

10 TOP TIPS FOR BUYING A CARAVAN

There's so much more to consider than length or berth when choosing a caravan. We've compiled a guide to help you navigate your next purchase.

1 SIZE MATTERS

Think about whether you can comfortably spend four to five days in your caravan without getting cabin fever. Do you need a large kitchen? Would you like a lounge with a permanent table? Is a compact bathroom sufficient for your needs, or would you prefer a separate shower and toilet? Many first-time buyers make the mistake of choosing a small two-berth caravan only to realise within a matter of months that they need to upsize to a unit with a permanent bed and lounge. After all, you probably don't sleep on your couch at home, do you?

All Dethleffs caravans feature permanent beds with high quality mattresses and a separate lounge. Body lengths range from 5.9m to 8.05m and body widths are either 2.3m or 2.5m.

2 SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT

Chassis, suspension and brake technology are critical factors in safety, road holding and general towing manners, yet are often ignored by some manufacturers. Has the caravan you're looking at got independent suspension, a shock absorber for each wheel, and mechanical and electrical anti-sway technology?

The standard specification for Dethleffs caravans in New Zealand includes world-class componentry from AL-KO Germany. The chassis is upgraded to use thicker steel and extra bracing, and the premium heavy-duty Delta axle is matched with

the appropriate shock rating. Brakes and bearings are also upgraded to include large, sealed, double-roller, maintenance-free bearings. Dethleffs caravans use AL-KO's revolutionary AKS3004 stabiliser coupling and ATC electronic anti-sway braking system, which is similar technology to that used in late model cars.

3 WEIGHT AND PAYLOAD

Total weight and payload should be

a key consideration. To remain safe and legal, the total weight of your caravan needs to fit within the towbar rating of your vehicle. The really important thing, after extras are added (such as tanks, awning, solar, satellite, gas bottles, bike rack etc), is what payload is left for food, water and personal effects.

Thanks to the upgraded chassis and axle, Dethleffs caravans have generous payloads which range from 350kg to 500kg-plus depending on the model.

4 WHICH LAYOUT SUITS?

An island bed takes up the most floor space but provides excellent accessibility around each side of the bed. A side bed (French bed) is a better use of floor space but has access limitations. Twin single beds have historically been overlooked but have become increasingly popular recently for their generous bed width per person, ability to customise bedding preferences, easier access to storage, and a more open floor plan.

Lounge position can be front, middle or rear and all have different merits. Dethleffs' large range of layouts feature a variety of lounge and bedroom configurations.



5 QUALITY OF FIT-OUT

Consider the choice of fit-out materials. Are they both durable and reliable without comprising the caravan's overall weight?

Dethleffs caravans are designed and manufactured with a very specific balance between lightweight composite materials and solid, durable materials where needed.

6 STORAGE

The longer you caravan, the more contents you accumulate. From kitchenware to camping furniture, it will all need its own space within your caravan.

All Dethleffs caravans feature a large front storage locker to house two full-size gas bottles, a full-size spare wheel, and extras such as spare toilet cassette, power cord, grey water hose and BBQ. All units also include an external locker door to access under-bed storage. Overhead lockers and impressive kitchen and bathroom storage combine to give class-leading storage capacity.

7 YEAR-ROUND CARAVANNING

Not all caravans are fully insulated, double-glazed or even heated. If you want maximum use and enjoyment from your purchase, these factors are important.

Dethleffs caravans are fully insulated in the walls, roof and floor with XPS insulation; fully double-glazing including roof vents; and have Alde central heating systems for comfortable use year-round.*

8 WHAT DOES THE PRICE INCLUDE?

When comparing one caravan with another, look at what you're getting for the quoted price. Does the advertised price include everything you need to travel where you want, the way you want?

All Dethleffs caravans include fresh and grey water tanks, self-containment certificate, solar, lithium battery system, Alde central heating,* a full 9kg gas bottle, gas certification, three-year WOF, 12-month registration, an electrical WOF, a smart TV, 60cm KiwiSat automatic satellite dish, and a comprehensive handover.

*Truma Combi heating in the Nomad 490EST.

9 WARRANTY AND SUPPORT

What does the warranty include? Is the warranty with the seller or the factory? Be wary of importers who do not buy from the manufacturer and, consequently, cannot provide a factory-backed warranty. Does the seller also stock parts and understand the servicing requirements?

Dethleffs caravans include a two-year general warranty and a six-year water ingress warranty with the factory. There are five authorised Dethleffs service agents in New Zealand approved to carry out the water ingress inspection.

10 USER-FRIENDLINESS

The more enjoyable your caravan is to use, the more likely it is that you'll want to use it regularly. Ensure it is a pleasure to tow and has all the features needed for easy, comfortable camping.

Dethleffs caravans are acclaimed for their exceptional build quality, premium finish, innovative design, impeccable road manners for stress-free towing, and comfortable, year-round use.

Specifications for Dethleffs caravans described in this article are applicable to models from 2022 onwards.



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