

BIG RED



On a recent test run, Trakka's stunning new Torino created a great deal of interest among fellow motorhomers.

Review and photographs: Malcolm Street

I have discovered how to create a great deal of interest among fellow motorhomers. It's quite simple – borrow the first of Trakka NZ's new Fiat Ducato-based Torino motorhomes, make sure it's painted an eye catching metallic burgundy with grey striping, and spend a few days touring in both the Northland and Taupo areas of the North Island. Motorhomers

will flock from everywhere and even those who don't will be seen to make a few sideways glances.

The new Torino is being assembled at the recently established Trakka NZ factory at Henderson, Auckland under the directorship of Doug and Jenny Sheldon, founding owners of the respected CoachKraft Group, and Dave and Sally

Berry, owners of Trakka Australia.

I had arranged to collect the Torino from the Trakka factory and before leaving was able to have a very interesting tour of the factory and saw numerous Trakka motorhomes in various stages of production. Of interest was the special below-floor-level hoist that allows the top areas of a motorhome to be worked on from factory floor level.

Prior to our departure, my wife and I unpacked our suitcases (principally so we could leave them behind) and discovered that the Torino certainly has a deceptive interior. At first glance there does not appear to be much storage space but it was surprising just how quickly all our goods and chattel was put away - with some space left over!

When I left the factory to head north for Whangarei and a meeting with Editor Rich, I had no idea that the Torino would create such interest and certainly the burgundy colour made it easy to find in motor camps and supermarket car parks amongst its white contemporaries. I had some spectacular proof of the Torino's uniqueness when MCC publisher Rob Pooley identified me as we passed on the highway, even though we had not met in person before!

On The Road


So how does the Fiat Ducato drive? In a nutshell, the Ducato is a fun vehicle to get around in! The 2.8 litre turbo diesel pushes the van along very well indeed both around the town and along the motorway, where keeping up to the speed limit was, well, no problem at all! More car-like than van-like the Ducato is a very easy vehicle to drive with power steering, power brakes and a very slick dash-mounted gear change.

The visibility from the driver's cab, including the power adjustable rear view mirrors, is excellent and doing a late evening run from Auckland to Taupo, I discovered that the low and high beams gave a good even light.

Both driver and passenger seats, complete with arm rests, are comfortable enough for long distance driving. About the only niggle was the passenger seat which was a little too high for a person with short legs! In the driver's cab, there were plenty of little storage compartments, including

very deep door pockets but I quite like that because small and valuable items like wallets and binoculars could be kept there and be handy but out of sight.

Noise levels whilst driving are quite acceptable – long gone is the noisy rattle of the diesel motor. Also fairly quiet were some of the accompanying noises that sometimes emanate from the rear of a motorhome. We managed to get towels

into the right cupboards fairly quickly and consequently there were few squeaks and rattles – the Torino is certainly well fitted together. 

1. Ducato cab is quite comfortable for driving. Swivelling seats give a more spacious feel to the front area, as well as being somewhere to sit. They also could be used to extend the bed slightly for tall people.
2. Clip-on table is great when you just want to sit out under the awning.

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Oh, yes, one other thing – the Ducato comes with central locking, a real asset in my opinion for a vehicle that has five doors.

Setting up

When parking for the night, setting up takes about two minutes – leap out of driver's seat, get power cord out of compartment above offside rear wheel and plug in, walk around to rear nearside and turn gas on, wind out Fiamma awning to keep rain out of sliding door (it really only rained one night) and get ready to relax!

The only thing to be a little wary of during that procedure is that the sliding door is not fully opened unexpectedly when turning the LPG on or off because the gas compartment door is partly behind the sliding door when it's fully open.

Opening the rear doors reveals not much at all, except the rear of the shower/toilet cubicle on the offside, where the outside table and awning handle are mounted and a small storage area underneath the kitchen bench. I found this quite useful for keeping two items – my large camera bag and my laptop computer. Since there is also a door from the inside of the Torino, this meant my cameras were quickly accessible from both

1. It might look a little confined but the kitchen area is quite functional, with everything close to hand. Despite being a compact motorhome, there's no real shortage of storage space and there's certainly room for everything in the kitchen.
2. Editor Pooley relaxing, er I mean checking out the finer points of the Torino!
3. Looks very comfy doesn't it? Despite being made up of several seat cushions, it takes less than five minutes to assemble.

inside and outside but generally out of sight most of the time.

Trakka have been a little clever with the Thetford cassette. Instead of having yet another door cut into the side of the vehicle, the Thetford cassette slides out into the above storage area. It does mean having to take out whatever is in the space but if you only use the toilet in the middle of the night and for emergencies as we did, then the cassette really doesn't have to be extracted that often.

Inside

It is certainly a very compact and practical layout, especially given that the Ducato van is just 5.6m long.

