

aim **FIRE**

Hire and sales mob Far and Wide knows what a camper needs.

Camper trailer manufacturers maintaining hire fleets learn fast what gives and what lasts, resulting in robust designs that withstand inexperienced hands and those 'unburdened' by ownership. In fairness, most of Far and Wide's hire clientele are reputable, and many borrow units for months on end, similar to this Desert Trek model set up for touring.

We're inspecting a hire unit today, but the hard floor Desert Trek is also sold (and quoted here) to the same spec new. This one's sporting Far and Wide's new logo, after returning from the high country a week before.

"I like how the kitchen interacts with the dining area: the sink faces the front, so if you're washing up, you're still part of the action"

Usability is important in hire models and Far and Wide benefits from the stream of traveller feedback that loaning out its products provides. The Desert Trek's many clever add-ons start with what's on the a-frame, and include two spirit levels for setting up, a chained hitch pin, and a support plate for the jockey wheel. These sit behind the Treg poly block hitch, Anderson plug, and hydraulic brakes, for towing without a brake controller. Electric trailer brakes are available too.

The stone shield is high and wide, which is good. We all know what a single stone

can do travelling at 110kph. Two 4.5kg gas cylinders and three jerry cans ride up front, but there's an Engel MT35FS fridge/freezer on the nearside, and Engel SHX1000 generator (Honda generator shown) on the offside protected by sturdy storage boxes. The quoted price includes two Primus 80A solar panels, a charger and 140Ah battery.

The trailer is made from Grade 5 bar aluminium checker plate, with a 240V inlet, battery and external storage on the offside. The 1600kg-rated chassis is also aluminium for a Tare of 940kg, which is respectable for a hard floor. It runs on seven-leaf rebound springs with dampers

and 16in rims. The spare tyre is under the camper, which you access using a winder, but it affects the clearance a little. The main trailer storage is reached via a rear door when the camper's closed.

KITCHEN

The kitchen slide is hidden by a fold-down sealed locker flush with the camper body, and opens with sturdy push locks. It rolls out on alloy casters, and there's no weird locking system to disengage. You do, though, need to hook up the gas to use the stove, but it's nothing tricky.

I like how the kitchen interacts with the dining area: the sink faces the front, so if you're washing up or cooking behind it, you're still part of the action. It's a good setup, made better by its proximity to the fridge and gas supply.

The kitchen slide has a drainer, a sink with an electric mixer tap plumbed to a 70L cold water tank (upgradeable to 120L), a Spinflo four-burner stove with flame shields and grill, and a fold-down cupboard. There's also a handy towel rail at the far end of the kitchen, and an LED light above the drainer. You'll find a 12V outlet here, with a 240V outlet further down the camper.

CANVAS

The Desert Trek is fast to erect if you're stopping for the night, but you do need to attach



Left: The second awning over the drawbar increases the total undercover area.

Main: Gas struts help you lift the roof rack over and fold down the floor when installing the main bedroom tent. It's a one-person job.





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



SPECIFICATIONS

Far and Wide DESERT TREK

Tare:	940kg
ATM:	1600kg
Suspension:	rebound springs
Brakes:	Hydraulic drum
Coupling:	Treg
Price:	\$35,195

From top: The tent walls are very straight maximising space, and the square poles slide freely, for easy installation; the fridge is close to the sink, it's a very user-friendly space; the rear door provides access to 240V power outlets when the camper is closed.



the main awning separately. The payoff is a much larger external undercover area (5.8x2.5m), which turns into another room with optional annex walls, increasing its family appeal. The main awning's zip is protected by a strip of Velcro. There's a second awning at the rear of the tent, which isn't mandatory, but nice for longer stays.

Unfurling the canvas is a matter of unclipping the latches around the camper, folding over the rack, adjusting the legs, and clipping the elastic loops to secure the canvas against the camper. The rack and canvas softly open on gas struts. One person can do it, and it isn't a muscle man's job. Once it's over, you step inside and adjust the poles. Shorter folk can handle this, and the internal poles are 25mm square, which look smart, are easy to get even and slide freely. The tropical roof sets up automatically. When you're ready to go, the Desert Trek has a handy belt to hold the canvas mid-furl, so you can easily push the canvas walls into the camper for a faster getaway.

INSIDE

The bed is queen size, and the bedroom is well illuminated by a strip of LEDs. Storage under the bed is open, and the mattress lifts on struts. The controls for the 12V and 240V systems are here, with two 240V outlets on the right, for when you're camping at a powered site.

The hard floor is a good 8cm off the ground, which I like, and the canvas walls are reasonably straight, too. The second, offside door bypasses the kitchen, and is useful after dark if your tent faces away from the amenities or towards your neighbours. There are three windows over the bed. All windows and doors have downward facing seams for better weather proofing, and covers inside and out for hasty retreats in stormy weather. The canvas is good quality Wax Converters, too.

SUMMING UP

Far and Wide's Desert Trek lasts the distance, and enables families to enjoy the underfoot comfort and convenience of a hard floor design due to its generous-size awning, which easily converts to a room.

Clever ideas like the inclusive kitchen improve travelling comfort, and the whole setup upgrades for touring. Price is \$35,195 inc. GST as shown. ■

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