

4X4 ACTION

ISSUE 45

UNTAMED

ARB TAKES ON THE NEW HILUX



PRODUCTS | NEWS | TRAVEL | ADVENTURE | ADVICE | LIFESTYLE



4X4 ACCESSORIES

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PIECE OF THE ACTION



**AUSTRALIA HAS BECOME
SYNONYMOUS WITH THE
PHRASE “THE LUCKY
COUNTRY” AND IT’S A
REFERENCE THAT’S
REPEATEDLY USED IN
THE 4X4 WORLD, GIVEN
ALL OF THE FANTASTIC
DESTINATIONS WE HAVE ON
OUR DOORSTEP.**

The Outback, in particular, is quite unique as it is a vast, remote and desolate land, yet unlike so many other off the beaten track locations around the world, it can be explored without fear of getting kidnapped, robbed or worse. I think many of us take for granted the fact we can set off into the bush for weeks or even months on end and experience some of the most stunning landscape nature has to offer, all the time in complete safety. So it's good to get a reminder from time to time, just how fortunate we are to have all of this in our backyard.

About a year ago, I was approached by the Northern Territory Government with a view to providing assistance for a major media event it was hosting for Land Rover. Land Rover has always taken an extremely ambitious approach to its international media events, with prior activities such as the Camel Trophy and G4 Challenge considered to be at the absolute pinnacle of off road adventure. In 2000, the company's premier international activity shifted from a competition style event into an expedition style one, and the Land Rover Experience Tour was born. Since then, the world's top motoring journalists and a handful of extremely lucky members of the public have been taken to locations such as the Silk Road, Bolivia, Malaysia, Argentina, Scotland, Canada, Mexico, Namibia, Iceland and Jordan.

Several years ago, a decision was made to bring the Tour to Australia in 2015. The project was on a scale rarely seen in this country before and represented an investment for Land Rover of more than nine million dollars. Over 100,000 people registered for just six places available for members of the public on the trip, dozens of journalists from around the world were extended invitations and about twenty specially prepared Land Rovers along with a purpose built catering/ambulance/communications six wheel drive truck were shipped over from Europe. ARB assisted with a whole range of gear including swags, fridges, compressors, recovery and general camping equipment. It's been estimated that the event will generate 200-300 million page views of media content, which is fantastic publicity for tourism in the NT.

I was fortunate enough to be able to join the Land Rover Experience Tour for their grand finale event at Uluru late last year and found the entire crew to be in extremely high spirits following an absolutely sensational few weeks of four wheel driving in the Territory. When doing a recap of the trip in front of the group the expedition leader, Dag Rogge, declared it to be the best event they had ever run. It was very obvious that all of the participants I met had fallen in love with the Outback and many were struggling at the prospect of returning to their busy lives in cities around the world. Whilst the trip was largely without incident given all of the vehicles performed brilliantly, one journo got a real taste of Outback motoring following an animal strike, which totally immobilised the vehicle. Unable to be driven or towed, and with the accident occurring in one of the most remote locations on the trip, retrieving the vehicle cost over \$10,000! A stark reminder as to why we fit bull bars to our vehicles down under.

The 2015 Land Rover Experience Tour really was a once in a lifetime opportunity for many people on the trip, but for Aussie four wheel drivers we have access to these types of adventures whenever we want.

Of course to be able to undertake trips such as this in safety, it's important to be appropriately prepared and have a well set up 4x4 vehicle. This is another area where Australian four wheel drivers can consider themselves very fortunate, given the world's best 4x4 accessories are designed and built here. The Australian 4WD accessories industry is a global success story, with local products sold and respected all over the world. However, whilst the industry is massive these days, it was actually pioneered by quite a small group of individuals back in the 1970s.

Sadly we lost one of these founders in January, with the passing of Fred Black. Fred established Out Of Town 4WD in the late seventies where he combined his passion for four wheel driving with his expertise for fabrication, building high quality 4x4 gear on the NSW central coast. Like many fledgling 4x4 businesses at the time, the operation grew quickly and became highly respected in a number of fields including manufacturing, vehicle repairs, servicing and even driver training. What really propelled the organisation to the global stage, though, was its range of long range fuel tanks. Using his intimate knowledge of Outback travel, 4x4 vehicles and engineering, Fred developed a line of fuel tanks that took advantage of redundant space under vehicles, providing vastly improved range. The Out of Town Longranger tank is distributed by ARB to this day, and we very proudly look forward to continuing to deliver Fred's products to the world for many years to come.

Matthew Frost
National Sales and Marketing Manager

PRADO POWER



Whilst the recent update to the 2.8L turbo diesel Toyota Prado changes little from an aesthetic point of view, there is plenty going on under the hood. Because of this, ARB redesigned the dual battery tray to ensure correct fitment.

Designed around the use of Redarc's BCDC & LFP range of chargers and fitment with ARB dual battery wiring kit, the ARB dual battery tray mounts in the driver's side front corner of the engine bay behind the head light.

The battery tray is constructed from durable steel for maximum strength, coated with a zinc rich primer and finished in a black powder coat.

Part Number 4221040



PLAY IT SAFE

Designed to give protection to vital underbody components including steering, engine sump, transmission and gearbox, ARB under vehicle protection panels are laser cut, press formed and folded to provide superior strength.

The 2012 on Suzuki Jimny under vehicle protection panel has been specifically designed and developed with a single

transfer case panel for the auto model. The panel's recessed mounting bolts are protected and easy to remove for vehicle servicing. Engineered for strength and functionality, all steel components are protected with either powder coat or zinc plating.

Part Number 5424100



SEVENTY'S SUMMIT GEAR



ARB SUMMIT
SIDE RAILS AND
STEPS ARE NOW
AVAILABLE FOR
TOYOTA 70 SERIES
LANDCRUISER
CAB-CHASSIS
MODELS.

ARB has completed design and development of Summit side rails and steps to complement the recently released large tube Deluxe winch bar for Toyota 70 Series LandCruiser.

The large tube Deluxe bar has been developed to suit 2007 on flared model 70 Series LandCruisers, and it features a 60.3mm outer tube and a 47.6mm lower cross tube, with ARB's renowned multi-fold upswept and tapered wing design for optimum strength and approach angle.

For a perfect match, as well as the ultimate strength and durability, the new Summit side rails and steps are also manufactured from ARB's large diameter 60.3mm steel tube. The side rails are specifically designed for flared model single and double cab LandCruisers and attach to the outer tube of the Deluxe

bar via a neat side rail clamping system, with attractive nylon plastic covers moulded with the ARB logo. For those vehicles not requiring the fitment of side rails, the steps are available with a return.

The side rails and steps are coated with a zinc-rich primer for maximum corrosion resistance before being finished in a satin black powder coat, or colour coded to match the vehicle. For maximum grip when stepping into and alighting from the vehicle, the steps are equipped with ridged anodised aluminium step extrusions.

Currently available to suit single and double cab model LandCruisers, Summit side rails and steps are also under development for the 76 Series Wagon and the 78 Series TroopCarrier. Keep an eye on the ARB website and Facebook page for availability.

UNTAMED HILUX

ARB'S RANGE OF OFF ROAD PRODUCTS TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE NEW TOYOTA HILUX, AUSTRALIA'S BEST-SELLING FOUR WHEEL DRIVE, IS CONTINUALLY GROWING.

The new Toyota HiLux has taken the Australian four wheel drive market by storm, heading straight to the top of the sales charts in a segment that the HiLux nameplate has dominated for many years. Access to the new HiLux even before the vehicle was launched locally gave ARB an early opportunity to develop an extensive range of products to both protect and enhance this popular vehicle, whether it's used as a workhorse, a weekender or an outback tourer. The range of products is impressive...



SUMMIT BAR, SIDE RAILS AND STEPS

The Summit bar is a superbly engineered frontal protection system that flawlessly complements the new HiLux's styling, and features ARB's renowned upswept and tapered wing design for optimum strength and maximised approach angle.

The Summit bar's exclusive 60.3mm top tubing and the 30mm edge radius on the wings and centre pan, combined with the wide press formed cover strap and two piece polyethylene buffers, make this the most visually appealing bar on the market. Features include a split pan design with two piece grille for maximum strength and airflow, a new fog light surround design that can be colour coded if desired, optional fog lights and fog light covers, twin Hi-Lift jack points, two antenna mounts, laser cut holes for fitment of a range of compatible driving lights – including ARB Intensity and IPF 808, 800 and 900 series lights – and a press formed winch cover panel for use when no winch is fitted.

With optional winch fitting kits, the Summit bar will accept a wide range of winches including models from manufacturers Warn, Smittybilt and Bushranger. It also features an integrated control box mount that recesses the control box lower in the pan, which combined with the wider split pan, greatly assists with the airflow requirements of the HiLux. A small door in the split

pan grille allows easy access to winch clutch handles.

The Summit bar's centre and side under pan protection panels are manufactured from laser cut and folded 2mm steel for maximum strength, and are finished with a zinc rich primer and a top satin black powder coat for corrosion resistance and appearance. ARB recovery points and Under Vehicle Protection (UVP) were developed at the same time as the Summit bar so, when fitted, all three components work as a complete protection package.

The Summit bar is available for fitment to all wide body HiLux models and can be finished in satin black or colour coded to perfectly match the vehicle.

Offering further protection for the HiLux, ARB has developed a range of Summit side rail and step options suitable for fitment to dual cab, extra cab or single cab models. The side rails and steps utilise the Summit's exclusive 60.3mm steel tube, and an anodised aluminium step extrusion ensures good grip when stepping in and out of the vehicle. The side rails attach to the Summit bar via a neat clamping system that has a reinforced nylon plastic cover with the ARB logo. For vehicles not fitted with a bar, or for customers not requiring side rails, the steps are available with a return.



ARB COMMERCIAL BAR

The new ARB Commercial bar for the wide body HiLux features a strong steel construction with an outer 60.3mm tube (to allow fitment of Summit side rails and steps). It has a 76.1mm centre tube, split pan design for maximum airflow and strength, two antenna mounts, two Hi-Lift jack points, ARB LED indicator and clearance lights, provision for fitment of ARB fog lights, as well as provision for fitment of ARB Intensity LED driving lights and a range of IPF driving lights. The Commercial bar can be fitted to the new HiLux in non-winch or winch applications; it has been designed to accept low mount model electric winches up to 10,000lb capacity from Warn, Bushranger and Smittybilt. A Commercial bar to suit narrow body HiLux models is currently under development and will be available soon.



OME SUSPENSION SYSTEM

OME offers a range of tuned and matched Nitrocharger Sport suspension systems to suit the HiLux, no matter the load carrying requirements, each providing a lift of around 40mm front and rear for increased ground clearance.

When the OME engineers first got their hands on the new HiLux, initial evaluations revealed a very firm ride when the vehicle was unladen. This provided the opportunity to explore suspension tuning for comfort and control in various load scenarios. As a result, the OME team has developed a wider range of strut and spring combinations to suit the new HiLux than was available for the previous model, providing the best possible ride comfort, control and load carrying combination.

There are four coil spring options for the HiLux's front strut, catering for vehicles without accessories, those fitted only with a bar, those with a bar and winch, and those with a bar, winch and additional accessories

such as UVP, recovery points, side rails and dual battery set-ups. In addition, OME offers two strut valving options to suit the different spring selections.

At the rear, OME has developed three leaf spring options for the HiLux: medium loads (0kg to GVM, optimal performance at loads of 0-300kg); constant 300kg (300kg to GVM, optimal performance at loads of 300-600kg); and constant 600kg (600kg to GVM, optimal performance at loads of 600kg plus). There are two rear shock absorber options, both of which have been developed to offer the best possible ride comfort and vehicle control at different payload scenarios.

OME has also developed greasable shackles to suit the revised leaf spring geometry of the new HiLux, as well as a bracket to suit the SR5 model's headlight levelling sensor that takes into account the increase in ride height.

BP-51

For the ultimate in ride comfort and control, the OME engineering team has developed a BP-51 suspension system that bolts on to the new HiLux without any vehicle modification.

BP-51 is a high performance position-sensitive shock absorber with a 51mm bore size and a hard anodised aircraft grade 6061 T6 aluminium body and remote reservoir. It incorporates internal bypass position-sensitive technology and features adjustable compression and rebound damping. The front coil overs also offer adjustable spring preload/ride height (to suit vehicles with or without a range of fitted accessories), while the rear shock absorbers have been tuned in length to account for the change in the new HiLux's suspension geometry, and have been matched to the wide range of OME leaf springs for new HiLux.

Unlike a traditional velocity sensitive shock absorber, in which damping force is determined by the shock speed, BP-51 offers up to 300 per cent more damping in the end zones of shock travel than it does at static ride height, so as the suspension compresses under

load or extends when rebounding, damping performance firms up to lessen the chance of bottoming out or topping out, resulting in a more compliant ride over rough surfaces and improved control.

BP-51 is supplied with a C-spanner, allowing the HiLux driver to independently adjust the compression and rebound damping on the vehicle as conditions dictate, simply by turning the respective dials to one of 10 clearly marked settings. An increase in the setting number increases the stiffness of the shim stack inside the shock absorber body, which restricts bypass oil flow and increases damping throughout the entire stroke.

Four years in development, BP-51 features high quality oversize rubber bushings; a high temperature Viton and Teflon seal pack; high performance, high viscosity index oil; high strength, high fatigue shims; and is supplied with an impact resistant, replaceable shaft guard. It's also re-buildable and re-valveable, and is covered by a three-year/60,000km warranty.





ARB AIR LOCKER

The new HiLux has a longer and diametrically bigger rear differential than its predecessor to handle the vehicle's increased engine performance and greater towing capacity. As a result, ARB engineers have developed a new Air Locker to suit the rear diff of all new HiLux models. The front Air Locker employed in the previous HiLux is suitable for fitment to the new model.

Air Lockers provide 100 per cent traction on demand without affecting on-road driveability or driveline durability. In fact, with more traction, Air Locker equipped vehicles have less reliance on momentum in off road conditions, so there's less likelihood of vehicle damage and environmental impact.

