

IN BRIEF

- ⊗ Capable couple's offroader
- ⊗ Built overseas on a dedicated production line
- ⊗ Innovative wishbone independent suspension

GOING PLACES



Words
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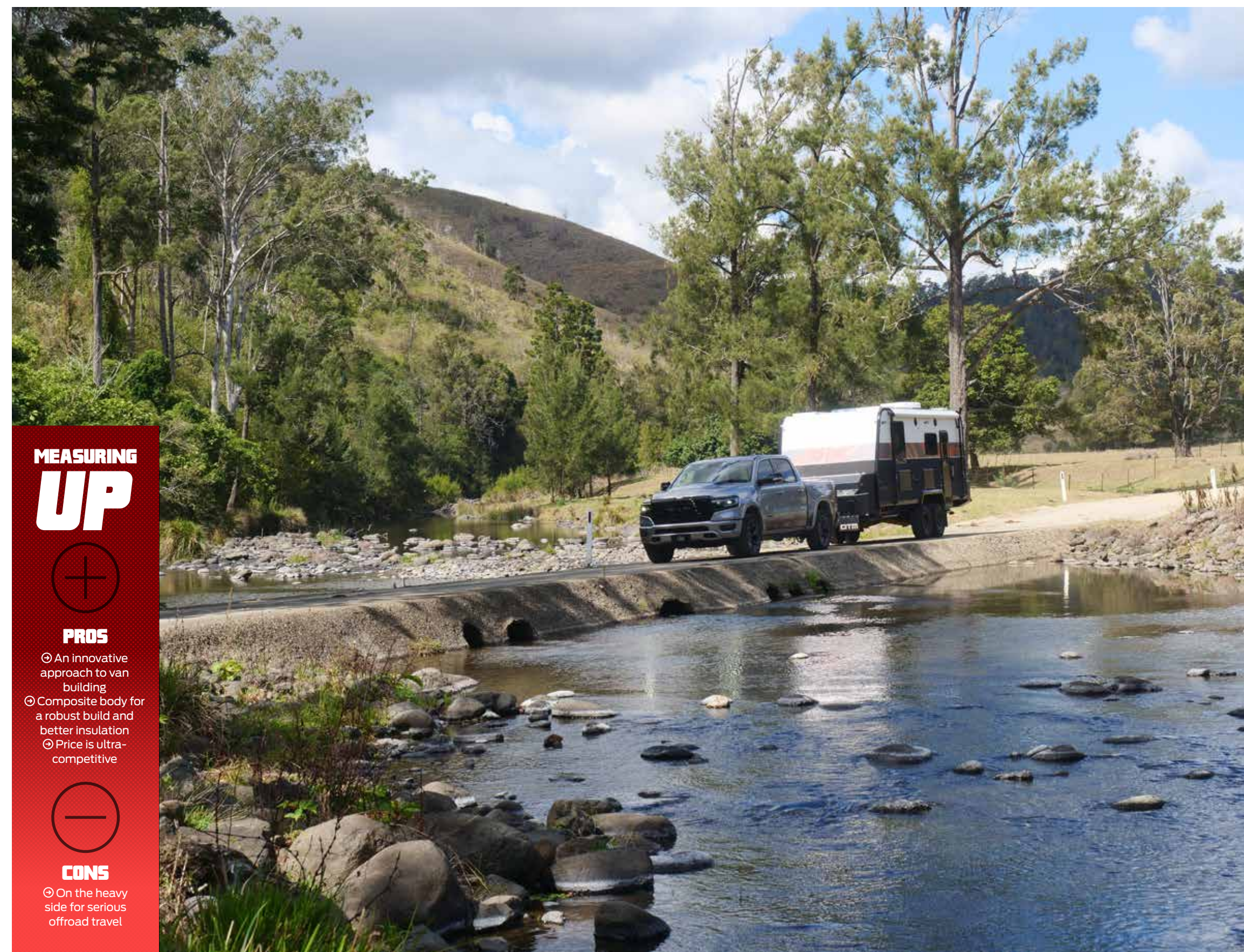
When Caravan HQ bought On The Move Caravans, the team had big plans to bring the boutique builder into the mainstream market while maintaining its innovative approach and reliable offroad reputation.



