

# SLIDE-ON CAMPERS

## CARRY ME CAMPER – WALK-IN

The latest piggy-back camper module from this experienced company is the Walk In model. Our video crew lived in one during this demanding test trip and came away very impressed.



Slide-ons are available for popular ute cab/chassis, but obviously, there's more storage space in one that fits to a short-cab ute and a lot less in a crew-cab version.

The compromise model we chose for our test was for an extended-cab ute.

Our evaluation Carry Me Camper Walk In was a brand new example that fitted neatly on the aluminium tray of an Isuzu D-Max Space Cab Ute. The empty camper module started with a dry weight of less than 600kg, but optioned the way we reckoned most people would want it and fully loaded it tipped the scales at around 750kg.

Like most extended and crew cab utes the Isuzu D-Max Space cab rides on medium-duty leaves that strike a compromise between load carrying and ride quality. With the Carry Me Camper loaded with full fridge, water tank and camping gear the D-Max looked fine for on-road running, but not ideal for where we were going. This wasn't a problem for Isuzu Ute Australia who immediately slotted in a set of Lovell Engineering-sourced, heavy duty rear leaves that instantly restored ride height.

### THE CARRY ME CAMPER - WALK IN

One criticism we've made about previous Carry Me Campers is that it's been necessary to climb a full-height ladder to access the bed. On the Walk In model this problem has been neatly solved by the provision of an entry area at the foot of the bed, accessed by a short ladder that needs to reach only to the ute's tray height.



As with previous Carry Me Campers since the late 1990s the Walk In has a simple, flip-over bed section that forms the roof of the living space beside the camper when it's opened. The underside of the lid/bed base has rolled-up canvas sides that drop down to form a private space, in conjunction with a zip-on end wall, or can be left open for fresh air. The zippers are fat, rugged types.

In the case of the Space Cab version we tested there's a short overhang over the cab roof and it's obviously longer in the case of crew cab versions.

The extended cab module has two large lift-up side doors and two smaller ones aft. The large doors double as sun shades and rain shelters when open, making a lunch stop on the road side quite comfortable in most weather conditions.



The doors allow unrestricted access to the storage areas, the cooker, sink and fridge, while the smaller rear doors provide access to the body jacks and other stored items.

Our test Walk In unit was held to the ute tray by a set of chains and over-centre clips that looked somewhat underdone, but withstood the rigours of our test without loosening. However, their appearance isn't flash and something less likely to snag on branches would be better, we feel.

The Walk In model is the top-shelf offering from Carry Me Campers and has a base price of \$16,930, with tent, ladder, mattress, poles and pegs. On top of that the test unit had the full electrical kit – voltmeter, 80AH deep cycle AGM battery, 240-12V battery charger hardwired, ARB 47-litre fridge/freezer on a slide, three power outlets, two 12V lights and a wandering fluoro light with lead – 55-litre water tank, stainless steel pantry, metho stove and space heater. As tested it had a RRP of \$20,600.

## LIVING WITH THE WALK IN

Set up on heavy duty rear springs the D-Max/Carry Me Camper tipped the scales at 2.90 tonnes, with full fuel and water tanks. Fuel consumption worked out at 11.3L/100km overall, for around 10,000km of bush travel, including off-road work and highway cruising at 110km/h. That's excellent. Handling and manoeuvrability were judged OK, although a set of heavy duty front torsion bars and shocks all around wouldn't have gone astray.



Setting up the camper was a doddle and the Walk In crew was ready for an afternoon aperitif in about five minutes, every day. Packing up took a little longer, because folding the soft cover over the tent was a tad fiddly.

Our crew was particularly impressed with the ability to get at everything without having to move other stuff and they loved the flexible tap hose, rather than the restricted range of a fixed tap.

Although initially wary of the Origo metho stove they soon adapted to it and found it and the accompanying Heat Pal stove/room heater very easy to use.

The bed was comfortable; if a little cool during one night near Alice Springs when the mercury went to minus three degrees! An under-bed insulation pad works well in these conditions we've discovered.

We had a problem with the large side door catches wearing holes in the rubber dust gaskets, but the reason turned out to be door handle holes wrongly aligned on this particular unit. It was an easy fix.



With the latest utes having 4WD-wagon-like safety equipment and traction aids a ute with a Carry Me Camper on its back is a great combination for long-term Outback touring. The ability to leave the Camper on its free-standing legs allows the ute to be used for work at other times.

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