



time to

room

23. Oct/Nov 2016

RRP \$5.95



EXCLUSIVE

Mal and Laraine Leyland

AUSTRALIA'S MOST
EXPERIENCED TRAVEL
JOURNALISTS



**Camping with
the stars
Eurogliders**

**NT essential
caravan guide**

Love on the road

Where to find it, how to keep it

timetoroam.com.au

ISSN 2203-8027



9 772203 802002



**WIN A DASHCAM
GIVEAWAY p56**



Sweet little campervan

New Aussie camper combines Japanese reliability,
German smarts and a dash of Italian style



**TRIED
+
TESTED**



Australia has had a love affair with campervans going back decades, still it's fair to say it has been a while since the sector produced any new surprises – especially at the entry level.

That's why the all-new entry-level Campino is so good – it's a genuine breath of fresh air.

Southern Spirit is a Brisbane-based bespoke campervan and motorhome conversion company run by husband and wife team Olli and Pia. Olli is the German engineering guru while Pia is the flamboyant Italian designer. Together they dreamed up the Campino – which takes its name from a popular German lolly. It's an entry-level campervan brimming with thoughtful design and a high level of standard equipment.

Campino is based on Toyota's hardworking LWB HiAce. While it looks and drives something like a box-on-wheels, the standard equipment these days is surprisingly extensive and makes it so much more comfortable and safer. For starters, there

Pros

- Price
- Workmanship
- Layout

Cons

- Length of the bed
- Table support gets in the way

are dual front air bags, ABS, brake assist and electronic stability control. Add to that an impressive radio/CD system with voice recognition, Bluetooth phone connection and steering-wheel controls; cruise control, cab air conditioning, electric windows and side mirrors; power steering, remote central locking, and a reverse camera, with its viewer in the internal rear-view mirror. While the cab can squeeze in three, the low-backed centre seat folds forward to become a console complete with cup holders and a handy mini desk.

On the road the Campino is surprising quiet - truly impressive and an indication of just how good a job Olli, Pia and the team have done in the design and build.

Pricing starts at a competitive \$61,990 drive-away for a 2.7 litre petrol model with five-speed manual. The Campino itself has a high level of standard equipment. A stand out is a grey water tank and Porta Potti, making it eligible for self-contained status -unlike others in this entry-level segment.

> continued on page 38

4WD STORAGE SPECIALISTS Premium storage systems

Whether you're a caravanner, weekend camper or setting up for that long trip, OffRoad Systems has a solution to suit your needs!

SAVE ON FUEL & STRESS WITH THE ORS SUPERLIGHT SERIES!



ORS OFFROAD SYSTEMS offer a diverse range of storage from Cargo Barriers, Stainless steel water tanks, Australia's best fridge slides through to custom and much more



02 4647 6322

info@offroadsystems.com.au
www.offroadsystems.com.au



Inside story

The HiAce's drawback as a camper is the lack of a walk-through cab. The upside is this allows for extra kitchen and living space. And while most campervans have particleboard cabinetry, the Campino uses lightweight, high-strength euro-sourced ply, plus quality German brand hardware.

There's an L-shaped kitchen space running across the vehicle behind the cab seats then down the driver's side of the van. There are two single beds that can be made into a large double/queen. All this sits beneath a traditional pop-top roof. While it hardly looks cutting edge, it's the finer details that truly impress.

The pop-top is Southern Spirit's own design and it's strong enough to walk on. Fully insulated, it has an easy-clean ceiling and the gutters channel rain away from the side door. The skirt has zippered and screened side windows. The roof is secured by simple webbing straps that loop through sprung buckles, while a fixed hi-top roof is an option.

Flush glass adds a streamlined look and security mesh screens have been added to the smallish sliding windows for increased ventilation. A three-metre awning is also standard and cleverly, the winder handle has been shortened to store in the

gap between the entry step and floor.

The Campino is LPG-free and uses an Origo portable metho stove. A cold water shower at the rear is standard, with an electric hot water heater an option, connecting to both the shower and the sink. There's 2 litres of fresh water storage built in and another 10 litre compartment for grey water. The fresh tank has a drain valve so you can easily empty or flush the tank if desired. Great idea.

Extra value

A 120w solar system is a \$1000 option and Campino is already pre-wired, including the regulator. A sizeable 120AH AGM deep-cycle house battery is standard and all wiring is heavy duty 6mm. AT is another option, but again the van comes prewired including a weatherproof external connector for satellite or standard aerial leads.

The L-shaped kitchen has a stack of four drawers while the cooker is portable and can be moved outside. A fold-down table hinges off the kitchen end panel. The kitchen includes a round sink with folding tap and glass lid plus an 80-litre Waeco 12 compressor fridge. An impressive German electronic-brand panel provides accurate readouts for the house and vehicle batteries

plus percentage readouts for the fresh and grey water tanks that are even accurate when the van is not parked level. Lighting is 12 LED throughout and even includes a pair of downlights in the tailgate for when it's raised.

The lounge/bed is the final and possibly best innovation of all. In normal use it's L-shaped, but the rear centre section is removable to provide a long aisle for loading a bike or piece of furniture if you're using it as a second runabout vehicle. There's a decent sized table for dining and when removed it becomes a base board, used to convert the single beds to queen size. The Porta Potti is a terrific inclusion. It stores in the driver's side rear corner but can also be moved to another cupboard inside for nighttime use.

Summary



SOUTHERN SPIRIT CAMPERVANS CAMPINO

YOU MIGHT ALSO CONSIDER

Frontline HiAce 2.7 Camper

The Sydney based camper conversion company has been transforming the Toyota HiAce into comfortable compact motorhomes since 1998. They're easy to set up and use and there's a good list of standard inclusions. Better still you can tailor your camper with a long list of extras at prices that won't break the bank.