The simple design of the Air Locker employs minimal moving parts, ensuring maximum durability, and has a thoroughly proven and tested design that is in use in more than 100 countries around the world.

As an added benefit, vehicles equipped with Air Lockers are also fitted with an on-board ARB air compressor that can be used to perform other duties such as tyre inflation.

TOURING GEAR

Despite the limited space in the new HiLux's engine bay, ARB's engineering team has successfully developed a dual-battery tray to suit the vehicle. The tray features strong steel construction to ensure ultimate durability in off road driving conditions, and it has been coated with a zinc rich primer and finished in a satin black power coat. It has been designed around fitment of Redarc's BCDC and LFP range of chargers, which work in conjunction with ARB's dual battery wiring kit, and will accept a range of batteries weighing up to 25kg.

For HiLux owners who want to extend the touring range of their vehicles, ARB now offers a choice of Long Ranger long range fuel tanks, which increase fuel capacity from the vehicle's standard 80 litres to either 127 litres or 150 litres. Despite its greater capacity, the 127 litre tank is mounted higher than the OE tank, resulting in improved ramp over angle for better off road ground clearance, while the 150 litre offers a massive 87 per cent increase in fuel capacity. Either tank can be supplied for petrol or diesel models. A 36 litre stainless steel water tank is currently under development and will be available soon.

CANOPIES, DRAWERS AND LINERS

Headlining the range of new accessories to improve the HiLux's load carrying versatility is ARB's hotly anticipated Ascent canopy.

The stylish Ascent canopy has a unique vanishing edge shell design that seamlessly integrates with the tub of the HiLux SR5, making it look like part of the vehicle. An integrated rear spoiler and the exclusive curved and tinted frameless glass provide a great look from all angles.

Features of the Ascent canopy for HiLux SR5 include remote central locking (operated via the vehicle's OE key fob), electronic unlatching of the side windows and rear door, slimline canopy vent to minimise dust ingress, improved sealing to the vehicle tub, clean visual interior with concealed fasteners and wiring, and auto interior LED lighting.

ARB offers a number of roof loading solutions for the Ascent canopy, including steel and alloy trade style racks with 100kg capacity. Alternatively, there is a cross bar solution that sees the bars align in height with a single cross bar on the vehicle cabin, ideal for those who wish to carry long items.

In addition to the Ascent, ARB has developed a Classic canopy that complements the commercial design of the new HiLux SR dual cab ute.

The canopy is available in standard height configuration with either a smooth or textured finish, and can be equipped with a variety of roof load solutions. Options include sliding or lift up windows, a slimline vent to minimise dust ingress, an under-rail ute liner, and flyscreen (for sliding windows).

ARB's Outback Solutions modular roller drawer system can now be fitted to the latest HiLux. A newly designed side floor kit fills in the area between the outer edge of the drawer and the side of the vehicle's tub, while a new floor extension fills the gap between the front of the drawer and the tub. Each floor section is easily removed, providing a flat floor around the drawers when in place, and retaining access to the storage space beneath when removed. The drawers have key lockable latches, UV stable commercial grade carpet and stainless steel runners for smooth drawer and roller floor operation. There are a number of options to tailor the system to best suit user needs.

For HiLux SR drivers who simply want the best possible protection for their vehicle's tub, and who don't have a canopy fitted, ARB offers a tough over-rail ute liner designed to maximise load space. The liner is made from UV stable and impact resistant black polyethylene and features an attractive textured finish. The over-rail design offers protection for the HiLux's tailgate top edge. An under-rail liner is also available for HiLux SR5 models.

Visit arb.com.au to watch a video of the new HiLux in action.



ALLOY RANGE





ARB'S LIGHT AND TOUGH ALLOY BAR IS NOW AVAILABLE TO SUIT THE IMMENSELY POPULAR FORD RANGER PXII.

ARB engineers have developed a new Alloy bar to suit the Ford Ranger PXII that offers the significant weight saving expected of an alloy bull bar, yet retains strength through design, while complementing the vehicle's styling.

"On the bar assembly there's a weight saving of around 55 per cent," says Steve Sampson, ARB Product Manager responsible for fabricated products. Three different alloys and tempers are used in the construction of the ARB Alloy bar, chosen to provide excellent corrosion resistance and high fatigue strength. Thick 4mm alloy is used for the wings and pan while the tubes use 3mm alloy.

The design of the bar features a 30mm radius on the wings and centre pan, a large diameter 60mm outer tube and a 48mm centre cross tube. A split pan design provides maximum strength and airflow to the vehicle's radiator, while the upswept wings maximise vehicle approach angle. There's an attractive two piece grille for the split pan that lends an OE appearance to the design.

While most of the bar assembly is made from alloy, steel is still used where required. "All of the chassis mounts and under panels are shared between [the steel] Summit bar and the Alloy bar," says Steve Sampson. "It still has the steel mounts and the bolt-in

steel winch cradle." As with all ARB bull bars, an airbag compatible mounting system secures the bar to the chassis via high tensile bolts and hardware.

The Ranger Alloy bar is a combination bar, meaning it is suited to non-winch and winch applications. Where no winch is fitted, a recessed aluminium winch cover panel is supplied for a seamless appearance on the top pan, and a knock-out roller fairlead panel is left in place. In winch applications, the Alloy bar's steel winch housing will accommodate Warn, Magnum, Bushranger and Smittybilt low-mount model electric winches up to 10,000lb capacity. There's a door in the left hand side of the split pan grille to allow access to the winch clutch handle.

A number of advanced features have been incorporated into the bar, such as two piece buffers, stylised fog light surrounds, optional fog lights and fog light covers, ARB LED clearance light/turn signals, two aerial mounts and driving light mounts suitable for fitment of a range of compatible driving lights including ARB Intensity and IPF 808, 800 and 900 series lights.

The new Alloy bar for Ford Ranger PXII will fit all models other than Wildtrak, including those equipped with forward collision radar. An Alloy bar for Ranger Wildtrak, which has front parking sensors, is currently under development. Keep an eye on the ARB website and Facebook page for an availability date.



CRUISING TO THE SUMMIT

**WITH THE LAUNCH OF A RESTYLED 200 SERIES FOR 2016, ARB HAS
TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP A SUMMIT BAR TO SUIT THE
LEGENDARY LANDCRUISER WAGON.**

ARB has developed a new Summit bar to suit the restyled Toyota LandCruiser 200 Series, launched late last year. Toyota describes the redesigned 200 Series as giving the LandCruiser a "more modern and aggressive edge" thanks to the introduction of a new grille with hexagonal frame, subtle scooping in the centre of the bonnet, revised bumper and front guards, and new projector-style headlights.

While the ARB engineering team were able to retain the chassis mounts from the pre-facelift model, all other Summit bar components have been specifically redesigned to suit the revised styling of the new 200 Series LandCruiser GX and GXL models.

The new 200 Series Summit bar features durable steel construction for maximum protection, and design elements include ARB's distinctive multi fold upswept and tapered wings with a 30mm outer radius, split pan design for maximum strength and airflow, large diameter 60.3mm tube outer frames and centre cross bar, and 62.6mm press formed cover straps.

Summit bar features include centre and side under-pan protection panels, an attractive grille in the split pan with a hidden door allowing access to a winch clutch handle (when a winch is fitted), durable two-piece buffers incorporating cover strap intersection caps, stylish fog light surrounds for fitment of optional fog lights and clear fog light covers, press formed apertures in each wing to accommodate ARB LED clearance/turn signal lights, Hi-Lift jack points located directly beneath each buffer, two antenna mounts on the centre cross tube, and provision for fitment of a range of driving lights including ARB Intensity LEDs as well as lights from Bushranger and IPF.

The Summit is a combination-style bar, meaning it can be fitted in non-winch and winch applications. If no winch is to be fitted to the vehicle, the Summit is supplied with a recessed 4mm aluminium press formed winch cover panel for a fully integrated appearance. For winch applications, the Summit bar has been designed to suit various models manufactured by Warn, Smittybilt and Bushranger. A unique feature of the Summit bar is its integrated control box mount that recesses the winch control box lower in the pan for a more subtle look, as well as ensuring maximum airflow to the LandCruiser's radiator.

The Summit bar is coated with a zinc-rich primer for corrosion resistance and can be either finished in satin black powder coat or colour coded to match the vehicle. As with all ARB bull bars, the Summit bar has an air bag compatible mounting system that secures to the vehicle's chassis via high tensile mounting bolts, and has been engineered in conjunction with ARB recovery points and UVP (Under Vehicle Protection) to provide a complete protection package.

A separate ARB Summit bar is under development to suit 200 Series LandCruiser VX and Sahara models, as these are equipped with additional features such as parking sensors, radar cruise control and four camera Multi Terrain Monitor depending on vehicle specification.

SAFETY FIRST

Since 1975, ARB has worked tirelessly to design and engineer a plethora of products to protect you and your family from the unexpected accidents that can occur while driving off road. While your family can be kept protected from the elements within your vehicle, it's the dangers when they step out and start exploring on foot, that could cause a range of upsets.

It's these unavoidable surprises of the Australian outback that has prompted ARB to design three first aid kits, tailor made for our 4x4 enthusiasts who love exploring this great land of ours beyond the wheel.

ARB FAMILY FIRST AID KIT

Compact, durable and water resistant, this comprehensive first aid kit with fold-out compartments is filled with critical first aid supplies and instructions, designed to assist you and your family in the event of an emergency. Containing over 42 quality first aid supplies, from an eye wound kit, bandages, antiseptic dressings, to a handy bottle of sunscreen, the ARB Family First Aid Kit is ideal for use when off the beaten track and medical help is some time away.



ARB PERSONAL FIRST AID KIT

Equipped to treat cuts, abrasions, sprains, fractures, minor burns, eye injuries and more, the ARB Personal First Aid Kit is the perfect companion for any off road adventure. This extensive kit with 33 quality first aid supplies will ensure you are prepared for every situation. The fold-out pouches keep contents organised, providing easy access in an emergency.



ARB SNAKE & SPIDER BITE KIT

More than 345,000 Australians are bitten or stung each year, making bites and stings the third most common injury in our country. The ARB Snake and Spider Bite Kit has been specifically designed for the treatment of snake and spider bite injuries. It contains quality materials designed to aid in the event of a bite, as well as an Emergency First Aid booklet and a Snake 'n' Spider information booklet.



Each kit has been cleverly designed to fit snug in the back of your fourby, so whether you're travelling alone, with a mate or have the entire family on board, there is an ARB First Aid Kit to assist in any emergency.

LOAD SOLUTION



**ARB OUTBACK
SOLUTIONS ROLLER
DRAWERS ARE NOW
AVAILABLE TO SUIT
BOTH NISSAN NP300
NAVARA AND THE
MITSUBISHI MQ
TRITON.**

Thanks to the development of new side and extension floors, ARB's versatile Outback Solutions Modular Roller Drawer System can now be fitted to Nissan NP300 Navara and Mitsubishi MQ Triton.

Outback Solutions drawers can be set up in a variety of configurations so you can best tailor the system to suit your requirements, such as two drawers, two drawers with a roller floor for fridge access, or one drawer and a roller floor.

The tough drawers and roller floors feature purpose folded stainless steel runners for smooth operation, while the floor of each drawer is cross folded to ensure maximum support for items placed inside. An anti-roll back system automatically locks the drawers in place at full extension, and key lockable push/pull slam shut latches ensure ease of operation and maximum security.



The side and extension floors are designed specifically for a perfect fit in both the NP300 Navara or MQ Triton. The side floors fill the area between the outer edge of the drawer and the side of the tub, providing a large flat surface on top. Stainless steel locking tabs retain one end of the removable floor section while the other is attached via a push to close latch, giving easy access to the valuable storage space beneath the floors. The extension floors cover the area in front of the drawer module right up to the front of the vehicle's tub. These are also easily removed so the space beneath them can be used to store items such as spare parts, small oil containers, ground sheets or ropes.

Outback Solutions drawers are finished in a durable and UV stable commercial carpet with aluminium side edging, and the modular design allows for fitment to different vehicles in the future by simply swapping the side and extension floors with vehicle specific replacements.

COMFORT & CONTROL

OME HAS DEVELOPED A NEW
SUSPENSION SYSTEM TO SUIT
THE MITSUBISHI MQ TRITON,
OFFERING IMPROVED RIDE
COMFORT AND CONTROL IN A
WIDE RANGE OF DRIVING AND
LOAD CONDITIONS.

Factory suspension systems are far from perfect; vehicle manufacturers develop just one state of suspension tune to suit a wide range of customers with very different driving and load carrying requirements. By contrast, the OME engineering team has developed a wide range of spring and Nitrocharger Sport shock absorber options to suit the different needs of every Triton owner. Due to factory geometry constraints, there was limited opportunity to increase vehicle ride height, so OME engineers paid particular attention to improving the MQ Triton's ride comfort and control.

OME now offers four coil spring options for the front of the MQ Triton to suit different applications: vehicles without a bar; vehicles with a bar only; vehicles with a bar and winch; and vehicles with a bar, winch and additional accessories such as side rails, under vehicle protection, recovery points and a dual battery system. In order to correctly match ride quality to the chosen spring rate, OME also offers two front strut options. The result of this matched system is a ride height increase of 25mm, improved control in both on and off road conditions, and a much more comfortable ride.

The ride height increase at the rear of the MQ Triton has been limited to 20mm, which slightly reduces the excessive rake of the factory suspension set-up. OME engineers have developed a range of three rear springs and an extra leaf to cater to different load carrying requirements: Medium loads (0kg to GVM, optimal performance at loads of 0-300kg); Constant 300kg (300kg to GVM, optimal performance at loads of 300-600kg); and Constant 600kg (600kg to GVM, optimal performance at loads of 600kg plus). Three new tuned and matched Nitrocharger Sport shock absorbers have also been developed to suit the rear of the Triton, including one specifically suited to vehicles that constantly carry very heavy loads in excess of 800kg.

No matter what accessories you have fitted to your MQ Triton, what you carry in the tub or where you drive, OME has a fully matched and integrated suspension set up that offers the best possible ride comfort and control, as well as a handy increase in ride height.



