

CAMPER TRAILER TRAK SHAK - MAJESTIC

When you're looking for a camper trailer it pays to have a careful look around at what's available in the market place. If you need a trailer that's a quick-erect proposition for overnight road-side stays the Trak Shak Majestic is not for you, but if you want a family or group home away from home it could fill the bill nicely.



The Trak Shak Majestic looks different from most campers, being relatively high in profile and is even taller when fitted with an optional solar panel array. However, it expands into a three-double-bed canvas 'house', so the boxy shell can be worth towing around.



The finished trailer is a combination of imported and local components, starting with an imported rolling chassis, with independent, coil-spring and damper suspension.

The bodywork, tent and other equipment are locally fitted. Braking is electric, with override backup and a mechanical handbrake.

The two fixed, queen beds and all the canvas fit on top of a voluminous box trailer that's fitted with front and rear opening doors. The doors are solidly hinged and on their inside surfaces have locating pins that accept a clip-on galley module on one door and a clip-on twin-fridge module on the other.

These modules are removable and interchangeable, meaning that the kitchen unit can be mounted front or rear and the twin Waeco fridge likewise.



Duplicated fridge plugs are fitted to both doors, so connecting the fridges for or aft requires no additional wiring to be run. However, the plug arrangements proved to be quite bush-unfriendly, as we discovered on last year's Camper Trailer Torture Test. More on that later.



When the tent is unfolded one of the tailgates is inside the tent, so owners can choose whether they want the galley module inside or the fridges inside. Another clever design touch is that the outside module can be lifted off the door, carried inside the tent and set up on its folding, supporting legs.

Because the kitchen module can be moved around the Trak Shak Majestic has been designed with portable water storage, rather than the customary built-in water tank.

The test trailer was fitted with racks for nine jerry cans, of which three were fuel cans and the remaining 120 litres dedicated to water, but owners can vary the fuel/water ratio if they wish.

The hard-shell camper lid opens sideways, revealing twin queen beds above the trailer body, separated by a vertical canvas panel. Beneath the fold-out bed is a soft-floor tent section that provides a third double-sleeping space.

When the tent is opened it incorporates a large soft-floor room and an integrated awning, for which there is a mesh wall enclosure, making an effective two living rooms.

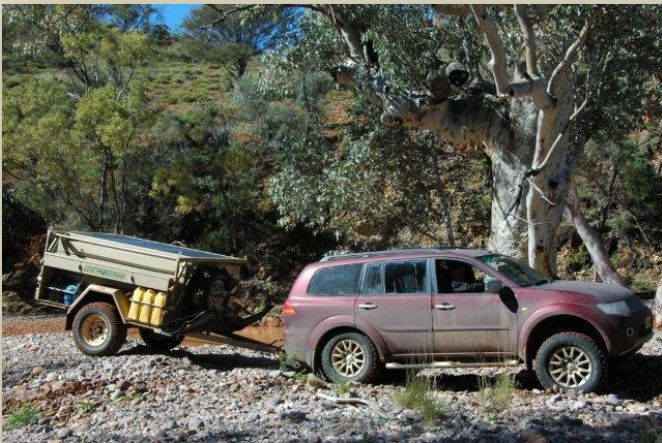


Living with the Trak Shak

Our Torture test involved a month's driving over 10,000km of varying roads and tracks, with overnight stays. The Trak Shak Majestic was a medium-weight in the test trailer group, with a loaded axle weight of 1.24 tonnes and a ball weight of 114kg.

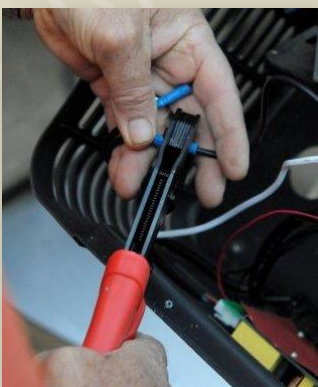


The Trak Shak Majestic test trailer incorporated an optional full-size solar panel frame that swung up before the tent was opened. Although a great idea in principle, the panel worked efficiently only when aimed at the sun and when driving. In theory, the panels can be removed and positioned at the optimum sun-catching angle, but the process is time-consuming. A portable, fold-out solar array might be a more cost-effective option.



The Trak Shak was quick to erect, but needed a large camping space and took careful folding to pack away. However, our test crew became adept at the job after a few days.

Having interchangeable fridge and kitchen modules is a great idea, but the practicalities haven't been worked out ideally.



We were suspicious of the durability of simple cigarette lighter plugs for fridge connection and we weren't surprised when the plugs failed after a week's travel over gravel roads. We bypassed the plugs to keep the fridges working.

The next fridge issue concerned the Waeco plugs, with which we've had bush trouble before. Each plug pushes into a recessed socket and the connecting pin mountings failed after two weeks' travel. We hard-wired the fridges to the trailer wiring, with fuses in the circuits and had no more fridge troubles.

For severe-service work the fridges should have male Anderson plugs bypassing the standard fridge connections and female Anderson connectors on the trailer doors.

Another durability issue we had with the Trak Shak was wheel bearing quality. The test unit came with a spare stub axle and hub, which we'd have needed if we'd driven much more distance: it was decidedly 'rumbly' on return to the makers. Better wheel ends are needed, we reckon.



Because of its opened-up space requirements and the relatively slow packing-up process the Trak Shak isn't ideal for single night camps, but makes a superb extended-stay camper that could easily accommodate three couples, a large family or a bunch of friends.

It would also make an ideal cooking and eating centre in the middle of a group of tents.

