

In brief...

- 5.4m (17ft 8in) single-axle pop-top
- Family van with double bed and two bunks
- 1890kg Tare weight
- Combo shower/toilet
- Designed for rough road use

all ABOARD

The robust little Goldstream 1760 Bunk pop-top achieves what not many other vans can.





dirt and dust less obvious. Aluminium is also the material of choice for the van's composite body panels and the pop-top roof, and there's a meranti timber frame underneath those panels.

Given the size and shape of the van, it's not surprising that there's only a tunnel boot for external storage. But it's a reasonable size for a family that doesn't travel with too much baggage. The gas cylinders are on the drawbar, and the spare wheel is mounted on the rear bumper bar.

A look under the 1760 Bunk reveals the 100x50mm (4x2in) DuraGal chassis, fitted with single-axle leaf spring suspension, shock absorbers and 15in alloy wheels. The chassis has been lifted about 50mm (2in) to give better ground clearance, and all the vulnerable pieces have been strapped up well out of the way. The 80L water tanks, which are protected with alloy checkerplate, are fitted either side of the axle to create balance, and there are quick-drop corner stabilisers to aid setting up.

THE ART OF COMPROMISE

So how do you get a family layout, including a shower and a toilet, into a van that is only 5.38m (17ft 8in) long? With a lot of ingenuity and a little bit of compromise, that's how! The double bed sits across the front of the van, forward of the entry door, which creates space for the kitchen bench and the bunk beds on the offside wall, leaving room on the nearside for an L-shaped lounge and a rear corner combo bathroom.

I've been in quite a few larger family vans where I've felt distinctly cramped, usually because of the cabinetry. But that feeling, real or otherwise, is negated here by the pop-top design, which creates plenty of air space and has no overhead lockers above the top of the solid wall. That does, of course, mean less storage space, but it also means you can leave more at home and travel lighter.

Setting up the pop-top is quite simple – you just release the four roof clips on the outside and then lift the roof from inside at either end. But don't forget to set the awning to the 'open' position first – it makes lifting the roof so much easier. There is also a small foot stool supplied, so the vertically-challenged among us can reach the roof clips.

One of the compromises you'll find with this layout is the size of the front bed. At 1.8x1.3m (5ft 11in x 4ft 3in), it's not particularly large. You could option a longer bed, but that would mean losing the front nearside corner cupboard, as you can't have both. But the larger bed would create more under-bed storage space, which might help negate the impact of losing the corner cupboard. As it is, the under-bed space is fairly

“There was a time when bathrooms in pop-top caravans weren't even considered, but with a bit of ingenuity and some vinyl curtains, hey presto, we can now have an onboard bathroom”

At the 2016 NSW Caravan, Camping & Holiday Supershow, held in April, there was a surprising number of family caravans on display. I say surprising because family caravans can be a bit of a challenge for manufacturers. If they build them too big and, therefore, too expensive, they don't sell. Build them too small and they don't sell either, because families need a bit of space. So manufacturers need to find that elusive middle ground. When I saw the Goldstream 1760 Bunk on display at the Parravans Caravan World dealer stand at the show, it caught my eye as I thought it managed just that, and it ticked many of the boxes that family vanners have.

For starters, it's a pop-top caravan, which is an attractive proposition for anyone who prefers a lower towing height or has storage height restrictions at home. It weighs in with a Tare weight of 1890kg and an ATM of 2500kg, so it has a generous and family-friendly load capacity of 610kg, yet it fits under the so-called 'Prado towing limit' of many popular tow vehicles. Although, I think reaching the full 610kg loading capacity of the van would be a challenge, given the storage restrictions in a mid-sized pop-top van such as this.

It behaved very well on the road and even off it. When I took it down some rough roads, it was certainly an easy tow due, in large part, to its size and towing profile.

READY FOR ADVENTURE

Our review van was fitted with the Goldstream 'Adventure Pack' which, in short, means the van is fitted out for rough road, but not full offroad, use. The first clue to the van's rough-road intentions is the side skirt and front panel of polished alloy checkerplate. Its traditional checkerplate finish is something I prefer to the more trendy satin black, because it makes the



WORDS AND PICS
MALCOLM STREET

Right: Ingenuity and compromise make the 1760 Bunk a comfortable family van. **Above:** Leaf spring suspension and well-protected water tanks on the underside.