STEP IT UP



Mitsubishi's recently released MQ Triton is the latest vehicle to have an ARB Summit rear step tow bar designed and developed, giving Triton owners a stylish and practical solution for towing and protection.

The Summit rear step tow bar has been designed to offer a number of key design elements including four Hi-Lift jack points, with two located on the lower edge of each wing and two located on the lower edge of the 60.3mm tube.

Press formed wings have been designed to visually blend with the vehicle styling whilst providing considerable strength and protection to the lower edges of the vehicle tub. The Summit rear step tow bar has been designed with three different powder coat finishes, the press formed wings and beaver panel are designed to be colour coded or left in the satin black powder coat finish supplied.

The lower edge of the Summit rear step tow bar is fitted with diffuser panels that are finished in a light grey powder coat, this colour beautifully contrasts with the 60.3mm textured black powder coat

tube. The centre spring loaded lift up panel is a neat and practical solution to hide trailer wiring connection and mount points for optional ARB Trailer Camera kit, ARB air compressor air-line fitting and 50amp Anderson plug.

To complement ARB Summit side rails and steps, the same style silver anodised extruded aluminium section is used on the Summit rear step tow bar and is manufactured with ridges for additional grip.

A 50mm hitch is supplied as standard with the ARB Summit rear step tow bar for the MQ Triton. The tow hitch includes gussets to maintain its 3.1t rating. Tow chain fixture points are located directly below the 50mm hitch receiver.

The impressive styling and clever engineering of the MQ Triton Summit rear step tow bar gives it an aesthetically pleasing factory look whilst maintaining the quality guarantee all ARB products are renowned for.

To see an overview of the Summit rear step tow bar, visit arb.com.au

COLORADO GOES FURTHER



The ARB Frontier long range fuel tank has arrived for the Colorado 7, and we're excited to announce that this 112L tank provides an additional 37 litres of diesel capacity.

Due to the tank being a direct replacement for the OE provided unit, the spare wheel does not require relocation, offering owners greater convenience when travelling long distances.

Formed from a durable crosslink polymer, the tank features a wall thickness of up to 8mm, to offer unrivaled impact resistance. In addition to this, all ARB Frontier fuel tanks are supplied with quality hardware, fixtures and fittings.

In Detail:

- Made from durable and impact resistant crosslink polymer material
- One piece body construction, designed to maximise available space
- Minimal impact on ground clearance
- Easy and fast installation
- No rusting or corrosion of the tank body
- Allows for movement of the tank within the chassis
- Machined pump plate to accept OE fuel module
- Individually pressure tested
- Supplied with new strap mounting kit
- Made in Australia

The ARB Frontier long range tank is available to order now. Contact ARB for pricing.

CLEAR



**ARB MAKES REVERSING SAFE AND EASY
WITH ITS NEW MULTI VIEW CAMERA AND
HIGH RESOLUTION DISPLAY.**

VIEW

MULTI VIEW REVERSING CAMERA

The ARB Multi View Reversing Camera has been designed and engineered to suit the specific needs of four-wheel drivers. With four unique user-selectable views, it allows drivers to choose the angle and field of view that best suits the driving situation.

In addition to a traditional rear view with a helpful parking box, there is a panoramic wide-angle view, split-screen side view and a top-down tow-ball view ideal for the accurate and easy hitching of trailers.

The traditional rear view offers an undistorted view ideally suited to reversing and parking, while the parking box overlay provides an accurate indication of the available space behind the vehicle when reversing to prevent any accidental bumps. This view also offers obvious safety benefits when reversing, as it provides a clear image of objects behind the vehicle, which could include children or pets.

The panoramic setting provides a much wider field of view behind the vehicle allowing the driver to overlook a much wider area when reversing. This view is ideally suited to many off road scenarios, such as when reversing along a track or reversing around blind corners, as it allows the driver to more easily spot obstacles to either side of the track, such as overhanging or fallen tree branches, or rocks and other obstructions.

The side view provides a divided image to both the right and left-hand sides behind the vehicle at the same time. This allows the driver to easily check side clearance when reversing in particularly tight spots, and is again very helpful when reversing along bush tracks.

The top-down tow ball view makes any driver look like a towing expert. It offers an undistorted bird's eye view with a guide box to provide the ultimate perspective when reversing to hitch up a trailer. There is simply no easier way to align a vehicle's tow bar with a trailer's coupling.

The ARB Multi View Reversing Camera has a low lux performance, so it offers a powerful and easy to view image even in low-light situations, and it is compatible with a number of screens including the ARB reverse camera kit mirror monitor, devices that have an RCA input such as the Hema Navigator, and ARB's new 5.6 inch high resolution display screen.

DASH MOUNT SCREEN

ARB's new 5.6 inch high resolution wide screen display provides the ultimate view of the image being generated by your choice of ARB camera, including the new Multi View Reversing Camera.

The large 5.6 inch screen offers high quality vision and is supplied with a self-adhesive pad for easy installation and a sun visor that reduces glare from direct sunlight. There is also provision to attach the screen with screws for additional security where it may be subjected to knocks or used in rough off road driving conditions.

The supplied wiring loom has provision for two camera inputs, so in addition to the primary reverse camera, vision from a second camera can provide an alternate view; ideal for monitoring a vehicle's cargo area, a trailer or even for a forward view. The loom has two trigger wires; one activates the primary camera when reverse gear is engaged, while the other activates the secondary camera input. The screen and camera inputs can also be activated and selected manually, allowing the driver to check vision from either camera at any time.

Screen menu options include adjustment to volume, brightness, contrast, hue and saturation, and a mirror image setting allows the camera image to be reversed if desired.

An optional trailer camera kit is available to suit.



UNDER PRESSURE



TO MEET CUSTOMER DEMAND FOR A SIMPLE, EASY TO OPERATE AND INSTALL TYRE PRESSURE MONITORING SYSTEM (TPMS), ARB HAS PARTNERED WITH A LEADING GLOBAL TPMS MANUFACTURER TO SUPPLY BOTH AN EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL KIT.

Available as either a DIY external sensor kit, or an internal valve replacement kit, both TPMS units feature a small CIG socket mounted display that is compact and easy to read. Showing tyre pressure of all four tyres in real time, the monitor can quickly detect punctures and/or excess temperature, giving both a visual and audible warning to alert the driver of possible tyre failure.

The display utilises the vehicle Cig socket and a unique feature of the display is that it includes a 5V/1A USB port which allows you to charge devices such as mobile phones and GPS units without having to remove the unit from the socket.

DIY EXTERNAL SENSOR KIT

The DIY kit comes with screw on valve cap sensors that are factory paired and labelled to the corresponding tyre meaning the system can be fitted in a matter of minutes. Simply replace your current valve caps with the small sensors and then lock in place with the provided lock nuts and tool.



INTERNAL SENSOR KIT

Designed as a replacement for the original valve stem, internal sensors have the benefit of allowing easy air inflation and deflating without the need to remove the sensor. Internal sensors should be fitted by a tyre fitting professional and the wheel should be balanced after installation.

SENSOR PARTNER

The TPMS Sensor Partner is an optional accessory designed to quickly pair internal sensors to the display when the position of a tyre is changed, ie. when rotating tyres periodically.





DESERT READY

THANKS TO THE PASSION AND COMMITMENT OF A GROUP OF DEDICATED ARB EMPLOYEES, THIS QUINTET OF TIRED FOUR WHEEL DRIVES HAVE BEEN RESCUED, RESTORED AND REVITALISED, TO THE POINT THAT THEY ARE NOW TRULY OFF ROAD ICONS.

TOYOTA 40 SERIES LANDCRUISER

The last time we checked in on the progress of the 40 Series LandCruiser it was in the hands of ARB's former workshop manager, Ian Bailey, who rebuilt the diffs, fitted ARB Air Lockers and rebuilt the gearbox and transfer case. Since then, the Shorty 40 has been equipped with a number of top quality accessories to ensure it's ready to take on Australia's Red Centre.

You might think that it's hard to source accessories for a vehicle as old as the 40 Series LandCruiser, but nothing could be further from the truth. "Everything we've put in the Cruiser you can still get in-store," explains ARB Kilsyth's Branch Manager, Luke Chynoweth, who's been given the job of accessorising this very special Off Road Icon. "We've fitted a full Old Man Emu suspension kit, four new leaves, shocks all round, bushes and U-bolts – which has lifted it up about 50mm. We've also fitted an ARB Deluxe bull bar, a Warn M8274-50 8000lb high-mount winch, a set of AR32 Intensity LEDs, and we've put a Safari snorkel on," he continues. The headlights have also come in for an upgrade with IPF Fatboy H4 globes and a new wiring loom.

Down the back, a Kaymar rear bar not only offers protection but also holds the spare wheel carrier, double jerry can holder and work light, while underneath a Long Ranger 87 litre auxiliary fuel tank more than doubles the standard capacity of the LandCruiser – just as well, as the Toyota 2F 4.2 litre six cylinder petrol engine is not renowned for its outstanding fuel economy.

The small cabin of the short wheelbase 40 Series doesn't provide a lot of cargo space, but the ARB team has made the most of what's on offer, installing a single Outback Solutions roller drawer, and finding space for accessories including an ARB twin air compressor and air tank, power outlets for the fridge, and other electrical components including a Redarc BCDC battery charger, auxiliary battery and solar set-up.

The ARB team certainly hasn't skimped on comfort and convenience features. "We've got two Recaro seats to give it a bit more comfort," says Luke, "and we've added a GME radio, a heap of Redarc gauges to keep an eye on everything, a Sony FM radio, a remote fridge monitor... it's even got an ARB reverse camera, and a camera mounted to the front as well."

While the LandCruiser is in good shape for its age, on closer inspection the paint leaves a lot to be desired. "It's been painted a couple of times... she's a bit rough, laughs Luke, "but we've got someone coming out to vinyl wrap it."

Finishing off the LandCruiser 40 Series are a set of Cooper ST Maxx tyres with Dynamic steel rims.

The oldest vehicle in the Off Road Icons line up, the 40 Series is certainly long in the tooth, but there's no doubt it's now ready for its upcoming Simpson Desert adventure.

To see a video of the finished 40 series, head to icons.arb.com.au









NISSAN GQ PATROL

As with all of the Off Road Icon vehicles, a staggering amount of work has gone in to making this 1991 Nissan GQ Patrol ready to survive Australia's Outback, and in turn transforming this once standard wagon into a very special rig.

Despite the 338,000km on the clock, this 4.2 litre diesel Patrol is in good mechanical condition, but Mark Harvey, ARB Moorebank's Workshop Foreman, says the ARB NSW team have given the GQ a good going over. "There were some old perished hoses and clamps, so we've just replaced anything that's worn," he says. They've also sorted out a minor power steering niggles and have had to whip the rocker cover off to sort out a noise in the top end on light throttle.

As for the body: "It had dings all over it!" Mark says. "It's been to our Preston warehouse and the paint guys have given it a full respray. They fixed all the dints... they haven't done a bare-metal respray, but they've fixed it all up."

The freshened bodywork has been complemented with a new set of ROH Black Track steel rims wearing 33x12.5R15 Cooper STT Pro tyres, which will give the big Patrol plenty of purchase in the red sands of the Simpson Desert. Also aiding traction are ARB Air Lockers (front and rear).

The suspension has been completely upgraded giving the Patrol a handy three inch ride height increase. OME long travel coil springs (front and rear) are complemented with Nitrocharger shock absorbers. An adjustable Panhard rod and trailing arms ensure correct geometry and an OME steering damper is fitted up front.

Installation of a Safari turbo system with intercooler and three inch exhaust has given the Patrol a much needed performance boost. In standard trim the 4.2 litre diesel makes a meagre

85kW of power and 264Nm of torque, but with the Safari turbo kit, output is increased by up to 60 per cent, which equates to around 140kW of power and 430Nm of torque, giving the old Patrol the kind of performance expected of a four wheel drive wagon in the 21st Century. Ensuring the modified engine only breathes clean, dry air, a Safari snorkel has been installed.

Protecting the Patrol's bodywork is an ARB bull bar with side rails and steps, while a Kaymar rear bar features a twin wheel carrier. Of course, the bull bar is home to a pair of ARB Intensity LED driving lights and a Warn winch, while an ARB full length alloy roof rack will be used to stow gear that won't fit inside the cabin, and to hold an ARB awning.

Plenty of work has gone on inside the Patrol as well: a pair of Recaro seats replace the standard pews; a roof console houses a GME UHF radio and an ARB fridge monitor; a Milford cargo barrier keeps heavy items safely away from vehicle occupants; and there's an Outback Solutions drawer system and fridge slide for the 60 litre ARB fridge. Redarc boost, EGT and dual-battery gauges are mounted in the centre console, and powering all of the accessories is a dual-battery set up consisting of an ARB battery tray, Redarc BCDC battery charger and 55Ah Optima Yellow Top battery.

Finally, ensuring this now mighty Off Road Icon will go the distance, a Long Ranger 147-litre replacement fuel tank has been fitted.

The team at ARB NSW has done a fantastic job transforming this tired GQ Patrol into an impressive off road tourer that will no doubt give some much more modern rigs a run for their money.

TOYOTA HILUX



The ARB team in Queensland has just put the finishing touches on the 1994 Toyota HiLux Off Road Icon, and they are justifiably proud of their achievement. This thing looks fantastic!

Starting with a bog-stock 2.8 litre diesel HiLux dual cab, with more than 300,000km on the odo, you'd think there could be plenty of mechanical problems to be addressed, but this was not the case with this well maintained rig.

"We found that the engine was in really good condition when we purchased the vehicle, so all we've had to do is an oil change and service, and upgrade the brake lines and hoses," says Aaron Marshall, Retail Sales Manager at ARB Nundah.

Even when new, the four cylinder oil burner could only muster 60kW of power and 183Nm of torque, so it's been given a much needed boost. "We've put a Safari turbo on it and a two and a half inch straight-through exhaust; combined, these add 30 per cent more power and 40 per cent more torque, while the exhaust contributes to lower exhaust gas temperature and achieves boost earlier in the rev range," says Aaron.

