

Ingenious camper fits any ute's tray

By LLOYD MARSHALL



TOP: A panel near the driver's door contains a hand-held shower.

LEFT: The Traymate fibreglass camper is designed to fit on to any ute.



WHEN he was in his early 20s, Earl Weaver built a caravan, then followed up by converting a bus. He installed living quarters up front and a garage at the back, complete with a winch to load his car on board.

Last Christmas Mr Weaver started designing his latest project, a fibreglass camper designed to fit on the tray of a ute.

The result was the Traymate, which is lighter than its competitors but has plenty of space and all the features necessary for a mobile accommodation unit.

The camper can be installed on the tray of any ute, courtesy of a purpose-built steel base that comes as part of the package.

Four tie-down bolts secure the camper to the tray and four jacks allow it to be raised and the ute removed.

The one-piece fibreglass bodies are handmade by Mr Weaver using moulds he devised.

A carpenter and cabinetmaker, Mr Weaver has spent many years on the road with his wife Wendy and that experience shows in the way he has maximised the use of space in the camper.

A permanent double-bed is located over the cab and access is provided by a flip-down step, with a further foothold provided by a

bench top. Immediately behind the passenger door is a gas bottle compartment with a bottom-hinged door and a ventilation panel.

Next to it a large stainless steel fold-down door becomes a bench in front of a shelved cupboard that is ideal for storing burners and cooking gear. Near the rear of the cabin

is the door to the camper, which is accessed by an aluminium ladder.

A 3m Fiamma awning extends out 2.5m and is supported by two extendable legs that fold out.

Imported from Italy and available as an option, the awning is one of the best on the market.

A vertical panel near the driver's door contains a hand-held shower

with rocker switch to control water flow and a 22-litre water tank that can be filled with hot water.

Privacy is courtesy of a heavy-duty slide-out shower curtain.

"There's virtually no weight in it and it guarantees privacy in the event that someone comes along at the wrong time," Mr Weaver said.

Next to the shower is a large fold-

down door that becomes a stainless steel bench, giving access to a series of shelves about 50cm deep.

A small door gives access to a large storage space extending under the interior rear bench seat. There is a matching door on the other side.

The interior has space for the largest model Engel fridge on the left, just inside the door, while sliding doors front a two-tier storage space to the right, under the edge of the bed.

The lower level of that space has been specifically designed to accommodate jerry cans.

Along the wall facing the door is a good-sized work bench with a narrow cupboard above containing a safety switch for the shower to ensure its rocker switch can't be accidentally activated by bumpy terrain.

The space under the rear bench seat can be accessed by sliding doors inside the camper or by the exterior doors at each side mentioned earlier.

Solar panels on the roof are optional, as is a table that slides out from the rear below the dual spare-wheel carriers.

Priced under \$20,000, the Traymate lacks nothing and looks sure to be a successful player in a competitive market.

Info: 9647 1101, www.traymatecampers.com.au.