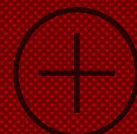


LEFT AND BELOW The rear of the 6.3 Adventure van; A lot of thought and experience has gone into this model

“The vans are built overseas on a dedicated production line and shipped to Australia for a final fit out and certification of electrics and gas”



MEASURING UP



PROS

- ⊕ An innovative approach to van building
- ⊕ Composite body for a robust build and better insulation
- ⊕ Price is ultra-competitive



CONS

- ⊖ On the heavy side for serious offroad travel

On the Move Caravans is certainly living up to its name. While the sales contracts still had the aroma of wet ink, the new owners, Caravan HQ, initiated changes to the production by establishing a partnership with Network Engineering to continue the range of locally built models. At the same time, key staff travelled overseas to establish an offshore factory dedicated to their brand. The team gathered key employees and engineers with years of experience with builders like Fleetwood in Western Australia to

collaborate on the project.

The vans are built overseas on a dedicated production line and shipped to Australia for final fit out and certification of electrics and gas. The OTM 6.3 Adventure bristles with innovation and intelligent design from the ground up. The truss chassis is bolted and rivetted together, and its modular design allows its use over different lengths of van. The independent suspension is built inside a steel cradle, enabling it to move along the chassis rails for optimum balance of different layouts.

A STURDY BUILD

Key to the plan was getting highly skilled industry personality Peter Naylor on board. Naylor has years of experience in engineering and as a CEO at major RV builders, and he was keen to be involved in the new project. In 2021, he travelled to China to find a manufacturer able to adapt to the high engineering demands of a van to suit Australian conditions. The local team designed a radical new modular truss chassis made from 3mm graduated C-section 550 MPa grade – advanced high-strength steel for optimum strength and durability. The chassis sections bolt and rivet together using punched profiles that save weight and add strength. If this sounds fanciful, you see construction like this proven every day in trains and B-Double trailers and similar techniques in aeroplanes. In the case of 'less is more', the circular punched holes form flanges that make the chassis immensely strong but lighter. The engineers claim a 130kg weight saving over an equivalent size box section offroad chassis.

The next project was the suspension, and here, Naylor drew on his previous experience building with a lightweight

"The local design team designed a radical new modular truss chassis made from advanced high-strength steel for optimum strength and durability"



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE The chassis sections bolt and rivet together using punched profiles that save weight and add strength; The OTM 6.3 Adventure bristles with innovation and intelligent design; A very different-looking and practical storage box sits on the drawbar behind a Cruisemaster DO35 hitch



wishbone suspension to design a much more robust modern version. In fact, the system owes more to the American military Humvee (High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle) than a caravan, given the over-engineered tubular sections. The wishbone suspension has been a proven system on Coromal vans over generations, and this latest version has 70 x 7mm main arms that look like they will survive the roughest treatment. Time will tell, of course.

Two airbags and two shock absorbers at each wheel give a soft and predictable ride, and the twin airbags offer a degree of redundancy in the event of one failing. The

system works by pivoting the wishbone arm from the centre of the van to the wheel, allowing progressive independent travel for each wheel. This means that the wheel arches sideways rather than laterally, but I'm assured that tests have shown that any tyre wear factor is minimal when the wheels take on various camber angles as the suspension moves up and down. The shock absorbers work at their most efficient angle, and the air pressures in the bags can be varied from valves at the A-frame from a separate pump. An onboard system is in the pipeline.

A timber-free composite body bolts to the chassis to lend more avant-garde theatre to

the show. The 30mm walls are high-density foam encased in 2mm fibreglass panels with a 55mm roof and a 40mm honeycomb floor, which is CNC notched to accept the lightweight ply furniture and keep it in place. The walls, floor and roof are bolted together with internal brackets.