The HiLux has been fitted with an ARB Deluxe winch bull bar up front, side rails, steps and an ARB rear bar, all of which have been colour coded to match the trick-looking flares, which give this '94 Lux a later model SR5 look. The side rails had to be reshaped to fit around the flares but the finished bar work looks fantastic, especially

when equipped with the ARB Intensity AR21 spot/flood beam combination driving lights.

A Smittybilt Gen 2 X20 winch has been mounted to the bull bar. "It's a 10,000lb synthetic rope winch with a wireless remote," explains Aaron. "We had to locate the clutch handle upside down so it wouldn't interfere with the radiator, but it can now be accessed through one of the under-pan vents." The roller fairlead has been fitted with nylon rollers to work in conjunction with the synthetic winch rope.

An OME suspension upgrade gives the HiLux a lift and is tailored to the additional weight the vehicle now carries. "To accommodate the bull bar and winch we've put heavier duty springs in the front" says Aaron. "At the rear we've accounted for about a 200kg load; the rear drawers, dual battery set-up and the canopy. The OME suspension gives us more ground clearance and wheel travel, and it's way more comfortable than the factory suspension."

The increased ride height means there's plenty of room under the guards for the new 32x11.5R15 Cooper Discoverer STT Pro tyres, which are mounted to a set of great looking 15x8 Bathurst Globe Alloy rims. And ensuring the HiLux has all the traction it'll ever need are a pair of ARB Air Lockers, actuated by an ARB CKMA12 high output air compressor.

Securing and protecting cargo from the elements is an ARB high roof canopy. "We bought the canopy secondhand,"

says Aaron. "We rebuilt it at our Brendale warehouse, fitted new windows and we repainted it."

An Outback Solutions drawer system has been fitted in the tub. "On the passenger side we have a roller drawer with a roller floor, which is about 350mm high, so we can put one of our 78 litre fridges on there," explains Aaron. "On the driver's side we have a roller floor... allowing us to put any camping gear or cameras there, so that gear is easily accessible." Whatever won't fit inside the vehicle will be secured to a Rhino Rack Pioneer Platform fitted above the cab of the HiLux.

The only concession to comfort in this HiLux is the fitment of a pair of Recaro seats, while a GME TX3350 UHF has been situated under the dash for vehicle-to-vehicle communications.

As the only ute in the Off Road Icons line up, chances are the HiLux will be called upon to carry much of the gear required for the Simpson Desert crossing, and with its raft of modifications and top quality accessories, it's certainly up to the job.

To see a video of the finished HiLux, head to icons.arb.com.au





JEEP TJ WRANGLER



The North American entry into the ARB Off Road Icons line-up is already an award winner, picking up eighth place at the SEMA Show's Best Jeeps of 2015 category in Las Vegas late last year. But getting the bright red 2004 Jeep TJ Wrangler to SEMA in time for the world's biggest automotive aftermarket show was no easy task...

"In our SEMA buildup we did pretty much everything cosmetically, to the exterior and the interior, to get it all dialled in time for the show," explains Matt Glass, who looks after ARB USA's Marketing and PR, "but we didn't really have any time to do any on-trail shakedown."

A few mechanical issues were sorted out, and the exhaust system was replaced, and then once the show was over, the ARB USA team hit the trails to see how the now-modified Wrangler would perform. "What we did on the trail is just double-check all of our systems and cycle the suspension, with a couple of small trips here, locally in the northwest... and everything worked like it should," says Seattle-based Matt. Not surprising, as the TJ has been equipped with some heavy duty gear, including an upgraded Dana 44 front axle and a Currie Enterprises steering system, which is essentially double the strength of the OE set-up. Also residing beneath the Wrangler's shiny red exterior is a Daystar 30mm body lift

and motor mount lift, an Advanced Adaptors slip yoke eliminator to correct the driveline angle, and a Tom Woods driveshaft. An OME suspension system consisting of four new coil springs and matched Nitrocharger shock absorbers gives the Wrangler an additional "two inch" height increase.

The standard wheels and tyres have been replaced with 33x12.5R15 Mickey Thompson MTZ tyres, mounted to Mickey Thompson Classic III rims. Fitting the bigger rubber beneath the guards was a tight squeeze. "We needed to source some wider flares, because with the bigger tyre size there was some small contact on full compression," explains Matt, but he and the ARB USA team came up with a solution in the form of wider flares that were offered as OE equipment on the Sierra version of the TJ Wrangler, which was sold in North America. As well as resolving the clearance issue, these flares ensure compatibility with Australian road rules while retaining the Wrangler's factory look.

As you'd expect, this Off Road Icon has been extensively equipped with gear from the ARB catalogue. "Starting at the front it has our ARB bull bar and ARB Intensity AR21 lights, Warn winch, ARB Air Locker, Safari snorkel, ARB side rails, we did an ARB rear tyre carrier, ARB Outback Solutions drawer inside..." Matt starts explaining. The TJ Wrangler will also feature an ARB fridge wiring harness to send power to the 35L ARB fridge, an ARB Twin Air compressor and tank, a BesTop Twill Replace-a-top soft-top, Pro Series replacement seats and durable BedRug waterproof carpets.

Matt Glass is understandably proud of the work that the ARB USA team has put into preparing the TJ Wrangler for its upcoming Simpson Desert odyssey, and he's pretty excited that he'll be accompanying the Jeep Down Under. "It's going to be shipped mid year," says Matt, "along with myself, Fred Williams from Petersen's 4-Wheel & Off Road magazine and Chris Collard from Overland Journal."

To see a video of the finished TJ Wrangler, head to icons.arb.com.au

LAND ROVER DEFENDER



The sole Land Rover in the Off Road Icons group is a red 1995 Defender equipped with a 2.5-litre turbo-diesel engine and with 250,000km showing on the odometer. Somewhat surprisingly, the old Defender proved to be mechanically sound, other than a few minor gremlins such as a leaking gearbox seal and minor brake issues. There were, however, a few body issues that had to be sorted out prior to fitting accessories. "Our biggest concern was bodywork," says Aaron Nott, ARB Canning Vale's Retail Manager, tasked with the job of bringing the Defender up to scratch. "Defenders are prone to rust on the firewalls and the A-pillars and whatnot, and we have had to replace the foot wells." As for the aluminium bodywork, there were obviously no rust issues there, although the red paint certainly needed a freshen-up, as did the white roof, which has been given a re-spray. Once that was sorted it was time to start throwing some gear at the Defender. Not long before the accessorising process was due to begin, Aaron Nott left the ARB Canning Vale store and headed to another ARB outlet in Perth, much closer to his home. As a result, the Defender project has gone on hold and there's a bit of a way to go to complete its transformation into an Off Road Icon. Nevertheless, the team now charged with the job of readying the Landy for its upcoming Simpson Desert adventure has

everything in place. Up front this Off Road Icon will sport an ARB Commercial bar, which will house a Warn XDC 9.5 winch running synthetic rope. Lighting the way will be a pair of Intensity LED driving lights and upgraded IPF headlights. An OME suspension system will give the Defender a healthy lift of between 30 and 50mm, as well as much improved ride quality and load carrying capability, and ARB Air Lockers front and rear will ensure there's plenty of traction at the flick of a switch. ARB diff covers will protect the diff housings from big hits, and the Defender will wear a set of Cooper tyres on some newly sourced steel rims, with the exact size and specification still to be confirmed. An ARB Deluxe roof rack will be used to carry any gear that won't fit in the cabin, while a long range fuel tank will ensure the Defender goes the distance. Of course, the Defender will be equipped with a range of electrical goodies such as an ARB Fridge Freezer and a GME Tx4500S UHF radio, and an ARB dual battery system will be fitted with a Redarc BCDC in-vehicle battery charger to keep things running while making sure there's always plenty of cranking power on those cold desert mornings. By the time you read this, the Off Road Icons Defender will be well and truly ready to tackle the Simpson Desert, and with all of its new ARB gear it will undoubtedly look a million bucks crossing those many red sand dunes.





Land of Crosses

CHRIS COLLARD AND HIS FORD
RAPTOR POSSE SETTLE INTO THE
MAÑANA MODE IN THE WILDS OF
MEXICO'S FRONTIER STATE.

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS COLLARD

I LOOKED OVER AT RICH CURRIE,
MY LONG-TIME FRIEND AND CO-
DRIVER, AND NOTED HIS DEATH
GRIP ON THE GRAB HANDLE. THIS
WAS TIERRA DE LAS CRUCES,
LAND OF THE CROSSES, AND WE
NEEDED TO GET THE HELL OFF
THIS ROAD.



I lost count at 173, but we must have passed at least a thousand. Some were simply two boards nailed together and painted white; others were ornate metal sculptures, slowly rusting in the briny coastal air. Near many of the sharper corners, groves of these lonely markers huddled together in the relentless desert sun, fragments of shattered lives strewn across the surrounding landscape. The common denominator was that each cenotaph was in the shape of a cross and bore a name, most of which were scribed by hand. It wasn't difficult to ascertain their purpose, or why they were adorned with faux flowers, car fenders, empty bottles of Tecate, or soiled toy baby dolls. We were traveling north on a thin ribbon of asphalt, the only paved route to bisect the 900-mile peninsula known as Baja: Mexico's frontier state. The road lacked a shoulder and the lanes were scarcely wide enough for two commercial trucks to pass mirror-to-mirror without exchanging paint. Somewhere south of Santa Rita at the apex of a long sweeping curve, a semi, hauling a 40 foot trailer barreled down on us, a good six inches over the solid yellow line that separated our designated domains. I hugged the edge, cringed, and held tight to the steering wheel. I looked over at Rich Currie, my long-time friend and co-driver, and noted his death grip on the grab handle. This was Tierra de las Cruces, Land of the Crosses, and we needed to get the hell off this road.

We had spent the previous week chasing and photographing the NORRA Mexican 1000, a four day vintage car rally through the wilds of Baja's pristine backcountry. Though I usually take my time and avoid Mex 1—camping on sandy beaches and gorging on tacos de pescado at my favorite taco stands—we were hightailing it to Alfonsina's Cantina in Bahía San Luis Gonzaga (Gonzaga Bay) 500 miles to the north to meet friends, and needed to make time. Pulling over for fuel, we dragged a finger across our map to the first dirt alternative.

We pulled off the highway and headed towards Scorpion Bay, the gringo designation for Bahía San Juanico, a popular surf break that dates back to the 1970s. Perched on a rocky outcropping on the end of a 15 mile long beach of white sand is the local cantina. It is an open-air affair and the view, authentic cuisine, and cerveza fria merit any distance required for a side trip. The laidback atmosphere just might entice you to ditch your current life of responsibilities and join the dozens of expat residents who fish, surf, and abuse their livers on a daily basis. Camp this night would be under the stars on a quiet playa halfway to San Ignacio.

ABOVE:
Coco's corner
OPPOSITE PAGE:
Gonzaga Bay



CHECKPOINTS AND GONZAGA BAY

For visits to southern Baja of more than three days you are required to obtain a tourist visa. While I normally do this, it just didn't work out this time. To avoid the military checkpoint north of Guerrero Negro, we slipped around via a super-secret track through the dunes.

A dust trail and four motorcycles appeared at a crest in the road about five miles past the Chapala turnout. Closing in on the bikes I realised it was my crew from Overland Journal. Overland Expo had concluded a few days earlier and nearly the entire team had headed south for a little road therapy. I pulled out a bottle of Don Malaquias—a special añejo I had picked up at my favorite tequila shop in San Jose del Cabo—for a commemorative nip. We parted ways, they continued south and we north.

The whine of a laboring outboard motor could barely be heard over the gale that had rendered my tent a canvas pancake the following morning. We had rendezvoused with friends, the Ford Raptor clan, the night before at Alfonsina's—the Pacifico was cold and we had set camp in calm clear skies. Dusting the previous night's festivities off our gray matter, we waded up our tents and headed for the gypsy camp of an old friend.

I'm not sure if Coco owns the land where his eclectic mix of campers, cacti, tin cans, toilets, and ladies undergarments are planted. I've heard that his '69 Ford pickup simply stopped running one day and he set up camp. Whatever the case, Coco has become a legend in Baja, and his celebrity status has landed him on the pages of magazines the world over—Coco's Corner is even found on the AAA map. When I met him in 1997, his truck—which was still (barely) running—was a wonder of Mexican ingenuity that MacGyver would envy. Over the following two years a group of friends pooled their resources, bought an identical '69 Ford, drove it down, and handed him the keys. He has always reciprocated the favor with warm hospitality and an open-ended invitation to buy beer from his propane powered fridge. His little camp is an oasis in the desert, and another must for travelers south. If (when) you stop, take time to sign his guest book and thumb through the pages; you never know who sat on his picnic bench last. We retraced our previous day's route back to Chapala.



THE LOST COAST AND PESCADORES

A turnoff just south of Chapala marked our access point to what I have always referred to as the Lost Coast: 100 miles of rugged Pacific coastline and one of the peninsula's least populated regions. Volcanic cones rise amongst table-flat mesas. In the lowlands, eons of precipitation and erosion have cut channels to the sea, or to sinks where the accumulation of sand and dust has created moon-like expanses of silt.

Though a snorkel definitely adds a measure of comfort when fording rivers, the sole reason I installed it was for Baja's silt beds. At times the flour-like powder, which can be 6 to 24 inches deep, assumes the consistency of water. It creates bow waves of dust that will literally roll up over your hood and pour through an open window. Without a raised air intake (mine is a Safari Snorkel from ARB) this unusually wicked concoction can clog an air filter and suffocate the engine in a matter of seconds. The funny thing about running silt beds is that you can't just ease your way through it, and you definitely don't want to stop; its aqueous properties can swallow your

rig like mud. In short, you just charge through, hope you pick the right line, and pray you don't get bogged down. Fortunately, the Chapala silt bed was quite tame this year, and we made good time on the 30-mile trek to Punta Blanca, a hidden surf break on the Pacific.

