

RV Buyers Guide - Part 1 (Motorhomes)



Description

So you've decided to buy a recreational vehicle (RV) but don't know where to start. Don't worry, I guarantee there are plenty of others in the same boat. There are a number of factors to consider before purchasing an RV and these factors should be well thought out to avoid disappointment later down the track.

Here are a few factors to consider before you buy your RV. This list is not all-inclusive but it should help you make a more informed decision before you purchase an RV.

- What type of RV is best suited for you and your family?
- What type of floor plan will work best for you and your family?
- Do you plan to travel cross-country with the RV or is it going to be set up at one location and left there?
- If you're going to be towing the RV is the tow vehicle capable of handling the weight of the RV and do you have the proper hitch work to safely tow it?
- How many people will be in the RV and what are the sleeping requirements?
- Is there enough seating space?
- Do you need a slide out(s) for additional living space? If you get slide outs how is the RV interior affected when they are in the stored, travel position?
- Is there enough outside storage, and are the storage compartments large enough to accommodate what you plan to take?
- Is there enough closet, cabinet and drawer space for all of your personal belonging?
- Are there enough cabinets and drawers in the kitchen? Don't forget about the pots and pans.
- How much counter space does it have in the kitchen? Is it enough?
- Where is the dinette table in relation to the range, oven and the refrigerator? Does it make sense?
- How does the bed feel when you lay down? Is it long enough and wide enough?
- Can you walk around the entire bed or is it built into the corner of the walls?
- Are there windows where you want windows?
- Is the refrigerator large enough?
- Can you reach the microwave?
- Is the A/C ducted throughout the unit? If not will it cool the entire unit?
- Do you prefer a split bathroom where the shower is separate, or a bathroom where everything is together?
- Can you stand up in the shower?
- Is the bathroom large enough?
- Can you sit on the toilet?
- How much fresh water can you take with you? Is it enough?
- How large are the gray water and black water holding tanks? Are they large enough for the way you plan to use the RV?
- How much LP gas does it hold? Is it enough for how you plan to use the RV?

- Is the RV too big or too small for your needs?
- If you want a motor home drive it before you buy it.
- If you're towing a vehicle behind the motor home what are the weight limits?
- What type of electrical service does the RV have, 30 Amp or 50 Amp?
- Do you need a generator?
- If equipped with a TV where is it located in relation to the seating arrangements?
- How many TV outlets do you want?
- Do you need a phone jack?
- Does the RV have an awning? If so, where is it situated, does it interfere with any storage compartments or windows etc?
- How long is the warranty on the RV? Do you need extended coverage to protect your investment?
- How is the RV constructed?
- If it's a caravan / 5th wheel do you prefer a corrugated aluminium or fibreglass exterior? How hard is it to keep clean?
- If you're buying a motor home do you want gas or diesel? Which type is more practical for how you plan to use it?

By now you should have a clearer view of what components and features you would like in your RV. The next step is to choose an RV type that will accommodate for your wants & needs. There are various types of recreational vehicles to choose from with price tags ranging from usually \$5,000 to \$500,000 – Even up to 1 million dollars for top of the range luxury suites. Common types of RV's you'll find on Australian roads are;

1. Motorhomes (Class A, Class B and Class C)
2. Campervans
3. Caravans
4. Camping Trailers
5. Bus Conversion
6. Slide-On Campers
7. Pop-top's
8. 5th Wheelers

Over the coming weeks we will cover all of the above recreational vehicle types but in this article, we will solely concentrate on Motorhomes (Class A, B and C). Let's look at these RV types in more detail;

Motorhomes (Class A)

In the motorhome family, Class A motorhomes are at the top of the food chain and are the largest, most luxurious of the motorized RVs. Typically resembling a bus, Class As are entirely constructed on a specially designed motorhome chassis. Powered by petrol or diesel engines, these units may have multiple slide-out sections that open up the living space. Options are unlimited for Class As, but generally they have kitchens, bathrooms, entertainment centres and centrally controlled heating and air conditioning. They have excellent flexibility in terms of design layout and almost all have a flat floor design, swivelling driver and passenger seats forming an integral part of the front lounge area.

