



Isabel's striking looks have drawn plenty of advances

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY NANCY BATES Q83355

Tony is becoming more enamoured with Isabel every day. He still has not warmed to her name but her performance and characteristics are pretty close to all that we wanted in a motorhome.

Our Global Warrior is compact (she fits into most large car spaces) tough, reliable, self sufficient – as long as we can get water and fuel we can stay out indefinitely – and easy care. She is the first of six travelling around Australia now and we have been pretty much road-testing her for John Marano and the boys at All Terrain Warriors (ATW) in Yandina, Queensland.

More than a hundred blokes have walked up in car parks or pulled up in utes with the same opening gambit: 'That looks as if it would take you anywhere you want to go.'



Shade is immaterial: Isabel creates her own



At Cape Keraudren

'Pretty much,' we say, 'So far, anyway.' We have been more than 16,000km over zillions of corrugations, driven most of the way on dusty unsealed roads, survived 45°C+ heat without too much discomfort, driven through washouts, mud and over rocks, along beaches and camped on sand beside the water's edge. Shade is immaterial: Isabel creates her own with awnings and the roof-screens design.

We haven't put her through a lot of deep crossings because there haven't been too many: the north of Australia has been mourning the effects of the lack of a wet last summer. For that reason we skipped our planned return to the Kimberley and decided to do a few loops through southern WA, returning to Mitchell Falls, etc. as soon as the roads re-open – if they have enough wet to close them in the

first place. We are also looking forward to doing some desert crossings and I am keen to find out how snug she is in the snow. Tony loathes the cold so that will be a solid test.

We have found a couple of problems and have relayed information back to ATW: our hiccups have been fixed and modifications made to Isabel's little brothers and sisters. Energy problems were solved by replacing a faulty battery and sticking up a couple of extra solar panels (heat does not equate to high solar performance). We run a roomy fridge and freezer, computers and charge various small device batteries.

Isabel has proved her worth free camping on beaches around Darwin and down the north-west of Western Australia. Tourist towns such as Broome ban free camping and the mining towns are a bit strict because miners trying to stack their cash have lived out of cars and in unlovely camps to escape horrendously high rents.



Isabel against a storm and bushfire sky at Cape Leveque

We have found excellent free camping outside the towns, however, and plenty of helpful advice from the locals. When council waterside camps 'close' for summer it can mean they are free without rubbish pick-up.

Isabel continues to attract stares and comments with her revolutionary style: 'Looks like that thing will take you to the moon,' has been a regular comment or 'She looks like a moon buggy/space shuttle.'

Even more interest is sparked once the roof pops up 600mm with all-round screened windows. I usually succumb to curious strangers with an invitation to have a look inside. I scurry in first to have a quick tidy and pull down undies hung up to dry but still damp because Isabel is so well-sealed to the outside even light duds take days to dry if we are on the move.

Usually they are surprised at how cool Isabel is inside. The high windows create a ventilating system that works exceptionally well. I was a bit sceptical when John Marano said we wouldn't need air-conditioning but after being in the north in the build-up (well, let's hope it is a build-up) and a couple of days at 47 and 48 degrees I incline my head towards Yandina. 🚐

Even light duds take days to dry if we are on the move