The route led us north by northeast in the shadow of Pico Fernando, which rises to over 6,000 feet, leaving the Pacific behind and entering a world that was most assuredly inspirational fodder for a Dr. Seuss cartoon. The boulder fields near Cataviña are an intrigue to the mind's eye. Cardón cacti, which grow to 60 feet in height and are the tallest in the world, rise amidst a rolling sea of house-sized boulders. The twisted and contorted appendages of boojum, ocotillo, and elephant trees form an eerie undergrowth, and horned lizards play hide-and-seek with rattlesnakes and black racers. As twilight gave way to nightfall, we set camp in the base of a large slab of granite. In the distance, coyotes howled in an offbeat cadence as our campfire cast macabre and ghostly shadows through the thorny forest.

ABOVE:

San Ignacio

OPPOSITE PAGE:

A kiss from
the locals

CATAVIÑA, PETROGLYPHS, AND MAMA ESPINOZA

The Mexican government has a monopoly on fuel, but the Pemex station in Cataviña, one of two on the 225 mile stretch between El Rosario and Guerrero Negro—has been closed for years. When it was open it rarely had fuel. I was in Cataviña in the mid-90s and met a couple that had been waiting for a day and a half for fuel—They offered me 25 bucks for one of my jerry cans (gas was \$1.50 a gallon at the time). Things move a little slower in southern latitudes. It is a mindset referred to as *mañana* mode. “*Mañana mañana*,” is a commonly heard expression that roughly translates to “tomorrow, or maybe the next day.” When the pump runs dry it may be several days before the truck arrives. The number one rule when traveling Baja’s backcountry is that if fuel is available, get it.

We followed the asphalt to El Rosario and the world famous Mama Espinoza’s restaurant. Ana Grosso Peña Espinoza, daughter to a French-Italian father and Pima Indian mother, was born here in 1910. After being sent to school in Calexico during the bandit-ridden decade

of her youth, she returned to El Rosario and married Heraclio Espinoza, the son of a Spanish land grant recipient. While Heraclio managed their cattle ranch, Ana, between bearing 15 children, grew vegetables and flowers, managed the post office, and eventually, in the 1930s, opened a restaurant. Since the beginning of vehicle-based exploration of the peninsula, Mama’s has been a regular stop. The inaugural NORRA Mexican 1000, based a pit stop here in 1967, and notable characters such as James Garner and Steve McQueen have tipped coldies and dined European style at the long wooden tables.

It was rumored that Mama was still alive, and when I queried her daughter, Rolly, she said, “Of course, would you like to meet her?” Rolly led me back to a courtyard adorned with vibrant bougainvillea and past an old hand-crank well where I joined Mama at a small table. She had the charm and spunk of a woman a quarter her age. It was a delightful honor to meet the 104-year-old matriarch of this dusty bend in the road.



SIERRA SAN PEDRO MÁRTIR AND MIKE'S SKY RANCHA

Tracing coastal tracks north through San Quintín and Colonia Vicente Guerrero, we turned east towards the 10,000-foot peak of Picacho del Diablo in the Sierra San Pedro Mártir National Park, which was new and hallowed ground for me. The narrow paved road into the park, which is carved into the side of the mountain, is one of the steepest I've driven. As we rose from sea level to 4,000, 6,000, and 7,000 feet in elevation, the flora transitioned from chaparral and coastal scrub to tall stands of pine, fir, and cypress. Granite peaks towered above grass-covered alpine meadows, and temperatures settled into the sweatshirt range. We were told that the National Astronomical Observatory, located above at 9,280 feet elevation, was closed for the day. A park ranger approached us and, after recognising our disappointment, deliberated for a moment before saying, "Well, maybe you can see it, but we must be fast."

The view was truly astonishing. A mile and a half below, Laguna Diablo and the Sea of Cortez reached east. Looking north we could see Laguna Salada, part of the estuarial delta of the Colorado River (before the

U.S. dammed the river). To the southeast, California condors, one of the world's largest and rarest birds, glided effortlessly on thermals rising off Picacho del Diablo.

The park ranger herded us back down the hill, to avoid questioning we slipped out of the park and boogied down the mountain. Turning off the pavement near Meling Ranch, we veered north and shoehorned the Raptors through boulder-strewn Cañón de Coyotes, part of the Baja 1000 racecourse, toward another iconic overland pit stop: Mike's Sky Ranch.

Perched on a knoll above the crystal-clear waters of San Rafael Creek, the ranch has been a destination for overland travelers, racers, and vagabonds of all genres. Stepping through the entrance of the cantina is a transition into the world of Baja's racing legacy. Stapled to the walls, doors, windowsills, and ceiling are the decals, business cards, t-shirts, and signed dollar bills of thousands of previous wanderers.





ABOVE:
Boulder fields
of Catavina
OPPOSITE
PAGE LEFT:
San Quentin
OPPOSITE
PAGE RIGHT:
Route planning,
Catavina

LAGUNA HANSON AND CAÑÓN GUADALUPE

Though there is a graded dirt road to Laguna Hanson, we decided to get lost in the web of unmarked two-tracks that blanket the area. As the shadows stretched across the Sierra Juárez, we ducked into a grassy meadow and found a hidden camp in a thick grove of firs by an abandoned rancher's cabin. Granite outcroppings framed the scene and a tumbledown split-rail corral stumbled its way toward the meadow.

Circling around the north, we descended from the cool climes of Sierra Juárez into the boilerplate of Laguna Salada and set up camp near the base of Cañón Guadalupe. An oasis in the parched lowlands, Guadalupe is famous for its natural hot springs. Decades ago a family moved into the palm-lined canyon and began to improve the area with campsites. There are now dozens of private hot tubs tucked into natural granite alcoves, some with picture-perfect views of the valley. Unfortunately, the gate was closed and locked, and we were relegated to rolling out our sleeping bags on the radiator-hot sands of the valley.

After morning coffee and a round of selfies with some odiferous, yet very friendly visitors (mules), we set out on foot up the canyon. The two-mile hike to the

springs left us sweating like the rookie pilot in the movie *Airplane*. It was nonetheless spectacular, except for the fact that the hot tubs were dry (they are filled only when in use) and there was no one around. We retreated back to the valley where the mercury was now heading toward the century mark.

It is always a melancholy moment when beginning the journey back home. I'd been south of the border for a little over two weeks and it was time to head for the barn. We'd had the normal travel mishaps—a couple of punctured tyres, a comi-cacti or two in the shin, and a few beers accidentally tipped over into the sand—but the recollections of Baja's stunning backroads, bartering with fishermen for a bag of clams, and the daunting peaks of the Sierra San Pedro Mártir were the moments that would find permanent storage in our cerebral hard drives. In these latitudes it is all about settling into mañana mode, turning off your cell phone and tossing thoughts of work, bills, and obligations in the glove box. The Raptor crew veered east towards Ensenada to go fishing, and Rich and I headed north. We both cast an eye at the first white cross we passed, standing alone on the bleached white laguna. Would we be number 174? Not this day.

ISLAND DREAMING

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE FRASER



The water is two kilometres deep. It's so deep the water is a vivid inky blue. We are searching for the biggest fish in the ocean, the whale shark. We spot a dark shadow in the water. I have my dive gear on already, so I quickly drop over the back of the boat.

As I go to swim out, I feel a sudden pull on my fin. My first thought is that it's jammed between the outboard and the boat. I turn around and to my surprise a three metre shark has hold of it. This day is about to get interesting!

Two weeks earlier the journey was a whole lot more relaxing, beginning with a three hour flight from Perth to the tropical paradise called the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. The Cocos Islands are an Australian Territory and should be classified as a national treasure.

As you begin the descent you get your first glimpse of this island paradise— a group of 27 coral islands that form two atolls.

Only two of the 27 islands are inhabited, leaving a lot of island for you to explore. West Island has most of the island's infrastructure, including the airport. The Cocos Malay population are based on Home Island. Direction Island has only the most basic infrastructure and is a popular day trip—one you will never forget.

Like a scene out of The Castle our host meets us at the airport with a trolley. We load it up with my camera and dive gear and start to walk up the road to our accommodation. It takes all of three minutes. How cool is that? No long taxi queues. No traffic jams, just a short stroll and we are on the water's edge.

This is typical of Cocos, it's as informal as it gets, and the people are super friendly. It's a place where the airport runway doubles as the golf course for most of the week. No one locks their doors and everyone stops to chat to you. In two days everyone knows your name.

I grew up in a country town in the 70's and this takes me back to a time when I could roam without a care in the world. My parents' only concern was that I wasn't terrorising the neighbourhood on my trusty XR75 mini bike.

It takes about ten minutes to settle in, put on our board shorts and head to the beach. Scout Park is at the south end of the 11km West Island so we grab one of the old pushbikes at our accommodation and start pedalling. By the time we reach Scout Park we are ready for a swim. The sea is warm and clear and combined with beautiful white sand and great coral, it's a snorkelling Nirvana.

The next day it's time for a dive. We suit up and head out onto one of the many shallow offshore reefs. It's only about 20 metres deep with perfect visibility and amazing marine life.

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I FEEL A SUDDEN
PULL ON MY FIN... I
TURN AROUND AND
TO MY SURPRISE A
THREE METRE SHARK
HAS HOLD OF IT. THIS
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INTERESTING.

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BELOW:

Steve with a
Robber crab

OPPOSITE TOP:

Christmas Island
Robber crabs

OPPOSITE BOTTOM:

Direction Island







Being underwater is a totally relaxing experience. No matter how much I dive, when I get underwater, time tends to stand still. I think it must be a combination of weightlessness and entering a totally different environment.

After a day in the water, it was time for a romantic walk on the beach with my beautiful wife. After all these years together there is still something great about walking together on a secluded beach at sunset.

The next day we get up early and catch the local ferry to Direction Island (DI to the locals). The ferry only goes to DI twice a week, so we didn't want to miss out. We arrived early in the morning and the ferry was due back at 4pm to pick us up.

DI is my idea of paradise—perfect white sandy beaches, a sheltered bay to swim in and the famous 'rip' at the point. The rip runs hard between DI and pushes you towards the lagoon. It is clearly marked and very safe for an average swimmer. The best way to experience it is to put on a snorkel, mask and a set of fins, and let the rip take you on a marine journey of a lifetime.

THE RIP FOLLOWS THE
EDGE OF A REEF AND
TURTLES, SMALL REEF
SHARKS, AMAZING
CORAL AND THOUSANDS
OF OTHER FISH SPECIES
ABOUND.



ABOVE:
Cocos Island

The rip follows the edge of a reef and turtles, small reef sharks, amazing coral and thousands of other fish species abound. It finally pushes you back into the lagoon, where a gentle swim back to shore lets you do it all over again if you so desire. I went about four times and could get addicted to it. This is by far the best rip I have been caught in.

One of the other highlights of the time at Cocos was a kayak tour with Ashley and Kylie, who run a small local business. They take people out to a few of the uninhabited islands on motorised kayaks. No paddling required!

Ash and Kylie are two of the nicest people you will meet, their knowledge of the islands is incredible and they will give you a personalised experience of some of the remote islands at the Southern end of the archipelago. We had lunch on a secluded beach, swam with turtles and made some great friends. Make sure you put this on your list if you visit Cocos.

After a few days of diving, playing with the giant mantas, meeting Kat (the resident dugong) and generally enjoying life, it was time to pack up and head for Christmas Island.

It's less than an hour's flight and on first approach it's clear that Christmas Island is very different to Cocos. It has a rocky coastline with just a few small sandy beaches, thick vegetation and very hilly.

At the airport our good friends Jono and Kirsty are there to greet us. They will show us some of the hidden treasures of Christmas Island over the next week. The island has often been in the news for all the wrong reasons—detention centres, controversy and the tragic sinking of a boat filled with refugees, but this is far more than those news grabs.

Christmas Island is a unique and important bird sanctuary with some of the most amazing and beautiful birds on the planet, calling Christmas Island home for part of the year. It also plays host to the world's largest red crab migration. Each year millions of red crabs make the tough journey from the inland part of the island to the shore to mate and lay their eggs. A few weeks later, millions of baby red crabs, only about 5mm across begin their march inland, taking about nine days to reach the plateau.



Vulnerable to predators and human impact—whale sharks, fish and manta rays eat the larvae and cars squish the crabs on roads – making it a tough gig for a crab to survive. In the height of the migration, some roads on the island will be closed to reduce the squish-factor from cars.

The first day we headed into the rainforest and experienced a couple of local waterfalls and met some huge robber crabs. Then it's time for an afternoon of caving.

I would only recommend caving for the brave and fit. If heights or confined spaces bother you then give it a miss. We climb on makeshift ladders and ropes 100 metres straight down in darkness. The whole time you descend into the damp cave, you feel the rush of wind created by the ocean's waves as they surge. It takes a good hour or so to navigate the cave to its end point where it meets an underwater cavern that leads to the ocean. Using our headlights we illuminate the cave so I can get some shots. The colours are magical and the atmosphere is exhilarating. Have I said how much I love my work?

Jono and Kirsty love the water and spend a large portion of their time in, and under it. Photographing, fishing and

exploring the incredible marine diversity of the island is more than a hobby, it's their life.

Most days we would head out on their boat in search of all the big marine creatures (the bigger the better I say!). We have a couple of days swimming with the largest pod of spinner dolphins I have ever encountered—at least one hundred of them at one time. I didn't know which direction to point the camera.

The following day we spot a giant manta ray. It gets so close I can't fit it in my wide-angle lens. It's wingspan spread over four-metres. My heart beat faster as the majestic creature swam past me.

Dolly Beach is really small but a beautiful spot about halfway around the 70 kilometre island. We arrive mid-afternoon in the boat, drop anchor a couple of hundred metres off shore and swim in. You just need to navigate the surge of the waves through a narrow passage to arrive on this remote tropical paradise, just long enough for a refreshing swim. Then it's time to head back to the boat and make our way home. That's when we spot the dark shadow.

