

Forward VISION

*The Explorer Vision 4x4
motorhome is remote
travel-ready.*



In brief...

- Toyota HiLux-based 4x4 motorhome
- Upgraded suspension
- Fully-moulded fibreglass body
- Two-berth with north-south single beds
- Full-sized bathroom and kitchen



WORDS AND PICS
MALCOLM STREET

Clockwise from top: This 4x4 motorhome has a compact interior, albeit with a pleasing vibe; a gas bin contains two 4kg cylinders; the rear door has a security screen.

Measuring up

Pros

- 👍 Practical-sized motorhome for offroad travel
- 👍 Suspension mods that give good load capacity
- 👍 Single bed layout
- 👍 Relatively good external storage
- 👍 Clearview external mirrors
- 👍 Full fibreglass body

Cons

- 👎 5V charger sockets
- 👎 No cooker grill
- 👎 Basic table swivel

would allow for a load carrying capacity of just 250kg in the HiLux's factory form.

However, Explorer Motorhomes has developed a legally-modified HiLux chassis that increases the GVM to 3500kg, resulting in a much more practical load capacity. The suspension modification includes new rear springs, rear shock absorbers, front struts and front shock absorbers. Not only does that improve the load carrying capacity but it also improves the general road handling of the motorhome, which suffers a bit from sideways motion due to its taller height and narrower build.

The HiLux will be familiar to many and the SR 4X4 version comes with a 2.8L turbodiesel that delivers a maximum power output of 130kW and 450Nm of torque through a six-speed fully automated gearbox. On my little trek along Queensland's Bruce Highway and some dirt roads in the Sunshine Coast hinterland, it delivered in the power department. However, if you want a few more kilowatts and a bit more torque grunt, the Vision is also available on a Ford Ranger cab chassis. It's worth mentioning here that Clearview replacement rear vision mirrors are fitted as a standard feature to this motorhome. The Clearview's are a winner in my eyes, not only because they're very practical to use but because they look like they are part of the original vehicle.

Whichever chassis is used, the motorhome bodywork and interior remains the same. Externally, the Explorer Vision's body comes with a five-year structural warranty and is fully-moulded fibreglass – the one-piece moulding giving the advantages of a good strength-to-weight ratio, as well as a seamless body, thus minimising water leaks. Windows are Dometic/Seitz acrylics and the door has a security screen.

Something that's not always seen as an asset with RVs but, in this case, should be seen that way, is the Vision's narrower body width of



Clockwise from top: The HiLux-based Explorer Vision is built with offroad/remote touring in mind; an overhead locker above the kitchen bench contains the electrical panel; the front under-seat end has a drawer that doubles as a step for accessing the single beds.



2.18m (7ft 2in). That is, without a doubt, a handy feature to have when offroading on narrow bush tracks.

TWIN BINS

Given the upgraded load capacity and its small relative size, the Vision is quite well set up for external storage capacity with two bins, one on top of the other at the rear left-hand corner. It's certainly an improvement over other motorhomes of this size, which often have no external storage bins, apart from those required for the toilet cassette and gas cylinders. On that subject, the cassette toilet has a SOG ventilation

system is on the rear wall, and, along the right-hand side, the gas bin contains two 4kg cylinders.

The design of HiLux-based motorhomes usually requires an east-west bed over the driver's cab and the difficulties of clambering in and out of the luton bed can be an issue for some travellers. Explorer has developed a very effective alternative, using north-south single beds over the driver's cab instead.

This Vision motorhome also has a three-quarter bathroom across the rear, a nearside kitchen bench and a club lounge/dinette on the opposite side. Although the interior isn't particularly spacious, the light colour scheme and large window creates a pleasant ambience. Ventilation is handled by a Fiamma ceiling fan or a roof-mounted Dometic air-conditioner and the bed area also comes with a wall-mounted Sirocco 12V fan. Legal requirements concerning the location of the Truma water heater means that in theory it cannot be used when the right-hand window is open – there's a couple of circuit contacts for that and the gas space heater that are fitted to the window to prevent either being used unless the window is closed. For evening time, well-placed LED light fittings, including semi-concealed strip fittings, place the illumination where it is needed.

There are two wardrobes fitted into the layout.



Left: The north-south single beds over the driver's cab can be pulled out above the kitchen bench and lounge. **Below left:** A wardrobe between the end of the dinette and the bathroom wall has hanging space and good-sized wire basket drawers.



One sits between the end of the dinette/lounge and the bathroom wall and has a cupboard that comes with hanging space and good-sized wire basket drawers. A second wardrobe is tucked into the corner by the entry door.

Given the lute length is around 1.22m (4ft), how do north-south beds fit in? It's a good question but, quite simply, by day, the single beds are pushed back into the lute peak but at night, the 2x0.69m (6ft 7in x 2ft 3in) beds can be pulled out into the air space above the kitchen bench and the lounge. When pushed back, a simple hook and eye keeps them in position but friction also helps.

For a step, a large folding box step that hinges to the driver's cab roof between the beds, swings down to make climbing in and out of the beds quite easy. I like this sort of arrangement because it not only makes getting in and out of

Ratings

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Value for money | ★★★★★ |
| 2. Driveability | ★★★★★ |
| 3. Setting up | ★★★★★ |
| 4. Suitability for intended touring | ★★★★★ |
| 5. Layout | ★★★★★ |
| 6. Quality of finish | ★★★★★ |
| 7. Build quality | ★★★★★ |
| 8. Creature comforts | ★★★★★ |
| 9. Innovation | ★★★★★ |
| 10. X-Factor | ★★★★★ |

Trailer talk



☛ The eagle-eyed might notice that I towed a trailer around for this review.

