

Touring in the Tooradin

When looking for a high level of luxury at an affordable price you should have a look at Jurgen's Tooradin.

With the move to their new \$5m factory in Pakenham, east of Melbourne, Jurgens have shown a genuine commitment to the local caravan industry by this progressive company. And by the number of their vans I have noticed on the road recently their range is becoming very popular. And why not? They are stylish and well built, yet weigh less in comparison to similar sized competitors.

Weight is kept out of the vans through clever engineering and the use of lightweight but durable material. Take the chassis for example. Rather than being built on heavy channel like many manufacturers, the Jurgens chassis utilises a grid of lighter galvanized sections, engineered for strength using an advanced Finite Element Analysis computer program. This advanced programming is able to identify stress points and areas where extra strength is needed.

Prototypes are then run through vigorous testing to simulate thousands of hours of road use before being put into production. Jurgens includes three years warranty to back up their product and there is a nationwide network of deal- ▶

The Tooradin is finished to a high level throughout.



The angled bed allows access from both sides.

ers to help with any service issues.

Many modern vans have adapted a clean flat look to their exterior walls. Jurgens have had this appearance for many years because, rather than having timber stud walls with an added skin, they use a single preformed composite panel of aluminium, insulation, timber and PVC, which is extremely strong and very rigid. These panels are cut to fine tolerances on CNC machines assuring a perfect fit for doors and windows and correct alignment of roof and floor.

The roof is from a single sheet of aluminium, ensuring it's watertight, and according to Jurgens is strong enough to walk on while the floor is a single section of high quality ply with weather proofing underneath.

All of this technology would be of no interest if the vans did not also have a visual appeal and a pleasant living space and the flagship Tooradin model on test has both in spades. The upmarket range takes its name from the town where the original Jurgens factory was located for many years prior to the recent move.

The clean lines of previous vans translate well to the longer twin-axle version with

the minimalist sides complemented by tapered fibreglass ends. So too, the tasteful interior will woo prospective buyers looking for a comfortable and very user-friendly touring van.

Before heading inside we should look at some of the mechanical aspects and exterior features. At the drawbar the 3500kg Al-Ko hitch has a standard ball coupling, while a fibreglass moulding across the rear of the A-frame tidies things up.

The front boot houses two 4.5kg gas bottles and a spare wheel and there's an easily fitted travel blanket that can be attached across the front of the van to avoid stone chips when on the move.

Suspension is the well-regarded Al-Ko independent rubber torsion system, which offers simplicity of service, light weight and a soft ride. The system has been used for years in Jurgens vans in South Africa and it holds up well under their similar rough conditions. Brakes are electric drums and polished alloy wheels add to the good looks.

Along the kerb side are a handy fold-down table, roll out awning, a media console for a TV and outside power, LED lighting as well as storage lockers and a



The round bench and stainless steel sink.

comprehensive slide out kitchen. Jurgens have taken notice of travellers who like to keep fit and would also like some transport at their destination and have included a couple of push bikes racks on the back.

Entry is through a two-way security door and into very pleasant accommodation. To welcome your arrival a wine cooler with see-through door is set to the right of the entranceway. That's a nice touch. Overhead are storage cabinets and to the left a very impressive caramel coloured leather lounge/diner with seating for five around a movable table. There's room to bring in an occasional chair for a sixth when required and the area converts to a double bed by dropping the table and adding cushions.

Light flows into the interior from a large front window and two more along the sides. All these openings have curtains behind neat pelmets and can be blocked out completely or opened with fly screens to create a good airflow.

To the driver's side is a very funky and at the same time, practical kitchen. The silver tambour style rolling doors under the rounded kitchen bench and in a high storage hatch are a real standout and add to the



The bathroom has stone benches and stainless steel vanity. Large windows add light to the comfortable dining area.

well-executed design.

The round bench for the stainless steel sink and draining board is offset into the walkway but does not impede passage and helps find a bit more preparation space. Jurgens have adapted rounded edges and shapes rather than the stark square look often associated with modern vans and it contributes to the upmarket refined feeling.

Dark stone-look benchtops and glossy dark splashbacks fit well with mid tone timber cabinetry and, unlike early Jurgens vans, there are numerous colour combinations of fabrics from which to select.

The cook will be impressed with the kitchen including its Thetford cooktop with one electric and three gas burners, oven with grill and range hood, overhead Samsung microwave and, on the kerb side, a Thetford 180 L fridge/ freezer that has manual power selection which, according to Jurgens, allows better control.

Tooradin models come in a variety of layouts with the J2605 variant having the lounge at the front and an offset bed central. Skewing the bed so it runs at an angle across the van steals some space for more living room but still allows access from either side. The

arrangement also allows extra space to include the slide-out kitchen below, not available with a north-south walkaround style.

Features like bookshelves, storage shelves with fiddle rails to stop things sliding off, wall cupboards, mirror and a leather bed head give the feeling of being in a well-appointed apartment. Without overhead cupboards all around the bedroom there is a great feeling of space. It might mean a little less storage, but it adds greatly to the roomy appeal.

One of the big differences in the current line of vans over those of only a few years ago is the inclusion of an ensuite, even in some of the smaller models, and the Tooradin is no exception, with a full width version at the rear.

Entry is through a sliding door and the timber decor fits in well with the rest of the van. To the left is a Thetford cassette toilet while against the rear wall a vanity with a large mirror has neat storage options and space for an optional washing machine.

To the right is a moulded full size shower with a seat and an overhead hatch and light. Hot water comes from a gas and 240v heater connected to a pair of 80L tanks so there should be enough for a few days of indepen-

dent camping.

A single 100ah battery with charger and transformer/inverter also contributes to some free camping and it can be topped up from the tow vehicle or mains power.

Other inclusions are a roof mounted 240v Ibis remote control air conditioner, movable television and stereo sound system with overhead and outside speakers.

Jurgens have done a good job with this new premier range of vans and they certainly live up to the luxury claim. They have a distinctive appearance on the road and their stylish interior impresses on first look. They should be easy to live with over extended travel and their rugged design means they can easily handle corrugated roads as well as the changing conditions of country blacktop.

With a price starting around \$69,500 the Tooradin is priced well in the market especially considering the high level of comfort and spacious design.

John Ford



Bike racks on the back of the Tooradin.



Everything about the kitchen is beautiful quality.



AL-KO torsion suspension system. Even the cover on the A-frame is finished well.



SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer: Jurgens Caravans

Model: Tooradin J2605

Country of manufacture: Australia

Overall length: 8.1m

Width: 2.45m

Travel height: 2.8m

Tare weight: 2250kg

Gross weight: 2800kg

Ball weight: 160kg

Price from: \$69,500

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