



Remote Control

Trakka Jabiru Remote is a real 4x4 with high and low range that opens up more options.

MOTORHOMES have been around for some time and, like caravans, most of us can form a mental picture of what they look like and the style of layout that they are synonymous with. Well, the Trakka Jabiru Remote 4x4 is in looks and layout what you would expect – but the big point of difference is the four-wheel-drive ability and the options that this new RV opens up.

Sally Berry, “the boss” at Trakka, agreed that OTR should take this exciting new ve-

hicle not just around the block for a quick photo session, but away 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 Kuringgai 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 as there’s good fishing in Lake Eucumbene.

Well, I am able to confirm that the drive

was a breeze, and even the 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 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 heads to turn and raised more than a few questions. It’s a smart outfit, as the photos in this review show.

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, devised by Sally and her team at Trakka, 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 ▶



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

► SUVs, and also to launch the boat and maybe find a couple of trout.

The day 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. As this is a field review of the Jabiru, I won't go into details re our lake fishing trip but I will tell you that fish was on the menu...

After retrieving the boat, we 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 again another chance to test the driving credentials of the Jabiru, with plenty of steep 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 Bulllocks 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



Camp set up, great awning.

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 Land Cruisers and Patrols.

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



Kitchen area is compact but works.

brumbies for a while, we then packed up and headed west on the Snowy Mountain Highway towards Tumut. Along the way we managed a few photos between rain showers and at Yarrangobilly even 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 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

Open the door to absolute luxury.



The Jabiru is one smart looking vehicle that turns heads.

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 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 camper's 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 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.

So what have Trakka produced with the release of the Jabiru Remote 4x4? Well, three days is not a trip around Australia but it was enough time to show us that it's 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 – Sally and her team have done a great job.

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, then 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. For a full run-down on this new camper, check out Trakka's website or phone and they will be happy to help you.

Gregg Haythorpe



SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer: Trakka
Model: Jabiru Remote 4x4
Length: 6.945 metres
Width: 1.993 metres
Height: 2.80 metres
Engine: Mercedes Benz, turbo diesel, 2987 cc, 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



Even with boat in tow, it handled the High Country hills with ease.