After two weeks on Cocos and Christmas Islands I'm in the water on my last dive and I'm face-to-face with

ABOVE:

Dolly Beach

OPPOSITE

CLOCKWISE

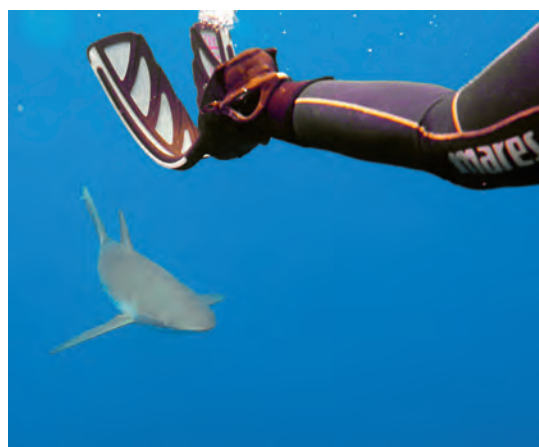
FROM TOP:

Giant Manta, My
diving buddies,
Daniela Roux Cave

a three metre shark that has hold of my fin. I tap him on the nose with my camera (OK maybe it was slightly harder than a tap!). He lets go and we are now looking at each other. I imagine he is wondering what on earth I am doing in his back yard. He looks reasonably friendly and not too stressed by my presence, so I decide to head out towards the shadow. (Note: this is not my first time swimming with sharks, so if you are anxious in the water I wouldn't recommend following dark shadows.)

My new dive buddy keeps his eye on me and circles for the next fifteen minutes. Finally, I catch up with the dark object and it is a perfect whale shark. The gentle giant of the ocean swims right up to me, gives me a once-over glance and gracefully goes on his way. What an encounter!

I head back towards the boat and notice that my friendly shark now has a couple of mates who have also shown up to check me out, so it's probably time to call it a day and mark the end of an incredible two week adventure. This was a ten out of ten experience and one I aim to repeat in the next couple of years.



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WE HAVE A COUPLE
OF DAYS SWIMMING
WITH THE LARGEST
POD OF SPINNER
DOLPHINS I HAVE EVER
ENCOUNTERED.
—



THE MADIGAN LINE PART II

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY CARLISLE ROGERS

IT IS EASY TO REALISE THAT WHATEVER SPECIAL NESTS WE MAKE —
LEAVES AND MOSS LIKE THE MARMOTS AND THE BIRDS, OR TENTS
OR PILED STONE — WE ALL DWELL IN A HOUSE OF ONE ROOM — THE
WORLD WITH THE FIRMAMENT FOR ITS ROOF — AND ARE SAILING THE
CELESTIAL SPACES WITHOUT LEAVING TRACKS.

— JOHN MUIR





The monotony of the desert hits me hard. A dune, a valley, a dune, a valley. Until you reach Eyre Creek, nothing much changes. Here, Coolibah trees sprout incongruously against the red dunes, and the sand is a pale gray colour, washed down the creek bed and not yet weathered iron red.

This part of the Simpson is the 'classic' desert of the mind. Red dunes after red dunes. The roar of the V8 working under load, climbing the dune, the inhalation sound of the intercooler sucking air through the snorkel next to the driver's window, then the engine-braking groan going down the back of the dune and the upshift through the flat, corrugated valley...repeat ad infinitum.

Except for the old rusty sign marking Big Red for east-bound travellers, there are no waypoints, no breaks in the desert's homogeneity, save the greens and yellows of the spinifex bushes, growing in varied colours between and up the sides of the dunes. Here the dune crests are fairly tame, if cut out. They are rounded from vehicle traffic, but essentially safe.





A rhythm sets in, the LandCruiser bobbing up and down against and over the landscape like a cardiograph. Music hums out of the speakers and the horizon dips and sways. It is the most ocean-like experience I think you can have in a car – the rising waves and coral greens of the spinifex all converging into an inverted submarine world. The colours are all wrong, but the texture and the rhythm are the same. Wind and tides tend to have the same effect on sand.

As the track nears Lake Poeppel, the valleys become more gray and I can smell the clay before I see it. A vast claypan, this area can become impassable after rain, but in the winter the most rain I've ever seen in the Simpson was just a few stray drops from wispy clouds that barely covered the stars.

Poeppel Corner marks the tricorn of Queensland, Northern Territory and South Australia. From here the track splits. A small metal sign marks the beginning of the Hay River Track. Turn left and I could swing past the boundary marker and onto the French Line to continue straight west.

I turn right up the Hay River Track toward Camp 16 of Madigan's journey across the northern Simpson, and everything changes.

What looks like a straight run between the dunes becomes a winding, twisted path north. I'm losing time, and the desert does not abide schedules. One can continue north on the Hay River Track all the way to the Plenty Highway, an epic trip unto itself.

Before dusk, I rolled into Camp 16. A huge blazed eucalypt stands in the wash of a dune bearing a faint blaze from Madigan's expedition, a small chain barrier and a litany of metal plaques commemorating various 4WD club expeditions over the last 40 years or so.

A visitor book is sealed in a metal box with stories and signatures from the road: name, vehicle, itinerary. I'm

surprised to see just how many vehicles are actually doing the Madigan Line these days. Where thirty vehicles annually would have been the average five years ago, I counted at least that many in the previous month. The Madigan Line was opening up, at last. Requiring much more fuel and supplies and self-sufficiency than the other routes across the desert, it was the new frontier, the hard way.

Which explains why I was going this way. There wasn't much history in the track itself. Sometimes a small marker where Madigan's expedition camped, sometimes nothing, sometimes another visitor book or an old fruit jar stuffed with business cards.

Does anyone ever collect them? Is there a register somewhere they hope archeologists will find, an annotated list of business cards stuffed into the jar at Camp 19?

The condition of the jars and their contents often suggested otherwise. But it brings to light one of the reasons that people cross the desert in the first place: to say they did.

I have nothing against this – I'm probably half-guilty of it myself. And yet, there is something sordid in using this vast, sparse ecosystem, this remnant of a mountain range that was worn down so thin it could be blown into lateral dunes extending 100km north and south of where I'm standing on the peak, parallel lines that recede endlessly, for nothing more than an ego trip.

I feel like you can't go into the desert with a full ego – the fall will be all that much harder as it is stripped away.

The desert wind, the night sky, the endless heat, the dreary repetitiousness of reds and greens, of the organic fractal patterns that the spinifex has scrawled into the ripples of sand all combine to peel away layers, of skin, of expectation, of the psyche.

Out here the voice of god rings in my ears like it does no other place. In the quietness there is a throbbing, in the stillness a ringing. The less there seems to be, the more there is. If less is more, is nothing everything?

Dawn rises in a cacophony of strange birdsong. The ground is covered in grasshoppers so delicately coloured they blend in perfectly with the sand, small yellow dots matching the yellow quartzite pebbles that sit on the surface of the red sand like a billion billiard balls on a red cloth table.

Out here the geckos have similar patterns, designed to blend into the ground, or into the broken shapes of spinifex bushes. Their ability to adhere to just about any surface has been the subject of much debate for almost two centuries. Surprisingly, it wasn't until 2000 that scientists discovered the secret: Van der Waals

IT IS ONE OF THE FEW 'TRACKLESS' ADVENTURES LEFT TO MODERN
MAN, AND IT PROMISED, OR THREATENED A LONGER, HARDER JOURNEY
THROUGH THE SIMPSON.



force. By exploiting this weak intermolecular force, the humble gecko can walk inverted on glass surfaces. What I'm wondering is, why is a creature so well adapted to climbing so prevalent in the desert, where this superpower seems redundant? Every morning it seems there is a gecko under my swag taking shelter from the rising heat of the sun.

From camp 15 the track cuts west through the dunes again. I'm a little disappointed, and also immensely relieved, that there is a track through the dunes. Sometimes defined, it is often faint and blown over and I have to pick my own line over the dunes. It is this I came looking for – the real challenge of navigating through the desert by wits, rather than ruts.

Even where there are tracks between the dunes, the ridge tops are all virgin, with high winds in the preceding weeks washing away all evidence of traffic. This creates several problems. The dune crossings are not always perpendicular to the dunes, and the direction the track goes after the crossing varies wildly. Often it is at the point where the front wheels are a metre or more off the ground when this decision must be made, which creates a stressful environment in the LandCruiser.

Somewhere between camps 12 and 11 (Madigan forged his path from west to east, so I'm doing it backwards) I nearly roll the 79 Series. The back tyres have been a little too soft, and all the weight in the canopy means the front end always wants to lift up more than it should. Coupled with the freshly blown dune ridges, every dune is now a sweaty-palmed charge:

enough right foot at the base to keep momentum going up, but not so much that the vehicle catches air at the top. The perfect approach, the only way over, is to carry enough speed that the front wheels spin freely in the air as the back axle just rolls over the crest.

On one dune, though, the line is crooked, the face of the dune is blown out and there is only one way up, a straight line up the face with a diagonal crest. The left front wheel hits the metre-high line of vertical sand first, rotating the LandCruiser into the beginnings of a perfect barrel roll. Another thirty kilometres an hour and I might have been able to make it all the way around.

It seems to take years. Ghost leans precipitously, then leans some more. The weight of the cabin feels wrong. My stomach feels wrong. Stuff is rolling across the floor in slow motion. Then the wheels touch again. I made it.

My hands are shaking for a while, I made it, but that was too close. About half an hour later, I miss a crest and I'm rolling back down to try it again. The wheels are slipping and my right front tyre is over a metre in the air, just hanging there. If I go forward, I get bogged. If I go backwards, the car rolls.

This is an interesting predicament and a good lesson in using the right recovery gear for every situation.

The 100 Series has been humming along. Automatic transmissions and sand dunes go together like socks and shoes. Luckily this time it is in front of me. I wind the winch out and slowly pull the 79 Series back onto its feet and keep going. A snatch strap or the MaxTrax would have potentially made the lean worse, so I went with the safest way out.

That night around the campfire I felt like I had survived something. I felt like the desert had tested me and I had passed. Perhaps tomorrow she would let me in a little deeper, into the desert, into myself.

Part 3 of Carlisle's Madigan Line journey will continue in Issue 46

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MY HANDS ARE
SHAKING FOR A
WHILE, I MADE IT,
BUT THAT WAS TOO
CLOSE
—



MORETON ISLAND





ESCAPE THE FAKE

It's the 'getting there' in the 'getting away' where so many holidays go wrong. By the time you brave the crowds and the traffic, you're wound more tightly than a cat in a bathtub. That's where Moreton Island comes into its own. Often neglected because it's right in our own backyard, Moreton Island is quietly emerging as Brissie's local island and, at a mere 20 minutes' drive from Brisbane CBD, you can be on the boat and kicking back with a beer while some of those other 'adventurers' are still stuck in queues at roadside stops with hours of "are we there yet" ahead of them.

MADE JUST FOR 4WD'S

Moreton doesn't just have a 4WD track, it's a whole 4WD island playground! With just over 200km of 4WD accessible tracks and beaches, there is plenty to explore. So whether you're after the thrill of seemingly endless, smooth open beach horizons, or you prefer the challenge of tracking overland and inland, you can test your 4WD skills as little or as much as you like.

While Moreton is perhaps not the most challenging 4WD location at all times, it definitely can trip up the most experienced of sand drivers and it pays to come prepared. Conditions change regularly and sand can get very soft and boggy at times – we definitely recommend having the basic recovery gear on hand and the knowledge to use it safely. Always run your tyres around 18 – 20 psi – there are air hoses on the MICAT ferry to re-inflate them on the return journey to Brisbane. If all else fails, there are plenty of friendly faces to lend a hand if you get in trouble.

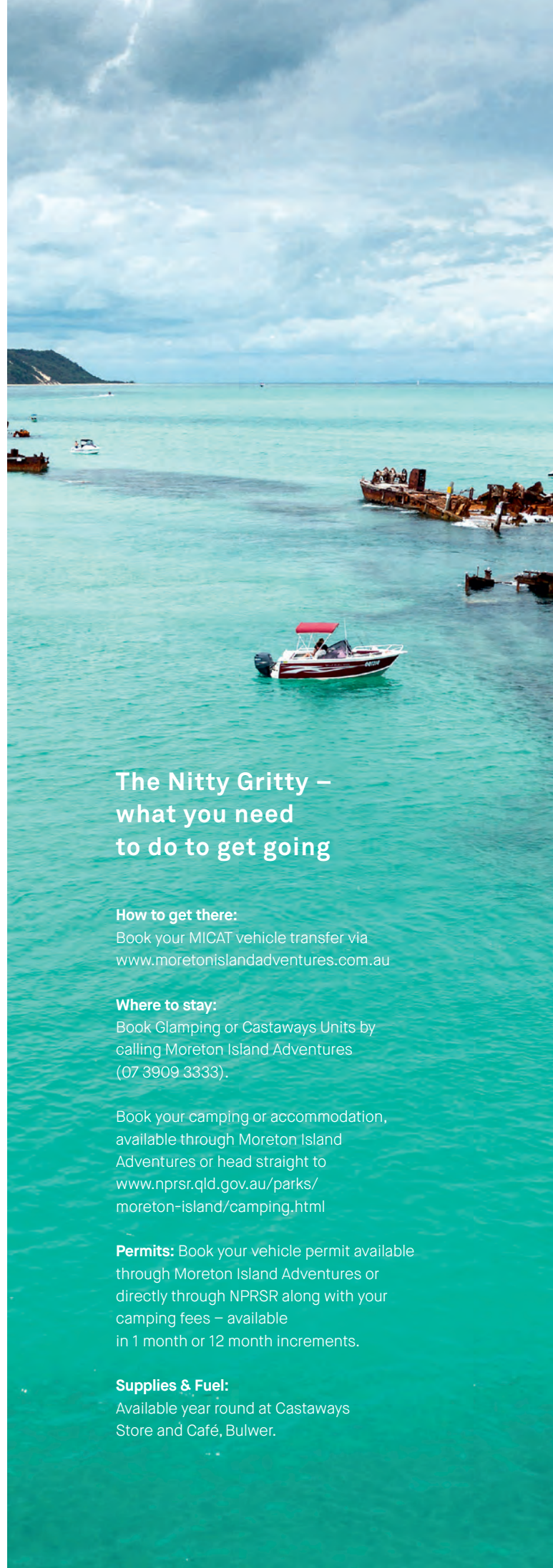


MILLION DOLLAR VIEWS FOR PEANUTS

Where else can you get an ocean view minus the Gold Coast high-rises and tourist rubbish these days on a middle class income? Sure you could fly to Bali, but you'd have to get the kids immunised for botulism and rabies and keep them away from those mangy dogs – or you could go camping at Moreton! At only \$5.95 per person per night, and with a view of crystal clear water right from your tent flap, you'd be mad not to try it at least once. Depending on what you're after, there are campsites ranging from beach camping (BYO toilet) to sites with eco toilets and cold showers and the best place to do your research is to head to the NPRSR website and check the maps – or give Moreton Island Adventures Experts a call.

