-litre fridge/freezer completes the kitchen set-up.

On the right hand side opposite the kitchen is the bathroom with shower and basin, and a power-operated chemical toilet that slides out of view when not required. The bathroom space is fine for height but snug when the loo is in the out position. At the campers' rear end, and taking up the full camper width, is a permanent king size bed with storage access at the rear. Add an outside shower plus a full four-metre awning, workbench and great lighting, and you

SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer: Trakka
Model: Jabiru Remote 4x4
Length: 6.945 metres
Width: 1.993 metres
Height: 2.80 metres
Engine: Mercedes Benz, turbo diesel, 2987cc, six cylinders
Drive: Four wheel, with high and low range
Seating: Two
GMV: 4490kg
Tow cap: 2000kg with braked trailer
Transmission: Five-speed automatic
Features: 48cm digital TV, 160-litre fresh water tank, 136-litre fridge/freezer, awning, shower and toilet
Pricing: From \$169,950
Contact: 1800 872 552, www.trakka.com

have one very comfortable camper – with air conditioning as an option that most would take. The full list of features is impressive and space does not allow us to cover everything but the Trakka guys have not missed much at all.

Three days is not a trip around Australia but it was enough time to show us that the Jabiru Remote 4x4 is a real 4WD vehicle, with low range. The drive experience, both on and off the bitumen, is a real delight and the Mercedes engine performs well under a tow-load. The build quality and style, and comfort of the Jabiru are what you would expect from a company like Trakka.

For a couple looking for the comfort and ease that a motorhome provides, with the great advantage of being able to explore off-road and thus enhance their touring lifestyle, I would most strongly recommend they consider this rather unique vehicle. As a fisherman, the ability to tow a small boat with ease opens up all sorts of options, and still keeps one's partner in a style I am sure they will love.

Gregg Haythorpe

It's nice to have 4WD ability when exploring off road.



BOAT SPECIFICATIONS

Model: Quintrex 450 Escape
Length: 4.52 metres, beam 2.10 metres
Weight: 456kg(boat and motor)
Recommended hp: 40hp. Max hp 60hp
Fuel tank: 50 litre
Options: Long list from canopy to radio and fish finders etc.
Price: From \$19,800 as base fitout
Contact: Sydney Powerboat Centre, (02) 9997 7797, or Quintrex at www.quintrex.com.au