Measuring up

Pros

- 👍 Lightweight family van
- 👍 Interior does not feel cramped
- 👍 Ground clearance
- 👍 Well put together
- 👍 Multiple drawers in kitchen

Cons

- 👎 Size of front bed
- 👎 Limited internal storage capacity
- 👎 No charger points for electronic devices



Goldstream 1760 Bunk

Weights and measures

Overall length 7.2m (23ft 7in)
External body length 5.38m (17ft 8in)
External body width 2.36m (7ft 9in)
Travel height 2.34m (7ft 8in)
Internal height 2.08m (6ft 10in)
Tare 1890kg
ATM 2500kg
Ball weight 230kg

External

Frame Meranti
Cladding Aluminium composite
Chassis DuraGal 100x50mm
Suspension Leaf spring with shock absorbers
Brakes 12in electric
Wheels 15in alloy
Water 2x80L
Battery 1x80Ah
Solar No (pre-wired)
Air-conditioner Truma Saphir
Gas 2x9kg
Sway Control No

Internal

Cooking Thetford four-burner and grill
Fridge Dometic 190L three-way
Microwave Daewoo
Toilet Thetford cassette
Shower Flexible hose, combo
Lighting 12V LED
Hot water Truma 14L

Options fitted

Gas bayonet

Price as shown

\$53,900 (on-road, NSW)

Enquiries

To enquire about this van, visit
www.caravanworld.com.au/spec or
phone (03) 8373 7328

OnCaravanWorld.com.au

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Clockwise from top left: The layout feels surprisingly spacious; the front double bed is on the small side; one of the two overhead lockers in the kitchen houses all the electricals; the top bunk has plenty of air space; two drawers and hanging space in the rear.



caravans weren't even considered, but with a bit of ingenuity and some vinyl curtains, hey presto, we can now have an onboard bathroom. It's certainly not big, in this case, but there's enough room for a Thetford cassette toilet with a moulded wash basin behind, and a variable height, flexible hose shower. However, the maximum height of the shower is restricted by the solid wall height.

But to fit the bathroom in, something had to give, and that something is the kitchen. It has all the necessary items – four-burner cooktop with grill, stainless steel sink, a large family-sized fridge and a microwave under the grill

Time for bed

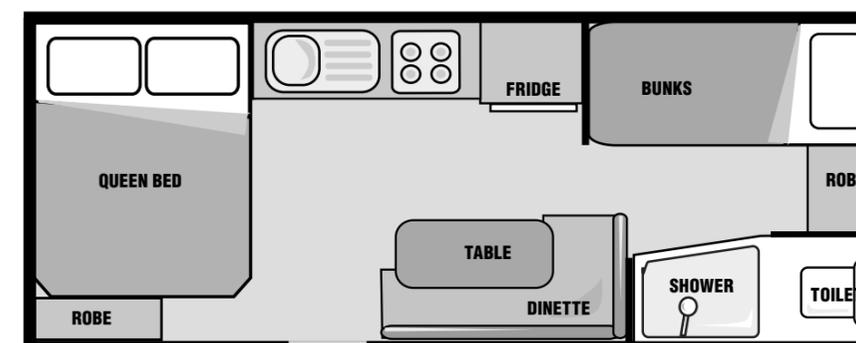
I'm really just thinking out loud here and I realise it may not be a popular idea but, given the size of the front bed and the relative size of the van, I wonder if two bunk beds across the front of the van would be better than a narrow double? I'm sure there are plenty of couples who could give me good reasons for having a double bed but, hey, this is a family van and practicality has to be a consideration. If you pushed the design limits even further, maybe the top bunk could be hinged so you end up with a front lounge seat by day.

small and largely taken up by the Truma Saphir air-conditioner and the Truma water heater.

The rear bunks are marginally longer at 1.83x0.63m (6x2ft), so there is always the option of letting the junior family members use the front bed and mum and dad getting a bunk each in the rear! Whoever scores the bunks also gets the huge cabinet with lots of hanging space and drawers underneath.

There's no doubt that an L-shaped dinette works best with this layout, as it's pretty easy to get in and out of, and also allows for an extra (folding) chair to be added on the other side of the table.

There was a time when bathrooms in pop-top





Above: The combo bathroom has enough space for a toilet, wash basin and shower. **Above right:** The height of the shower is, of course, restricted by the height of the solid wall.

– but there's not much overhead locker space. One of the two lockers houses the electrical panel, but there are four large drawers and a shelved cupboard. There also isn't any benchtop working space, but using the table is a reasonable compromise. Given the proximity of the bed to the cooktop and the lack of any side splash panel, I think a protective plastic sheet or something similar wouldn't go astray. Or, alternatively, you could use the external gas bayonet to hook up a barbecue and cook outside.

Ratings

1. Value for money	★★★★★
2. Towability	★★★★★
3. Setting up and hitching up	★★★★★
4. Suitability for intended touring	★★★★★
5. Layout	★★★★★
6. Quality of finish	★★★★★
7. Build quality	★★★★★
8. Creature comforts	★★★★★
9. Innovation	★★★★★
10. X-Factor	★★★★★

On the power front, the 1760 Bunk is fitted out with all the necessary lights and mains power points but no 12V/5V USB sockets. Most of the electrics, including the 12V fuses and digital water tank gauges, are located in the locker above the kitchen bench.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Granted, the little Goldstream 1760 Bunk is not going to win any prizes for the most spacious van interior, however, it is more than capable of housing a family of four and, even better, it doesn't feel cramped inside.

So, for a family that doesn't mind travelling light, it's a winner. And if you need more living space for longer trips, annexe walls could be added to the awning to enclose that area. **CW**