Alternately, if you love the idea of getting out into the great outdoors but can't stand the creepy crawlies, sandy bed or cold showers, Glamping is probably the answer! Moreton Island Adventures has recently launched their Glamping at Castaways in Bulwer. With 9 furnished tents complete with queen sized beds, private ensuites and veranda overlooking the giant Melaleuca trees, it is a fantastic way to experience Moreton without sacrificing a little bit of luxury. Glamping is also a fantastic option if you're just looking for a short break, or if you have a family and can't be bothered lugging the required 'kitchen sink' that seems to be a requirement of family camping.

Of course Castaways isn't just for the Glampers, if you get fed up of dad's burnt sausages or just want to treat the kids to some chips, drop by this casual restaurant for great breakfasts, fish and chips, burgers and pizza all under a thatched roof – shoes optional!



The Nitty Gritty – what you need to do to get going

How to get there:

Book your MICAT vehicle transfer via www.moretonislandadventures.com.au

Where to stay:

Book Glamping or Castaways Units by calling Moreton Island Adventures (07 3909 3333).

Book your camping or accommodation, available through Moreton Island Adventures or head straight to www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/parks/moreton-island/camping.html

Permits: Book your vehicle permit available through Moreton Island Adventures or directly through NPRSR along with your camping fees – available in 1 month or 12 month increments.

Supplies & Fuel:

Available year round at Castaways Store and Café, Bulwer.



Along with Moreton's unique ecosystem of desert, lakes and wildlife, what really gets people talking is

- Reaching speeds of up to 35km/hr with Brisbane's closest sandboarding
- Visiting historical WW2 bunkers at Rous Battery and Cowan Battery
- Comparing your catch to some of the records set in the Moreton Island Fishing Classic
- Visiting Queensland's oldest (and prettiest) lighthouse at Cape Moreton
- Seeing countless whales pass The Cape (minus the seasickness) July to October
- Watching the sunset (with a drink or two) set over the water just steps from your tent
- Climbing the world's tallest coastal sand dune and drinking in the 360 degree views
- Soaking in the tea tree laden waters of Blue Lagoon
- Unplugging the kids (and yourself) and getting them back to what holidays are really about

While we can't responsibly encourage you and your mates to break drinking records, we can encourage you to enjoy some of Australia's best nature based activities right here in Brisbane's back yard.

WORTH TALKING ABOUT

So what's the big deal about Moreton, isn't it just like Straddie or Fraser? Well it is an awesome East Coast Island, but it's free of Fraser's dingos and Straddie's roads and mines – so it's actually quite unique to this part of Australia. Moreton also has its very own set of shipwrecks which are set in crystal clear waters and teeming with countless varieties of fish. We would go as far as to say it's Brisbane's answer to the Barrier Reef minus the crowds and nonsense that goes along with major tourist destinations.

So if you'd like to answer that eternal holiday question – "are we there yet?" with a resounding YES, then why not explore your own backyard this year and give Moreton Island a go – we're sure you won't be disappointed with Brisbane's secret slice of paradise. Head to www.moretonislandadventures.com.au for more information on how to get there and everything else you need to know, or call one of the Moreton Island Adventures Experts if you prefer to talk to a real (yes REAL) person.



HAY RIVER REVISITED

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER FARMILO

**EVER WANTED TO TACKLE THE HAY RIVER TRACK? PETER FARMILO
FROM ARB HQ RECOUNTS HIS SIX DAY JOURNEY AND SECOND ROUND AT
EXPLORING THIS BEAUTIFUL OUTBACK REGION.**



We began our journey in Birdsville, after two and a half days travel from Kilsyth, stopping at Burra and Coopers Creek. We refuelled up in preparation for our trip into the Simpson Desert and north along the Hay River Track. We last did this trip back in September and were interested in the differences we would encounter as we were attempting the same journey in May.

Our group consisted of three vehicles, Dave and Ruth Ferguson's Toyota 2003 Troopy, Baz Ingrams 2012 LandCruiser 79 Series and my 2010 79 Series with my wife, Helen, riding shotgun.

DAY 1

The trip out from Birdsville towards Poeppel Corner was uneventful once we got the tyre pressures correct. I tend to gradually hone in on the correct pressure which can make the first few dunes a bit of a handful. The "rocking horse effect", rocking backwards and forwards in the car between dunes gets a bit tiring after a while. The dunes themselves are great fun though.

Once we turned off the QAA line and headed north along the Hay River Track the adventure really began. We skirted a salt lake until we got into the dunes, the way in was interspersed with areas of twisting and winding track. We set up at the campsite near Beachcomber and ended the day with a roaring camp fire.

DAY 2

We were up early for a hearty breakfast and a few photos of the camp at sun rise. Our last trip had taught us well and we came prepared to ensure that the scrub ahead caused as little damage to our cars as possible.

Australian Foams and Tapes, a great ARB supplier, had provided us with a 300mm wide contact that we applied to the sides of each vehicle and the other areas that we thought would be exposed to scratching. This took a couple of hours but the effort was rewarded with very few marks to be found when we unwrapped the vehicles at Batton Hill bush camp.

Initially, it was merely a gentle swish of the scrub across the sides of the vehicles, the beginning of the track was mostly twisting and turning across the outer reaches of the Hay River. A couple of the dunes we came across would be extremely difficult if taking this trip from north to south, however, our direction meant sliding down the face of these dunes which proved to be great fun.

Baz, who had never really driven in this type of country, soon got the hang of it. So much so, that we presented him with a blown up photo of one of his better efforts when we all got home.

We came across three cars travelling south to Birdsville. They told us that they had spent an hour getting their vehicles up one dune. We had driven down some pretty serious dunes thus far and felt that they might have some more trouble ahead of them.

We stopped at Madigan's Camp 15, took some photos and searched the visitor's book looking for our entry made on the previous trip.

It was surprising to see that more than twenty pages of entries had been made in the subsequent two and a half years since our last visit.

DAY 3

Lying in bed waiting for the sun to rise, I contemplated how the 79 Series had been travelling and decided to make some adjustment to my recently installed BP-51 shock absorbers.

Prior to leaving, the engineers had tweaked the settings, rebound and compression, to take into account the weight of the loaded vehicle and the roads we would mostly be driving on. The BP-51's performed fantastic on the Birdsville Track. Driving over crests and through dips you always felt that you had great contact with the road surface. Even cornering on the corrugations, the vehicle remained solid on the road and did not drift.

We all deflated our tyres to give a better ride and protect them from the large sharp rocks that are always present on the road. After hearing from the others in our group about how severe the vibration from the corrugations were, I was convinced that these BP-51's are as good as all the hype around the office.

I decided that morning to increase the compression by two increments on all four shocks. The reasoning behind this was that on the previous days I had felt a rocking motion that tended to speed up and get larger the further you went. Then you would slow down until it stopped and then proceed on. By increasing the compression settings, the rocking still happened but the motion was a lot slower and not as noticeable. This meant that we could travel in more comfort and at a more sustained speed than previously.

I am not a very mechanically minded person and generally like to leave things as they are. Being able to use the tool provided to adjust these settings in a very short time made for a much more enjoyable and comfortable trip through the twisting river bed track.

As the river bed became more defined, the trees seemed to loom larger and the scrub enclosed tightly on the track, these would do the real damage to the vehicle duco. The screeching from these branches as they scraped along the side of the vehicle becomes very disconcerting after a while. Relief finally came when we reached Camp 16, ending the day with another impressive campfire.



DAY 4

We set off the next morning for another day of twisting track around the scrub.

Helen and Dave managed to capture some great photos of the red sand drifts cascading down onto the track next to us. The red sand, green spinifex and clear blue sky made for some really special photographic memories. There were some pretty serious competition as to who had "got the money shot" at the end of each day. It made for very entertaining campfire reminiscing.

Our speed over the past three days was about 20 to 30 kilometres per hour. Most days we were only travelling a bit over 100 kilometres so we only had about four to five hours driving. Constantly turning the steering wheel to avoid the scrub and follow the track meant that good posture and plenty of breaks to stop and stretch were required.

Today the lead vehicle seemed to be following fresh camel tracks for quite some distance which heightened our expectation that we might see some camels. They would follow the track and just when we thought that we had lost them, the tracks suddenly reappeared again.

Ruth spotted some long awaited camels off in the distance. There was a frenzy of turning around vehicles, getting cameras, binoculars and charging off over sand dunes chasing the fast disappearing animals. This was as close as we would get on this trip to seeing these fine desert animals.

That night we setup camp at the turn off to Lake Caroline on the banks of the Hay River. Before dusk we drove out to Lake Caroline to capture some magic sunset photographs.

DAY 5

As we sat around the camp fire the night before, Helen and I were recounting all the bird life we had found at a small bore called Dingo's Well on our previous trip. Travelling with three people who loved spotting and identifying birds, we had some eager bird watchers ready and rearing to go first thing in the morning.

We were very disappointed when we found the well had long been dry and was just another part of the arid landscape that surrounds it. It brings home the point that a small amount of water can make a massive difference to the environment's entire ecosystem. Take that water away and the landscape changes dramatically.

Next on our itinerary was the Tropic of Capricorn crossing, the land was flattening out and began to look like cattle station country. The scrub had now receded away from the track and (thankfully) the scratching had stopped.

We came across a bemused group of seven vehicles and camper trailers heading south along the track. They had left Batton Hill that morning and were very interested to get our opinion of the track we had just travelled and any difficulties they might encounter. They seemed well prepared and I didn't think they would have too much trouble.

We noted that they didn't have the vehicle protection contact that we had used and there would have definitely been damage to their paintwork. We didn't say anything, not wanting to spoil the fun, as like most eager 4WDers, they were more excited about the journey ahead than worrying about the consequences of taking it.

We arrived at Batton Hill to the camp of the traditional owners and paid to stay for the night. The "donkey" heated water in the shower was a welcome relief as we had only showered once since leaving Birdsville.

On arrival we had organised to go on a drive to Goyders Pillar. This involved being guided by the traditional owners through a cattle station on their lands which took about thirty minutes to get to. The colours on the rocks and escarpment, reflected from the gorgeous light of sunset made for some beautiful photos.

We drove back in fading light to prepare our dinner and settle in for a relaxing night in front of the fire pit provided.

DAY 6

We packed up to travel to Jervois and re fuel for the first time since leaving Birdsville. The trip to Jervois was very straight forward, simply following the fence line until we reached the Plenty Highway.

During our previous trip, I was driving a 2007 Mitsubishi Triton. On that holiday, I managed to achieve a fuel usage of 103.5 litres for the 695 kilometres travelled at an average of 14.9 l/100 kilometres. For this trip, driving a V8, I was able to complete the 654 kilometres using 104 litres at an average of 15.9 l/100 kilometres.

From Jervois we headed east along the Plenty Highway towards Tobermorey and then north for our trip to the Gulf of Capentaria.

Looking back, we once again have had another fantastic trip along the Hay River. It can be slow going in places, however, this allows for plenty of time to take in the natural beauty of the dunes and trees that you travel through.

I would recommend it to any traveller wanting to do a trip that is a little different and little more isolated than the Simpson Desert crossing.



TESTING THE WATERS

ARB HQ'S RESIDENT COMMUNICATIONS & PR COORDINATOR, AND FORMER LIFEGUARD, LISA INGRAM, GIVES US HER TIPS ON **HOW TO STAY SAFE AT THE BEACH.**

My skin stings as the scorching sun warms in the early afternoon. The cool wind licks the sting and whisks my hair off my damp neck, sending a friendly shiver down my spine. I close my eyes as a smile gently grows, while I listen to my hair dance with the wind behind me. My toes relax into the sand and welcome the cool touch of the ocean's kiss. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else in the world right now.

"HELP!!" My trance breaks. My eyes dart open. I see in the distance an arm being swallowed. I dive in.

My heart rate quickens and I start fighting against the ocean, punching each wave back and kicking forward into the unknown. I reach the small boy whose eyes see fear and me as a beacon of strength. I am not, and he pushes me under. Shocked, I clamp his arm and pull him towards me as a sign of dominance. My heart pumps adrenaline through my veins and I find strength I never knew I had. I start kicking forward against the unforgiving current. It feels pointless, like we are two magnetic forces colliding.

My breathing soon becomes ragged and my muscles are burning. I want it all to end. What seems like hours go past, and then my toes finally kick off the sand. That one touch sends my heart into a flurry. My breathing quickens – we've made it.

Most however, do not make it. Although we are a nation of ocean-lovers, an alarming number of Australians are not surf smart, and Australians who head off road in search of the perfect beach, normally find themselves in areas where help is a far cry away.

Whether you spend a week camping on the beach, or a day beach driving, make sure you prepare accordingly. The following is a list of vital survival tips for when you and your family next dive into the water.

Check the wind conditions

Wind is generated by air moving from areas of high pressure to areas of low pressure. Low pressure systems is what you need to steer clear from when planning your beach trip. Big swells are commonly generated around intense storms of low pressure, resulting in dangerous surf conditions and heavy rainfall. Before your next beach trip, check the wind conditions through the Bureau of Meteorology website: **bom.gov.au**.

Check for rips

Rips are also known as 'rivers of the sea' and have that name for a reason. They flow from the shoreline to beyond the breakers, returning water brought in by the waves. This motion makes these currents of water strong and concentrated, easily able to pick up anything in its path and take them out kilometers from the shore. With an average of 21 deaths per year caused by rips, it is imperative to understand how to spot them and survive them.



