

# SOMETHING OLD SOMETHING NEW

THE OPUS DRIFTER  
XT BRINGS ENGLISH  
INNOVATION TO THE  
AUSTRALIAN MARKET.  
WORDS AND PICS **PHILIP LORD**











**“The Aussie model has been extensively tested locally prior to production”**



Australia has perhaps one of the most diverse camper trailer markets in the world, yet new arrival Opus has still managed to surprise with its innovation and ingenuity.

The Opus Drifter XT camper is manufactured in Adelaide by Purple Line Australia to the template of the UK company, Opus. This Australian version does not strictly adhere to the English camper's drawings. Its beefed-up Australian chassis and other unique details differentiate it from its UK counterpart.

In fact, the Aussie Opus is built with 50 per cent local content. Things like the chassis, furniture, tent and electrics are all locally sourced and manufactured.

### UNIQUE DESIGN

The founder of Opus in the UK, Jonathan Harris, began working on the Opus concept 15 years ago using inspiration from Australian campers. He saw an opportunity with the growth of “glamping” in the UK — that is, a need for comfortable camping that bypasses the soggy tent, but one that doesn't involve the cost, storage issues and weight of a caravan. He saw the concept of the folding Aussie camper





trailer as the perfect vehicle with which to profit from this growing market. Mr Harris and the then-nascent Purple Line Australia combined their skills to develop the camper.

While Mr Harris did follow a familiar theme to the Aussie camper trailer in its chassis and floor/box design, he didn't replicate what he saw in the Aussie market and came up with a unique tent design that drew its inspiration from a less-likely source: the old-fashioned pram, with its concertina bi-fold hood.

Opus claims its design is unique and it's been well received in the UK market. The Aussie model has been extensively tested locally prior to production, with shake-down tests both on-and offroad. During the pre-production phase, the tent spent a year erected in Melbourne to ensure it didn't leak or deteriorate.

## CONSTRUCTION

Two models are offered, the Drifter and the offroad-oriented Drifter XT. Both variants have two double beds with inner privacy tents, a club lounge that converts to an extra bed, a tunnel boot, 12V LED lighting and 240V power outlets, a fire extinguisher and an awning.

The Drifter has a five-leaf suspension, override brakes, 14-inch alloy wheels, 50mm Al-Ko coupling, wind-down Al-Ko stabilisers, a built-in sink with recessed tap and a mains water connection.

The reviewed Drifter XT has nine-leaf offroad suspension, an extended drawbar, 15-inch alloys, electric brakes, a Trigg articulated hitch, 200mm Al-Ko flip-up jockey wheel and drop-down Al-Ko stabiliser legs, plus a 98Ah deep-cycle battery system, 12V power outlet, two-burner cooktop, 50L water tank with stone protection and a large A-frame lockable storage



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** The Drifter has a low profile and looks sleek in motion; 4.5kg gas cylinder rides on the drawbar; The interior feels spacious and luxurious, with a cathedral roof complete with skylight windows; Under-bed storage keeps bits and bobs at hand; Side-accessed toolbox provides lots of room for the gear.



**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Not many hardfloor campers offer two double beds; Plenty of light, airy living space inside; Your biggest quandry in the kitchen will be which cupboard to choose for the pots and pans; The XT's stainless steel sink is fed by a 50L water tank; Power and water are controlled at one main switchboard.

## CTA RATING

### 1. FIT FOR INTENDED PURPOSE



### 2. INNOVATION



### 3. SELF-SUFFICIENCY



### 4. QUALITY OF FINISH



### 5. BUILD QUALITY



### 6. OFFROAD-ABILITY



### 7. COMFORTS



### 8. EASE OF USE



### 9. VALUE FOR MONEY



### 10. X-FACTOR



box with twin jerry can holders.

The galvanised steel chassis has an 1800mm long drawbar that measures 100mm deep, 50mm wide and has a 3mm-thick wall. The front lockable storage locker is a neat design, with hinged openings on both ends of the locker. Also, a slide-out drawer can be accessed from the kerb side of the camper, allowing heavy items to be accessed without straining your back. There is also a sturdy two-jerry can holder frame just ahead of the storage locker. The coupling is a Trigg polyblock with a handbrake and swing-up Al-Ko jockey wheel. The camper's set-up is simple; it takes about 10 minutes to get the legs down and the tent up.

The only slightly fiddly things are installing the support legs for the bed fold-outs and tensioning the tent bows inside. It's all relative though – just about all campers need to be stabilised and have the tents tensioned. The Opus is no more difficult to set up than any other camper.

The four drop-down Al-Ko stabiliser legs are quality items and are easy to use. Opening up the bi-fold reinforced bed lids is simple – unclip the four over-centre latches that secure the





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lids and unfold each lid. Then each bed lid's support legs are locked into place and the tent hoops are tensioned inside. With these steps completed, all that remains is to fit the standard awning and get down to the serious business of relaxing with a cold drink.

The step up into the Drifter XT camper is a bit of a reach and, as with many offroad campers, owners might benefit from purchasing a small plastic step. Opus is working on an integral fold-down step to solve this issue for the short-legged among us.

