

Bolwell Edge



Total photo(s): 7

Bolwell Edge

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Featuring an innovative, moulded fibreglass design and lightweight construction, the Bolwell Edge is a hard shell camper that's really a caravan

WE LIKED

- >> New look and design
- >> Extensive use of fibreglass moulding and vacuum bonding
- >> Decent-sized kitchen despite small space
- >> Good external storage

NOT SO MUCH

- >> No LED reading lights
- >> Limited coverage from awning
- >> Extensive list of options ramps up price

For many, the name Bolwell will immediately invoke memories of a quirky sports car that used to be made in Australia. With a fibreglass body, the Bolwell became something of an icon in the local motoring world.

Since that time, the Melbourne-based company has successfully expanded into different industries, making components for such diverse fields as medical applications to heavy transport.

The RV industry has extensively used a number of Bolwell mouldings and vacuum-formed products over the years. But in more recent times, the company has gone as far as to design and manufacture its own, stand-alone RV – the Edge.

TRUE ORIGINAL

Deciding what category of RV the Edge fits into is where things get a little difficult. It's more or less a caravan, but with enough camper trailer characteristics to make you think twice about that description.

However it's defined, on first glance the Edge is a very sleek and purposeful-looking unit.

In terms of construction, the Edge's futuristic look is achieved by using a fibreglass/synthetic composite body structure – called Endura-Core – that's frameless, but rigid. The Bolwell RV team believes the end result is a strong, impact-resistant, but lightweight body.

Single-piece structures for the body and front pivoting roof mean this rig is also waterproof. There are two non-opening windows on the side, as well as a large opener at the front.

Underneath the body, the hot-dipped galvanised chassis and drawbar may appear a little unusual at first, but are actually a fairly standard box section setup. Our Edge came with a Treg poly block hitch, but a standard coupling is also available.

The seemingly short drawbar is relatively uncluttered, with only the hitch and handbrake fitted. Two 9kg gas cylinders hide in a separate bin in the front boot – something that has a surprising amount of space given the size of the rig.

At the rear, there's no steel bumper so the spare fits neatly into the fibreglass moulding.

Riding on independent trailing arm suspension fitted with coil springs and shock absorbers, the Edge has a solid ground clearance.

Two 80 litre water tanks (one optional) are fitted between the rails and are protected with galvanised sheeting, rather than the tougher moulded polyethylene.

Like most quality caravans with a travelling height as low as 2.4m (7ft 10in), the Edge has a lifting roof, but it's neither a pop-top nor a rising roof design. Rather, it's hinged at the front and clipped at the back, campervan style, and is very easy to operate by just undoing the rear wall clips.

Other than opening the front stoneguard/window and lowering the corner steadies, that's about it for initial set up.

One of the Edge's other camper trailer features is the optional external slide-out kitchen bench (there's also an internal kitchen). Made from the same moulding material as the body, the external kitchen comes with a two-burner cooktop, plus a sink and storage compartments.

A small (optional) awning is also neatly tucked into a moulded recess, but while it's designed to cover the external kitchen, it fails to cover the entrance.

ELEGANT DESIGN

On the inside, the Edge is quite a simple layout. The front is occupied by an east-west queen bed, a small dinette sits across the middle and the kitchen bench takes up the rear. With the roof raised, the living area has a generous internal height of 1.96m (6ft 5in).

Although the side windows don't open, the front window, large roof hatch and three screened windows in the roof gusset provide enough air flow. Some may have problem with the sealed windows, but things were fine on the mild day of our test.

Measuring 2.0x1.45m (6ft 7in x 4ft 9in), the bed is a very snug fit across the front. And I found it slightly odd that although it comes with a 12V socket and sound system speakers on either side, there are no individual reading lights.

Two sideways-facing seats and a Lagun swivel-leg table make up the dinette. While this versatile and steady setup is a good design for this van, it can also be removed easily when not needed.

A flatscreen TV is fitted above the offside seat. This may not be the best location for the person in that seat, but there are not many other suitable places, except maybe in the front corner above the foot of the bed. Two overhead LED strips give good illumination.

Fitted into the corner, the well-equipped kitchen features an under-bench 137 litre Waeco fridge, two-burner cooktop and round stainless steel sink, with no drainer. I'm not sure why, but Bolwell lists the two burner cooktop as "optional".

The kitchen is also home to a couple of unexpected features. The first is the surprising amount of bench space the designers have managed to squeeze in. The other is the powerpoint pedestal, with four outlets, that can be pushed below bench level when not needed. Two 12V sockets are also fitted into the benchtop.

Storage consists of three drawers, one cupboard, a small wardrobe and a netted compartment, while the offside corner space is home to an external bin. Another LED strip illuminates the bench very well.

At 4.75m (15ft 7in), with an ATM of 1640kg, the Edge is not a particularly large unit, and along with its relatively narrow width of 2.2m (7ft 3in), it's ideal for bush tracks

and/or relatively lightweight travel.

VERDICT

The Edge is quite a unique caravan, especially to the un-expecting eye. Its apparent size belies what is actually fitted into the rig. And while it doesn't have any sort of bathroom fitted, it does come with either an optional external shower or fully enclosed annexe.

All this means it's not going to suit every traveller, but camping trailer enthusiasts who don't like flapping walls, or caravanners who prefer smaller rigs, are going to be interested. Whichever way you look at it, the Edge has more than a few home comforts fitted.

BOLWELL RV EDGE

Overall length: 5.42m (17ft 9in)

External length: 4.75m (15ft 7in)

External width: 2.2m (7ft 3in)

Internal height: 1.96m (6ft 5in)

Travel height: 2.4m (7ft 10in)

Tare: 1340kg

ATM: 1640kg

Ball weight (advised): 100kg

Chassis: Hot-dipped galvanised

Suspension: Independent trailing arm

Cooktop: Dometic two-burner

Fridge: Waeco 137 litre

Shower: External (optional)

Lighting: 12V

Gas: 2 x 4.5kg

Hot water: Truma 14 litre

Fresh water: 2 x 80 litre

Price (as shown): \$59,239 (including around \$8000 in options)

Supplied by: [Kratzmann Caravans](#), Burpengary, Qld

More info: [Bolwell RV](#)

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