

THE WANDERER

AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST RV CLUB MAGAZINE

Driving through History



Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia
www.cmca.net.au

JULY 2020 | VOLUME 35. NO. 7

From colonial ghost towns to bushranger hideouts and a look back at how the RV industry has evolved

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Living in a motorhome can be stressful and takes some time to adapt to ... but it's all worth it in the end. Tania

WHY I ALWAYS HATE THE FIRST WEEK OF ANY *camping trip*





Living in a motorhome can be stressful and takes some time to adapt to ... but it's all worth it in the end. Tania Differding scoffs at those who think camping is always relaxing, but revels in the joys it brings.

WORDS AND PICS: TANIA DIFFERDING V119948

When I tell them we're going away with our campervan and toddler, my non-camping friends say, "Oh, how relaxing, have a lovely holiday!"

Is it relaxing? Some of the time. Is it a holiday? About as much as backpacking, or a stopover in a random city, is a holiday. While it can sometimes be the time of your life, is it really relaxing? Not all the time. I just don't think these people who believe you are away having a relaxing holiday have any idea of what you are doing in the van most of the time.

The amount of times I've been on the road and had the thought pop into my head: if today was a normal day at work, I'd be having a better day... Why? Because camping is sometimes hard. Sometimes it feels like it would have been much easier to just stay home.

But it's not bad, it's just different. I always need a week to get into the new schedule of motorhome travel. My mind needs a week to move down a gear from normal everyday 15-minute-timeslots and getting-stuff-done to "this task is going to take a lot longer than it would normally, but that's okay because



Clockwise from left: Are camping's inconveniences worth it for meals with a view like this?; bringing a toddler along can add plenty of challenges to a camping trip; be ready to spend a lot of time packed in tight



It's hard in the beginning because everything takes longer in a campervan or motorhome. But then you roll up at an isolated beach and the stress just falls away

you don't have much else to do anyway". Eventually, I'll get to that place where I start walking slower, stop wearing shoes, and happily read whatever I can find just for something to do.

Sure, you have more time to sit on the beach, read a book, just talk (the beauty of not having a TV), and spend time with your loved ones. And let's be honest — these are the photos we're putting up on Facebook.

It's hard in the beginning because everything takes longer in a campervan or motorhome. Need to wash your dishes? If you're staying at a campground, you'll have to work out how to get your dishes to the camp kitchen, then wash them oh so slowly (all the while

thinking about how much you love your dishwasher at home), then dry them, then get them back to the van, hopefully without dropping a knife on your foot or a clean dish in the dirt. However, realistically, doing dishes in a camp kitchen is a camping luxury. Try doing day-old dishes in 40-degree heat in a tiny sink with only cold water. Oh, and the water tank is a little low, so you need to ration that stuff, rather than waste it on rinsing dishes!

When you have a baby, toddler, or child under a certain age who might sometimes have a tiny accident in bed, or in their pants, or in their clothes, or on their favourite beloved blankey, then that needs to be urgently washed. This presents another issue while



camping: doing the washing. If you ever travel in Europe, you'll find yourself walking a kilometre to the reception to pay for a token to take to the laundry room (that you need a key for, also from reception) that houses the washing machine with instructions definitely not in English. Moreover, it's probably going to rain just as you've finished hanging the last towel on a spare tree branch nearby. Ah, the luxuries of home that we take for granted.

I haven't even started on the real issues: the two weeks of uncharacteristically bad weather, cold weather, rain that doesn't stop, no phone reception to find your camping spot, no map (Melways are so 90s), nowhere to

fill up with clean drinking water, sick husband and cranky toddler (cranky husband and sick toddler are another good combination).

Oh, and we can't forget my primary camping hate: noisy camping neighbours. So paranoid am I, I won't camp within 100m of

another person — that's a slight exaggeration, but I do search for surrounding P-plate cars and then leave the vicinity if there are any, even if we've just taken 30 minutes to check-in and set up.

So, why do I do it? Why do I love it so much? Why do I spend my

working days selling and building campervans, my holidays and weekends living in campervans, and my nights watching movies about people in campervans?

I'll tell you why. Because those people who have no idea what we do in a campervan, who think it's





all about relaxation, really have no idea. They've never had that feeling of elation when rolling up at an isolated, pristine and completely empty beach on a perfect summer's day. They've never opened their eyes in the morning and had the feeling of gratitude because they've slept in a beautiful rainforest or on a breathtaking clifftop. They've never tasted tea or boiled eggs eaten on camping chairs with the wonderful feeling that there are no other human beings on earth but themselves. They've never felt the simplicity that comes with only having two T-shirts to choose from, no reason to look in the mirror or comb their hair, and no housework to do. They've never had the feeling of freedom that you get when you've got your van packed and you set off down the road to check out the next beach or town. You don't need to book accommodation because you're like a tortoise, or a snail, or a gypsy, and you are truly free when your home travels with you.

What can you tell someone who is about to buy their first campervan? Well, it's the same as having a child really. It'll be hard at times, but it'll be worth it. It's a different way of living, but once you've done it, you will never go back to the old way. Although sometimes you'll be angry and frustrated (at the teenagers with loud music at 4am), the other times it'll be so great that you'll never want your journey to end. 🚐



Who said travelling with a toddler was easy? No parent, ever! But once you've done it, you'll be hooked.