Signs of a rip

- Deeper, darker water
- Fewer breaking waves and calmer water
- Sometimes sandy-coloured water
- Water with different surface texture
- Look for persistent gaps between the breaking waves: that's the rip current

Rip survival

- For assistance, stay calm, float and raise an arm to attract attention
- As you float, the rip may flow in a circular pattern and return you to an adjacent sandbar
- If you're a strong swimmer, you may escape by swimming parallel to the beach, towards the breaking waves
- You should regularly assess your situation. If your response is ineffective, you may need to adopt an alternative, such as floating and attracting attention.

Know your first aid:

There are many first aid courses you can take to ensure you are prepared for when a friend is in peril. Surf Life Saving Australia provides many courses for beach safety, surf rescue and first aid, visit sls.com.au to find a course that suits you.

Beach driving tips:

- For the best traction, drive just below the high tide mark
- Check out local council websites for information on which beaches permit the use of vehicles
- Lighten your load, the less you have in or on your vehicle, the less likely it'll get bogged
- Lower your tyre pressure to 25psi, and go down accordingly. The lower the pressure, the longer your footprint which gives you better traction on slippery surfaces
- Always have an air compressor and tyre deflator handy
- Don't be afraid to go down as low as 14 or 12psi on really soft sand, if you're worried about losing tyres off the wheel don't do aggressive maneuvers on the sand
- Normally stay in high range as low range uses more fuel
- When you stop on a beach, try to face your 4WD down hill so it's easier to take off again
- Bring your MaxTrax as you will most likely get bogged



BAD HABITS

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL ELLEM



ANYONE CAN BECOME A PHOTOGRAPHER AND EXPERIENCE SO MUCH ENJOYMENT FROM PHOTOGRAPHY AS A HOBBY OR CAREER. BUT ALONG THE WAY, WE CAN BUILD A NUMBER OF BAD HABITS WHICH SLOW DOWN OUR CREATIVE POTENTIAL, AND AT THE SAME TIME GET US FRUSTRATED.

STANDING TALL

It's easy to get stuck in the habit of always shooting something in the same way. It worked last time, so why wouldn't it work today? You arrive at a destination and 'stand' there in awe looking at your 4WD in this beautiful scene, and whilst 'standing' there, you capture your shot. By moving the camera maybe down only 20cm or lower, you now have a perspective which will make the vehicle pop from the horizon or background structure. So always remember... move the camera.



KEEPING CLEAN

I don't know how many times it has caught me out before, but working in an environment with dirt, dust and water means that you are constantly chasing your tail with the elements. You need to be prepared for this by creating a system that ensures your lens and camera are clean. If you are shooting with a dirty lens, your image quality will definitely be affected. So take the right gear with you and keep your gear clean.



FIX IT IN PHOTOSHOP

One of my pet hates is the mentality of "I'll fix it in Photoshop".

With a little planning and care as to how you set up your exposure, you can usually capture the scene accurately, so that it looks right on camera and when transferred to your computer, will not need any significant work. Unfortunately, people can get a little lazy at the time of image capture. Yes, raw files provide much more latitude for image correction, but, with that comes the potential of becoming overly lazy with exposure, requiring significant work to correct later.

My theory is that when you are photographing something, you should be prepared to take your time, making every effort to sort out accurate exposure at the time of image capture.



SHOOT FIRST, SETUP LATER

Have you ever raised the camera and before making any adjustments, pressed the shutter button, then, when reviewing the image, discover it's not what you wanted? So you go back and change the exposure, then it's a little better but the composition still isn't quite right, so you go ahead and change that a couple of times... This constant reviewing of images by photographers can often be funny to watch. They take a shot and review it, take another and review that. It's known by some of us as "chimping" ...leaning over the back of the camera constantly checking what you have shot.

Admittedly, it's ok to do this, but if your purpose is to create the right exposure through the review LCD, then you are going about it the wrong way. Take a moment to assess the scene and why you are photographing it. Set the appropriate exposure mode, work out what will look best in a balanced shot relating to composition, set your focusing and exposure point into the desired location of the screen and try to build an understanding of whether you need any exposure compensation, before you actually raise the camera. If you can do this, your photography will improve in leaps and bounds.

TOURIST ANGLE

With some destinations, you may need to leave your 4WD and take a walk to the lookout. When you arrive, there might be a dedicated viewing area, this however, will ensure that everyone's images will end up very similar. Now without jumping a fence or walking off the track, have a look at the possibilities around you. There might be a tree branch hanging over the viewing area which will help frame the scene. Maybe the scene shot on the way will provide a better looking image than that of the viewing platform. Or perhaps, this is where you take the opportunity of creating a panoramic of the scene to showcase all its beauty.



BIGGER IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER

The guy in the camera shop sells you a camera with a sales pitch... "This camera can shoot an ISO of 204,800, it's amazing!" But would you use it? Not me... The problem with raising the ISO is that it definitely affects quality, adding noise, reducing detail and affecting colour range. So although it might be easy to simply raise the ISO, maybe drag out your tripod instead and take the image over a longer period of time.



THE BETTER GEAR MYTH

I have heard this one so many times... "Your photos are really good, you must have a great camera!"

Funnily enough, often this will be commented about an image posted on Facebook from my iPhone. Some people think that their imagery is lacking because of their camera or lens, where it might actually be that they are not concentrating on composition and exposure enough and therefore their imagery is average. When they move upwards to a more expensive camera, they are faced with the same image look, with maybe more detail. It's not the camera which creates the image, it's the photographer.



UP IN SMOKE

Travelling around this great country of ours I get to see some amazing sites, and best of all, meet some great people. Whilst on a trip in Outback Queensland I was traveling with a video crew from Creek to Coast. I was out photographing birdlife around a Pippagitta Waterhole in the early morning light and the crew were cooking up bacon and eggs for breakfast with a couple of the local stockmen. When I arrived back at the camp fire, one of the stockmen was enjoying a cigarette.

Now I need to let everyone know that I am not a smoker and do not condone smoking, however, seeing this rustic stockman smoking, I saw an opportunity to produce a black and white image, that (in my opinion) truly represented the traditional stockman.

Now the idea behind this image was to ensure that the silhouette of the stockman, the smoke hanging off him and his hat were the most prominent components in frame, I didn't need to capture his identity or his features, the hat and stubble would speak for themselves.

So, on the shadow side of the stockman, I set an exposure to under expose the subject, creating a dark silhouette shape. I focused on the profile of his face and waited till he exhaled through his nose.

The shot was an opportunity to capture a traditional stockman on the land, doing what he does.

I hope you enjoy this image.

Michael Ellem, Offroad Images

Camera: Canon EOS-1Dx
ISO: 100
Lens: EF400mm f2.8L IS USM
Shutter speed: 1/2500
Aperture: f11





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Cambuckle 2 pack 25mm x 1.8M

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Offers available from March 14 to April 9, 2016 at ARB stores and participating stockists. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer or discount. Normal fitting charges apply.

STREET SMART

SmartBar have been busy designing and developing innovative products in response to the growing market need for vehicle frontal protection. SmartBar's latest offerings are available for the Ford Ranger PX MKII, Mitsubishi MQ Triton and Nissan Navara NP300. Specifically designed for these individual vehicles, the latest models of vehicle frontal protection systems blend seamlessly to the contours of the vehicle, maintaining the intended aesthetics of the vehicle design whilst providing unparalleled safety.

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The Bushranger Rooftop Tent is perfect for campers, travellers and adventurers alike. Simple to both set up and pack up, Bushranger Rooftop Tents provide the ultimate in ease and convenience when travelling off road. A rooftop tent not only keeps your sleeping quarters off the ground and protected from the elements, it also frees up space within your vehicle as all of your sleeping gear can be left in the tent when packing up.

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Creates an insulating cushion of air between the tent and the flysheet.
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More information available from thule.com.au.

PURE POWER

REDARC is proud to introduce a new range of Pure Sine Wave Inverters that make it possible to plug in anywhere in Australia and still get the type of 240V power you get at home.

Sophisticated appliances such as computers and power tools may only be able to operate on a Pure Sine Wave input. With the new range of REDARC inverters, all your sensitive electrical devices will run smoother, last longer and produce less heat and noise. Not only is the range now slimmer and lighter, they also have a wider input voltage for both 12V and 24V models. With a wide operating temperature range, they will work under Australia's harsh conditions.

The range of 6 power ratings, in both 12V and 24V models, ensures that all your power needs while on the road are taken care of. REDARC inverters are available in 6 models; 350W, 700W, 1000W, 1500W, 2000W and 3000W. Choose a 350W to run devices like laptops and phone chargers, right up to 3000W to run power tools, heaters, kettles and more.

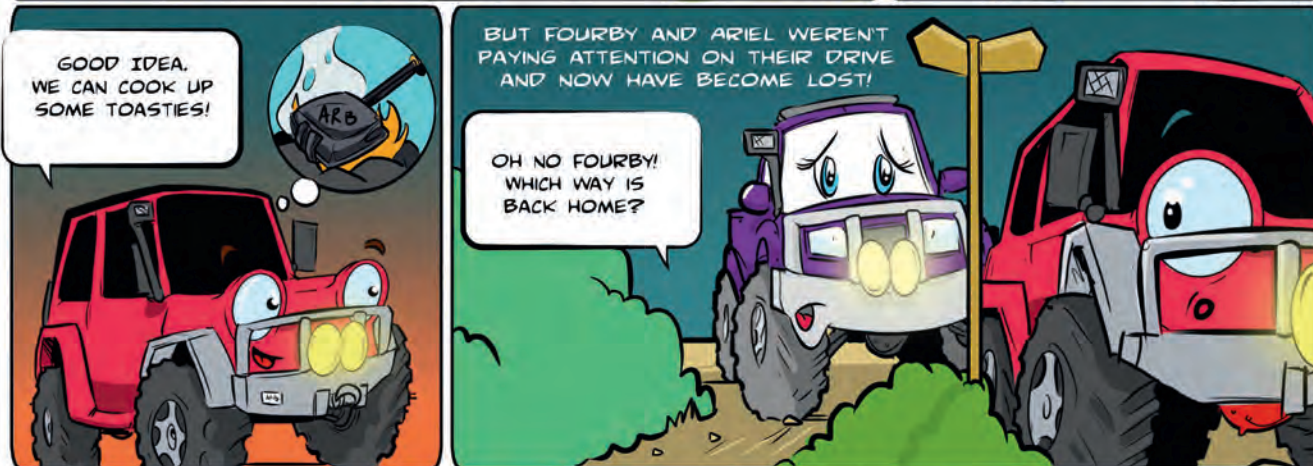
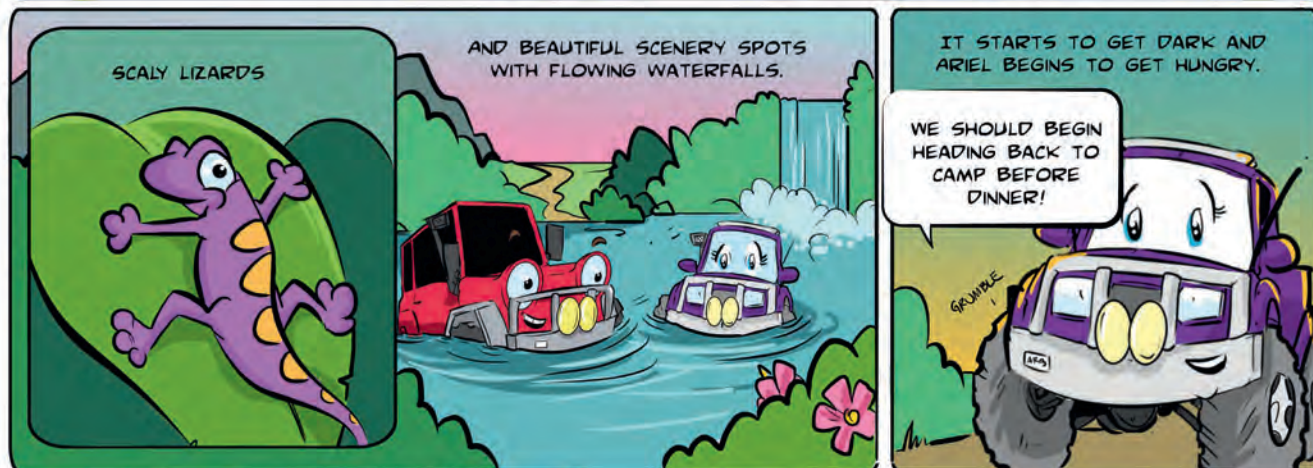
With these inverters you can take all the comforts of home whilst you travel, powering your electrical devices from your vehicle batteries, producing a quality Pure Sine Wave power source without fear of damaging your electrical appliances.

All inverters in the range feature multiple levels of protection, including overload, short circuit and over-temperature and load controlled cooling fan, which is engaged when power consumption reaches a certain level.

In addition, REDARC has an optional remote on/off switch (sold separately) that allows control of the inverter. It is designed so that the inverter can be installed out of sight and allows the operation from a more convenient location such as the inside of your caravan or campervan. Suitable for inverters 350W and up, the remote switch can be flush-mounted up to 8 metres away from the inverter.

REDARC Pure Sine Wave Inverters come with a two year warranty, starting at \$425 (RRP). To find out more see redarc.com.au/inverters





SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you spot the 5 differences hidden in these pictures?



SUMMER DAYS

We asked for your favourite beach camping and 4WDing destinations; congratulations to these keen off roaders who sent in some cracking shots. Each winner receives an ARB summer pack. See page 95 for this Issue's competition.



Eric Neubauer – Lake Apache, Arizona



Mark Evans – Corrong, SA



Craig Kinder – Parry's Beach, WA



Dave Charlton – Canunda National Park, SA



Simon Jones – Coral Coast, WA



Mark Busters – Byfield National Park, QLD



Sean Leigh – Stockyard Beach, QLD



Jason Slade – Cliff Head, WA

OFF ROAD CREATURE COMPETITION

Send us a pic of the most magnificent wildlife you have spotted while travelling off road and you could **win an ARB Personal First Aid Kit worth \$39.00**. Send your entry, along with your name and address to **promotions@arb.com.au**



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