It's a pod All-Roads trailer being marketed by Explorer and designed for offroad travel. A little differently to most trailers, the body is made from polyethylene but the chassis is still hot-dipped galvanised steel and the trailer has a Tare weight of 340kg. It's designed for carrying kayaks, boats, bicycles and other hobby items. As a result, it comes with a number of options, this one in particular being fitted with an LED light upgrade, roof racks, front toolbox, jerry can holders and shock absorbers for the leaf spring suspension. Base price is \$5495 but with all the mentioned options, it comes to \$8595.



bed simpler, it is also easier for making up the bed each night.

RARE AIR

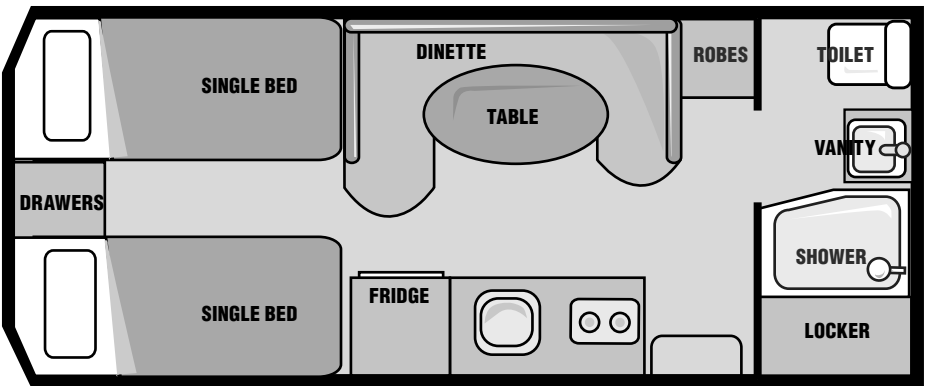
The lute ceiling height of 800mm (2ft 8in) ensures there's a fair degree of air space and the windows on either side supply a good cross flow of ventilation. Between the beds are a shared bedside cabinet and drawer, and a flatscreen TV, mounted by the left-hand bed, can be swung around so as to be seen from either the beds or the dinette.

Most kitchens in a motorhome of this size are quite small but the Vision is one exception to that rule. Built into the kitchen are two drawers and a cupboard that includes two wire basket drawers as well as a few other catering essentials such as the three-burner cooktop,

round stainless steel sink, an under-bench microwave oven and an under-bench 136L Waeco fridge. As usual, all the air space above the kitchen bench is devoted to overhead lockers, with the one nearest the door containing the all-important electrical panel.

Opposite the kitchen and under the offside window, the elongated U-shape lounge comes with an oval-shaped table and will seat two people without too much trouble. Both under-seat ends look like they have drawers, as the rear one does, but the front one when pulled out is a highly practical step for getting to the beds.

In the rear wall section, there's a little bit of compromise with the bathroom design but not much. A Dometic cassette toilet sits in the rear right-hand corner and the shower cubicle on the opposite side. To squeeze things in, the



Tested
Explorer Vision

Explorer Vision

Weights and measures

External length 5.8m (19ft)
External width 2.18m (7ft 2in)
Internal height 1.94m (6ft 4in)
Travel height 3.1m (10ft 2in)
Tare 2750kg
GVM 3500kg

Engine

Base vehicle Toyota HiLux
Engine 2.8L turbodiesel
Gearbox Six speed auto
Max power 130kW@3400rpm
Max torque 450Nm@1600rpm

External

Brakes ABS disc
Water 2x55L (fresh); 1x50L (grey)
Batteries 2x100Ah
Solar 3x120W
Air-conditioner Dometic roof-mount
Gas 2x4kg

Internal

Cooking Dometic three-burner
Fridge Waeco CR1140 136L
Microwave Panasonic
Toilet Dometic cassette with SOG
Shower Separate cubicle
Lighting 12V LED
Hot water Truma gas/electric 14L

Options fitted

Dometic diesel heating; dual reversing camera; wide alloy wheels and Pirelli tyres; 3x100W solar panels; second house battery; alloy bullbar; Clearview external mirrors; Criminal Safe door; stainless steel splashback; Sirocco fan above bed; pull-out pantry; towbar

Price as shown

\$157,484 (on-road, Qld)

Enquiries

To enquire about this motorhome, please visit www.caravanworld.com.au/spec or phone (07) 3085 2908

On CaravanWorld.com.au

☛ More pictures
☛ Specs to compare



Above: A three-quarter bathroom also comprises a separate shower cubicle.

Left: A shaving cabinet and towel rail are fitted above the toilet.

door frame of the shower cubicle does cross the rear window but that's not really an issue and it leaves enough space under the window for a wash basin. There's a shaving cabinet and towel rail are fitted above the toilet.

In standard form, the Explorer Vision comes with a 100Ah battery and charger. However, in this case, optional solar panels and a second house battery have been added and are useful for extended remote travel. The 12V switches, water tank gauges, solar panel regulator, main 12V changeover switches and a 12V socket are found in the control panel by the entry door.

THE BOTTOM LINE

There's a little bit of compromise built into Explorer's 4x4 motorhome – mostly due to its size. You might get a larger 2WD motorhome for the same price, but if offroad travel is what you want, then the smaller, HiLux-based Vision is going to be a winner. It's built for offroad/remote touring and comes fully equipped.

In addition, the bed arrangement is a practical one and makes good use of otherwise idle air space. It's an innovative design that offers more than the usual small cab chassis-based motorhome interior space and one that works well for its designed purpose. [CW](#)