

A New Star on the Road?

A brand-new incarnation of Roadstar
– have they got what it takes?

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN CUMMINS



RATINGS

EXTERIOR	✓✓✓✓
INTERIOR	✓✓✓✓
LAYOUT	✓✓✓✓
KITCHEN	✓✓✓✓
VALUE FOR MONEY	✓✓✓✓✓
OVERALL	✓✓✓✓✓

LEGEND

✓ POOR	✓✓ FAIR	✓✓✓ GOOD
✓✓✓ BETTER	✓✓✓✓ BEST	



Note the signature slope to the overhead cupboards



EXTERNAL FEATURES

- CHASSIS:** Hitec Engineering 6"
- FRAME CONSTRUCTION:** Meranti timber
- WINDOW:** Tinted acrylic
- INSULATION:** Polystyrene
- CORNER JACKS:** Drop down
- WASTE WATER COMMON OUTLET:** Yes
- WATER TANKS:** 2 x 95L
- WATER TANK COVERS:** Yes
- COUPLING:** 50mm ball
- SUSPENSION:** Rocker roller
- CLEARANCE:** Standard
- BRAKES:** 10in electric
- WHEELS:** 14in alloy
- TYRES:** Roadstone Radial SV-820
- AWNING TYPE & MODEL:** Dometic 19ft 8500
- BOOT(S):** Front
- STONE GUARD:** Vinyl
- GAS CYLINDER SIZE/S:** 2 x 9kg
- HOT WATER:** Gas/electric
- BATTERY:** 1 x 120Ah
- BATTERY CHARGER:** 30A PowerSaver
- INVERTER:** No
- SOLAR PANELS:** No
- SOLAR PROVISION:** Yes
- ENTRANCE DOOR/FLYSCREEN:** Camec tri-lock
- TAP ON A-FRAME:** Yes

Roadstar is a long-established name in caravanning. A victim of the GFC, Roadstar sadly went under; un-sadly, Australian Hitec Engineering, who used to make the chassis, brought the firm back to life. Hence, you can forget about the last 20 years of Roadstar – since February 2009, the vans have been made entirely differently.

The old Roadstar had a good reputation, so the question begs how new Roadstar compares. The new company's emphasis is on building a top quality, premium product that is complete when you buy it.

Roadstar have two ranges from which to choose. One is their Limited Edition, which comprises of two layouts you buy off the plan and can accessorise as needed. The Daintree range offers custom built vans from 13ft 6in to 23ft, in 34 layouts, which

you can customise or toss in favour of your own plans.

For this review we took out the mother ship, a 23ft Daintree that had been built with double bunks in the rear. Of course, if you didn't want double bunks you would just chuck 'em and pick a different layout.

EXTERNAL

Roadstar's philosophy is to keep it simple and simply do it well. You can see this immediately looking at the Daintree's exterior. It's a beautifully presented aluminium clad caravan. Hatches, lockers, slide-outs and all the rest have been kept to a minimum and the result is very sleek. The front of the Daintree has quite a tall vinyl stone guard, a nice smooth section in the middle and is finished off with ribbed aluminium up top.

Personally, I'm quite torn as to whether you should have a chequ-

erplate stone guard or a vinyl one. Chequerplate looks fantastic and lasts forever, but you are more likely to get an expensive ricochet into your tow vehicle. On the other hand, vinyl damps down those ricochets so you're less likely to cop any damage; however, they do need replacing every once in a while. Safety-Sean says vinyl; glamour-Sean says chequer plate.

The exterior was spic-and-span with a near perfect finish on the silicone sealant (no easy task!). The wheel arches have a white fibreglass rim, which, along with the mud-flaps, keep road-flung stones away from the van.

The A-frame is a teensy bit crowded, but then it is packing two 9kg gas bottles and a centre-mounted jockey-wheel – there is ample scope for attaching swaybars. The A-frame also sports a mesh, offering yet more protection.

The Daintree is a blacktop tourer, a rig designed to eat up miles on the tar.

She comes standard with rocker-roller leaf spring suspension, which is ideal for this purpose. If you want more bounce in your suspension you can opt for a Simplicity set up; the independent suspension of Simplicity means you can traverse rougher terrain and arguably creates a better handling rig.

Australian Hitec Engineering has been making trailer chassis for decades and here they have used reinforced 3mm box steel. Underneath the van looks very reassuring, with lovely welds, a spotless floor and little details like properly screwed hangers to guide pipes and wires; it doesn't have to be done this way, it takes longer and you'll never see it, but it shows Roadstar really do care about quality.