A total of 200L of fresh water and a 100L grey tank as standard are built into the chassis under the van, and I liked the way any electrical or plumbing fittings are well protected. The review van has an extra optional 100L tank. Wheels are black spoked 16in alloy numbers shod with 265 x 75 all-terrain tyres and 10in electric drum brakes.



"The curved leading edge swoops back, and the rear end has a pleasing rounded profile with a sporty wind deflector above"

A MODERN EXTERIOR

The 6.3 Adventure is a real departure from the sharp edges and chunkier style of previous On The Move vans. The curved leading edge swoops back, and the rear end has a pleasing rounded profile with a sporty wind deflector above. Very little of the white glossy fibreglass panels are on show outside. Instead, a painted deep black textured skirt rises nearly halfway to the roof. Above that is a wide graphic with subtle reference to the Adventure model and the brand name condensed to OTM on each wall. The look is modern and beautifully proportioned, even if the extensive area of black seems a little overdone.

The review van is an early prototype with the external lower section finished in a thermal black paint that I'm told helps moderate temperatures inside the van. And while I can't vouch for the effectiveness, I wouldn't put anything past this team, who are always searching for an edge.

A very different-looking and practical storage box sits on the drawbar behind a Cruisemaster DO35 hitch. The storage has three smaller top-opening spaces for smaller tools and such, while further back is a full-width two-tier box with provision for twin 4.5kg gas bottles. The boxes double as a stoneguard, and mesh wings on either side add more protection. The airbag controller

sits in a protected cross arm of the chassis ahead of the toolbox, but I suspect it might find a more secure position on production models.

Scrub bars run underneath the front sections of the sides where the van will be most vulnerable to impact damage on rough tracks. We see a full-width tunnel boot along the passenger side, two picnic tables, high-mount twin speakers and a full-length awning. The van's rear has another well-designed tool/storage box that encases twin spare wheels and smaller locking bins to the sides. The box looks tough and robust and is protected by a rear bar. It has a provision on top for carrying extras like firewood or recovery equipment.



LEFT AND BELOW Very little of the white glossy fibreglass panels are on show outside; Wishbone independent suspension

ON THE MOVE CARAVANS 6.3 ADVENTURE

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Body length 6.3m (20ft 8in)
Overall length 8.4m (27ft 7in)
Width 2.4m (7ft 10in)
Height 3.2m (10ft 6in)
Tare 2660kg
ATM 3500kg
Payload 840kg (calculated)
Ball weight at tare 190kg
Ball to tare ratio 6.6%

EXTERNAL

Frame Frameless
Cladding Fibreglass composite panels
Chassis Desert Master 550 grade steel chassis
Suspension Wishbone, dual air bag, dual shocks
Coupling Cruisemaster DO35
Brakes 10in electric drum
Wheels 265/75R16 all-terrain tyres with 16in alloy rims
Water 2 x 100L freshwater, 1 x 100L grey water
Battery 1 x 200Ah lithium
Solar 4 x 100W solar panels
Air-conditioner Dometic Harrier
Gas 2 x 4.5kg
Sway control Optional

INTERNAL

Cooking Dometic gas/electric cooktop and grill
Microwave 34L convection microwave
Fridge Dometic 188L compressor fridge/freezer
Bathroom Wall-mounted frontload washing machine
Hot water Instant continuous hot water

PRICE FROM \$83,990

OPTIONS FITTED

• 1 x 100L freshwater tank (total 300L)

PRICE AS SHOWN \$84,390

MORE INFORMATION

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“Nearly 2m of ceiling height and large windows make the best of the views and the available light”

A HOME ON WHEELS

The 6.3 Adventure is a larger than your average couple's van, and the rear entry opens to a roomy layout with a queen bed up front and a central living space. We find an ensuite running across the back to the right of the entry. Nearly 2m of ceiling height and large windows make the best of the views and the available light.