## LAYOUT

Once inside, the high ceiling of the 400gsm polycotton tent is impressive, but even more so is the natural light afforded by two skylights. They're covered by zippered canvas flaps that roll up to reveal the clear plastic that, according to the manufacturer, will outlast the canvas in typical recreational use. This is an







innovative feature and I'm surprised I have not seen it before. Windows are zippered and have midge-proof screens.

There's a double bed at each end of the camper and the shallow tub results in a relatively small step-up to the beds – although the leatherette club lounge does need to be climbed over to access the rear bed.

This is not the first time this compromise has been made, but the pale leatherette lounge of the evaluation camper wouldn't have remained pristine for long with my kids around.

Each bed has two storage pockets but could be improved more with some dedicated reading lights. However, the two ceiling lights are complemented by a portable third light that can be fixed in the bed area.

The club lounge is comfortable to sit on, and there's no sense of being wedged against the table, as there is with other campers. The table drops down to provide another bed.

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** The Drifter XT rides on 15in alloys, and the suspension is Al-Ko nine-leaf; The battery and charger are housed in an enclosed compartment.

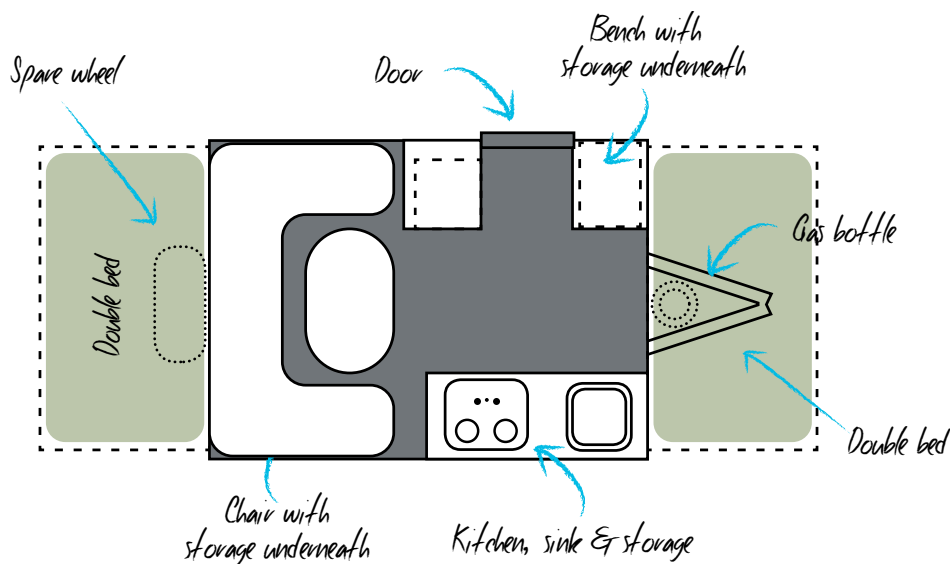
## HITS & MISSES

### I LIKED

- > Cathedral ceiling
- > Skylights
- > Light weight
- > Payload

### I WOULD HAVE LIKED

- > External cooker access when folded





## CTA SPECS

PURPLE LINE  
OPUS DRIFTER XT

### > TRAILER

**Ball weight** 70kg  
**Tare** 780kg  
**ATM** 1530kg  
**Suspension** Al-Ko live-axle nine-leaf pack  
**Brakes** 10in drums, electric  
**Coupling** Trigg polyblock  
**Drawbar** 100x50mm  
**Chassis** 100x50mm hot-dipped galvanised steel  
**Body construction** Aluminium frame, ply inner, fibreglass outer  
**Wheel/tyre** 15in alloys  
**Style** Hardfloor

### > DIMENSIONS

**Length (hitch to tail lights)** 4900mm  
**Interior length** 5750mm  
**Interior height** 2280mm

### > ACCESSORIES

**Gas cylinder** 1 x 9kg  
**Water** 50L  
**Kitchen** Slide-out  
**Cooktop** Two-burner external stainless steel  
**Battery** 98Ah deep cycle

### > PRICE AS SHOWN

\$19,990

### > SUPPLIED BY

Purple Line Australia 5/238 Governor Rd, Braeside, VIC 3195, (03)9588 2959, [www.purpleline.com.au](http://www.purpleline.com.au)



**“It takes about 10 minutes to get the legs down and the tent up”**

### KITCHEN

The bench area is fitted with a plumbed stainless steel sink and storage shelves. An internal gas cooker can be fitted in the bench area as an option. Storage inside is covered with floor-level cupboards, and the 98Ah deep-cycle battery and on-board charger are housed in a compartment just to the left as you step into the camper. A low shelf to the right of the door is the intended location for an optional camping fridge.

The two-burner stainless steel external kitchen slides out from the rear of the camper. It's a neat little cooker, but can't be accessed without the rear lid folded out, as the bed strut gets in the way.

On the opposite side of the camper, a lockable storage compartment also reveals the water pump, giving relatively easy access to this item for servicing.

### WRAPPING UP

The Opus is a breath of fresh air in a camper trailer market that, until now, appeared to have done it all.

While we'd like to see some improvements to the design (such as cooker access when the camper is closed), at first glance the Opus Drifter XT is a competitive entrant to the sub-\$20K camper field. **CTA**

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** With a double bed at each end, the Drifter's internal layout is much like a wind-up camper of the Jayco-type ilk; The two double beds fold out from each end quickly and easily.