INTERNAL

You'll know straight away that you are inside a Roadstar when you spot the distinctive, sloped overhead cup-



INTERNAL FEATURES

- FRIDGE:** Dometic RM2553 150L
- TELEVISION:** 19in LCD
- ANTENNA:** Winegard
- MUSIC SYSTEM:** JVC CD/DVD/MP3/radio
- COOKING EQUIPMENT:** Swift 500 Series, three gas, one electric burner, oven, grill
- MICROWAVE:** Elfa
- HEATING:** Aircommand Ibis
- COOLING:** Aircommand Ibis
- RANGEHOOD:** Swift
- LIGHTING:** LED/globe
- SMOKE ALARMS:** Yes
- GAS LEAKAGE DETECTOR:** No
- CUPBOARD FINISHES:** Timber
- TYPE OF LATCHES:** Push button
- LOUNGE CONFIGURATION:** L-shape
- SEATING CAPACITY:** Four
- UPHOLSTERY:** Fabric
- SINK:** Stainless steel
- SLEEPING CONFIGURATION:** Double, two bunks
- BERTHS:** Four
- BED SIZE(S):** Queen and single
- MATTRESS:** Innerspring
- UNDER BED STORAGE:** Yes
- PRIVACY SCREENS:** Yes
- BATHROOM CONFIGURATION:** Separate toilet/shower
- PRIVACY DOOR:** Yes
- TOILET:** Cassette
- TOILET ROLL HOLDER:** Yes
- SHOWER HEAD:** Water saver
- WASHING MACHINE:** No
- CLOTHES DRYER:** No
- TOWEL RACKS:** Yes

TECHNICAL SPECS

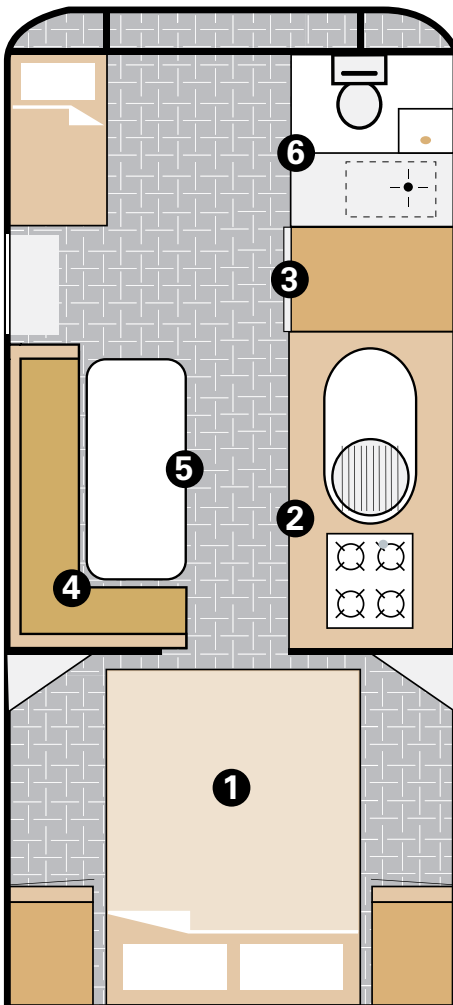
MAKE AND MODEL: Roadstar Daintree
CHASSIS NUMBER: AR0099
EXTERNAL BODY LENGTH: 23ft 6in
EXTERNAL WIDTH INCLUDING AWNING: 8ft
VIN TARE WEIGHT: 2200kg
VIN GTM: 2380kg
VIN ATM: 2600kg
BALL WEIGHT: 220kg
PRICE (AS TESTED): \$61,500

CONTACT/THANKS

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LAYOUT KEY

1. BED	4. LOUNGE/DINETTE
2. KITCHEN	5. TABLE
3. FRIDGE	6. ENSUITE



Right: This layout comes with a set of bunks and huge wardrobe



boards. They look good, and give the ceiling a more open feeling of space.

It was a real pleasure to see the level of craftsmanship that has gone into the cabinetry. For a start, it's all glued and screwed (try using that phrase out of context) for the best strength possible. The finish on the cupboard edges is lovely, and the guys have even put timber caps over screw holes just to pretty it up. All the edging is beautifully rounded, and the push-button cupboard handles are top notch. The shelf for the microwave has a rounded front for a more pleasing effect; it costs more in time and materials, but little touches like this again show that Roadstar really care about their product.

I thought the layout achieved a great balance in sharing the available space between the different sections of the van. And having 23ft to play with certainly helps! The bathroom exemplifies

this by providing a separate toilet, sink and shower in a minimum of space.

The toilet and shower are really separate, having their own cubicles.

An optimised ensuite leaves football fields of space to play with in the rear. This configuration incorporates double bunks and a massive wardrobe, but you can let your imagination run wild with the alternatives.

The kitchen has full height splashbacks, pot drawer, bench lid over the oven and a water filter. The only way you could improve it for me would be to add a roll-out pantry and a double sink, but I never did know when to stop. Bench space is at a premium, but alleviated by having a smaller fridge that allows for bench space on top. The TV is also there, but you could always mount it elsewhere if you wanted.

The lights are a combination of LED and globe. I actually like this, as you get a balance between the efficiency of LEDs and the brightness of globes. Off the grid you've got a fairly hefty 120Ah battery firing up the electrics, which is maintained by a 30A PowerSaver smart charger (that you can also use as a power supply).

WORTH BUYING?

This level of quality at this price is a amazing value!