Projecta's electronics screen and a neat panel of the main light and power switches are just inside to operate everything as soon as you step in. The kitchen runs along the passenger side, so the wide window can be used as a servery to outside dining. Deep overhead cupboards have hidden catches and triple hinges, and some include shelves for versatile storage. A low convection microwave sits under a cooktop/grill, and opposite the entry is a Dometic 188L fridge/freezer – a generous size by caravan standards.

RATINGS

VALUE FOR MONEY

High-value offroad van

TOWABILITY

Needs a decent tow vehicle but follows smoothly and safely

SUITABILITY FOR INTENDED TOURING

A couple's van for outback travel

BUILD QUALITY

Looks well engineered, and well finished inside

LIVEABILITY

Roomy couple's van

SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Plenty of water and ample power for off-grid with frugal use

CUSTOMER CARE

Five years structural and three years on the body is better than many

INNOVATION

A lot of thought and experience has gone into this model

X-FACTOR

It will attract a lot of attention



The dinette is opposite, and the cafe-style seating with black pleated leatherlike microfibre upholstery has a plush feel and look. Infills fit into drawers at the end of the seating to spread out for relaxing.

I like how floor-to-ceiling cupboards separate the living space from the bed area, using the normally dead area and creating a natural divider. The bed lifts for storage, and the side cupboards seem deeper than usual for better hanging and drawer space. Side nooks offer space to store phones and books and feature USB chargers.

The ensuite has the usual accompaniment of a Dometic swivelling plastic toilet, a low vanity with a mirror and a full-size shower, while the hot water is from an instant gas heater.



ABOVE AND BELOW The cafe-style seating with black pleated leatherlike microfibre upholstery has a plush feel and look; The wide kitchen window can be used as a servery to outside dining

“It's roomy and comfortable inside *and looks well-balanced and classy outside*”


OFFROAD READY

The amount of self-sufficiency is impressive for what the company describes as a couple's entry-level offroader. Four 100W solar panels up top power a single 200Ah lithium battery through a Projecta management system. The battery is chassis-mounted to comply with new laws, and there's a box already fitted for a second battery if you want to upgrade. The 300L of fresh water on board the review van is as good as it gets, and the grey tank will satisfy national park regulations.

THE TOW TEST

The tare weight of the 6.3 Adventure is 2660kg, so it's reasonably heavy for a 20ft 8in van. We wrangled the company owner's Ram 1500 for our 250km round trip into the hills around Springbrook in the Gold Coast Hinterland, and the big V8 never struggled for power. Ball weight is a low 190kg to allow for loads up front. But even with this low weight, the van towed smoothly over all road conditions. Braking was safe and progressive when needed. The ATM is 3500kg with a payload of 840kg, so many mid-range 4WDs will suit if properly loaded.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The new OTM 6.3 Adventure is an impressive van with a well-conceived design. It's roomy and comfortable inside and looks well-balanced and classy outside. If the price and quality are maintained as stock vans hit the market, it will be very tempting to buyers. Warranty is five years on the chassis and suspension, three on the body and internals and one year on appliances. On The Move plans to run the locally built models alongside the new imported OTM Adventure range, which the team is preparing for a production increase of up to 18 vans per week. There are already 180 in production or on their way to showrooms. That's bad news for local builders as the post COVID-19 drop-off in sales is starting to bite. The 6.3 Adventure hits the dealerships of Caravan HQ at \$83,990, which is remarkable value, and build quality is only expected to improve even further. 



ABOVE AND BELOW The ensuite features a Dometic swivelling plastic toilet, a low vanity with a mirror and a full-size shower; Designed for real rough road travel

THE WRAP

The imported range of On The Move vans has all the right ingredients as well-engineered and capable offroaders. This 6ft 3in couples van has 20ft 8in of roomy living space and an innovative chassis and suspension for real rough road travel.