Features of a Class A Motorhome

- **Spacious and well equipped**, even the basic models are well-appointed and roomy. But for anyone looking for the ultimate in luxury and elegance, Class A manufacturers have luxury models costing as much as \$1 million.
- **Slide-out rooms give added space**, moving the RV's exterior wall outward at the touch of a button, to enlarge the living, dining or kitchen area by up to 1 metre (3½ ft).
- **Smooth and stable ride** when the vehicle is properly loaded. Any experienced driver can take the wheel, and no special licence is required (unless the vehicle has air-brakes).
- **A small vehicle can be towed** behind, for short side trips once the motorhome is parked. Or you might prefer to tow a trailer to carry your boat or golf cart.

Size: ranges from 6.4 to 12.2 meters (21–40 ft)

Cost: starting from approx. \$70,000 *

Sleeps: up to 6 people, depending on the model

* Check with your local RV dealer for second hand prices

Motorhomes (Class B)

A Class B Motorhome, also commonly referred to as a van conversion or van camper, and is a panel truck that is fully self-contained, with a refrigerator, sink, hot water, air conditioning and heater and comfortable sleeping facilities. Many Class B motorhomes have showers and toilet facilities. Although smaller in capacity, they even have holding tanks for your fresh water and gray and black wastewater. The advantage of a Class B motorhome is handling and size if you don't happen to need the interior room. Other advantages include their versatility, reasonable costs and drivability.

When not used for camping, they are easily utilized as a second vehicle at home. A Class B Motorhome gets you on the road to adventure in a compact size that's fun and easy to drive. The comfort level of the Class B motorhome is truly amazing. Its spacious interior boasts of full headroom and is fully furnished with all the necessities plus lots of extra amenities. Two to four people can sleep at Class B motorhomes depending on the model.

Class B motorhomes are often considered as the most economical, versatile and manoeuvrable of the motorized RVs. They are easily loaded and readied for any travel occasion.

The Class B motor home is narrower than other RVs because it utilizes the space within the existing van body. With their compact size and many amenities, Class B Motorhomes can provide comfortable living space and essentials for couples and young families.

Class B Motorhomes are much smaller than the **Class A Motorhomes**, so sacrifices must be made when it comes to features and amenities. Today's Class B Motorhome are found to be full-sized Motorhome which are easier to manoeuvre in urban settings, and are much easier to use, especially for drivers who are not accustomed to driving large vehicles.

Features of a Class B Motorhome

- **Easy to drive, easy to load**, and can be left ready for a quick getaway.
- **All conveniences of home** are built in, including shower, sleeping, dining and cooking facilities.
- **Useful for towing:** a camping trailer could be towed behind giving you extra sleeping room for the kids or guests. Some prefer to tow a boat, but it is also possible to tow a small family car.
- **Full stand-up room:** this is achieved by the raised roof, and sometimes by the use of dropped floors, for extra head-room inside.

Size: ranges from 4.9 to 6.4 meters (16–21 ft)

Cost: starting from approx. \$60,000 *

Sleeps: up to 4 people, depending on the model

* Check with your local RV dealer for second hand prices

Motorhomes (Class C)

This type of motorhome is usually manufactured on a conventional truck cab and chassis such as the: Isuzu NPR, Mazda T4000 models and the Mitsubishi Canter. They are also built on commercial vehicles such as the: Ford Falcon, Holden Commodore, Toyota Hilux cab chassis and the Holden Rodeo.

The Class C Motorhome provides many of the luxuries and conveniences of a Class A Motorhome in a scaled-down and less expensive unit. The Class C motor home is a popular choice for both couples and families, because it has all of the amenities of the bigger Class A motor home, but it is not as expensive and is nearly as spacious. Class C motorhomes tend to be much closer in appearance and functionality to Class A motorhomes than the camper vans.

Families often use Class C Motorhomes on holidays as they can accommodate 6-8 people at a time. Many Class C Motorhomes now come with a slide-out in the living/dining area, and some even offer a second slide-out in the bedroom. Like the Class A Motorhome, passengers have enough scope to eat, watch TV, play games, take a nap and use the bathroom. But unlike a Class A Motorhome, driving a Class C Motorhome sometimes feels more natural, since it is basically a modified van.

Size: ranges from 6.2 to 9.6 meters (20 - 28ft)

Weight: range in weight from 4,500 to 5,400 Kg

Cost: starting from approx. \$39,000 - \$67,000

Sleeps: between 6 - 8 people, depending on the model

* Check with your local RV dealer for second hand prices

Comments