Behind the driver's seat is an 'L' shaped lounge which doubles as a bed at night. Between that and the shower/toilet cubicle, tucked into the rear offside corner, is the fridge and microwave oven. All the nearside area behind the sliding door is occupied by

the kitchen bench area, whilst just behind the passenger seat is a small hanging cupboard.

Catering

Set into an 'L' shape, the kitchen bench is a compact little unit but does have a three burner Cramer hob, stainless steel sink (both with smoked glass covers) and a reasonable amount of bench-top space for its size. Both the IndelB fridge and Sharp microwave sit opposite, so everything is within easy reach of each other.

Storage space is good too, with two overhead lockers, cutlery drawer, large pots and pans drawer, small slide-out pantry and an end cupboard with, drum roll please...a scraps and rubbish bin! Now I only speak from experience from the other side of the Tasman in this matter but for too many motorhomers, the scraps bin is the plastic bag hanging on the nearest door handle!

Along with a couple of cupboards above



and below the fridge and microwave, there was plenty of room for both food items and cooking utensils.

Above the hob is a Dometic slimline rangehood and in warmer weather that can be assisted by simply opening the rear door! The downlights in the rangehood have been wired up to a third downlight at the other end of the kitchen bench thus ensuring a bright even light.

Dining and Lounging

Multi functional is the best way to describe this part of the Torino. When driving, driver and passenger seats naturally face forward and the 'L' shaped lounge has seat belts for three passengers. By day in camp, the passenger seat swivels fully around and the driver's seat turns half way around, thus creating a comfortable area for two people and slightly squeeze seating for four.

The table top, when required, is attached to the swivelling leg that is fitted to the cabinet behind the passenger seat. When

1. Front swivelling seat adds greatly to the "lounge" area.
2. It's compact but there is room to move. The slatted wooden floor has a bilge pump underneath it. The cupboard under the vanity sink takes all washing and toilet articles very easily.
3. The swivelling table is stored behind the kitchen bench and can put into position very quickly. The swivelling leg is good for use between the seats. Note the storage area above the driver's cab will hold all the bedding quite easily.

not being used it sits between the sliding door and the kitchen bench. It's a neat little set-up and means the table can be moved to suit a variety of seating positions.

Storage consists of two drawers underneath the lounge, two overhead lockers, plus pouches behind the driver and passenger seats – quite useful for small, need-to-keep-handy items. Just behind the passenger seat is a small hanging cupboard – just big enough for two plus an overhead locker.

Sleeping

By night the bed is simply made up by rotating the locking lever and sliding the lounge out. The seat backs are then used to make up the mattress for the bed. It's actually more comfortable than it sounds

and we slept quite well.

Only swivelling half way looks odd for the driver's seat but it does mean that a bed can be made up for a small child or alternatively might be able to be used by a taller person to extend the main bed.

I should mention that there is a large open shelf above the driver's cab and this very handily took all the bedding (when not being used) very easily.

Cleaning up

Interestingly, the bathroom looks a little different from those seen in most motorhomes, it being mostly in the same décor as the rest of the Torino. Trakka have done a few wonders here. It's certainly a very confined area but there is still room to have a shower, use the cassette toilet and clean your teeth - all at the same time if you wish!

A couple of thoughtful additions are the decent-sized cupboard under the vanity sink and the slatted wooden bathroom floor which means when drying off, you are not standing in a pool of water – there's actually a bilge pump underneath. The shower is on a flexible hose and there's a combined opening vent/ventilation fan/light unit fitted to the roof, which works very well.

Utilities

Undoubtedly the most sophisticated item in the Torino is the lighting system. Comprised of well-placed downlights, there are two control panels, one beside the sliding door and the other behind the driver's seat. Both are conveniently located and both have a tricky little dimmer





system (just keep pushing the button) and most usefully, both panels have an "All Off" switch. The outside light is a small floodlight and being so bright we only used it occasionally otherwise it kept the neighbours awake!

The power points are one of the few niggles I had about the Torino. There was just one (unallocated) in the rear nearside corner of the kitchen. As one who uses a laptop when travelling, I would have liked one just behind the front passenger seat.

Webasto diesel-fired heaters are a relatively new item to me and I was able to use the Torino's during a few chilly nights around Taupo. I gave it the thumbs up – does take a few minutes to warm up but after that the thermostat control gets turned down.

In summary

Trakka have a well earned reputation for producing a quality motorhome and the Torino is no exception. For a couple who want a luxury campervan or small classy motorhome, then the Torino fits the bill very nicely and if the interest shown by fellow motorhomers during the test run is any clue, then the Torino is a winner. ■

Fact File

Manufacturer	TRAKKA NZ Ltd
Model	Torino
Base vehicle	Fiat Ducato Maxi 2.8 JTD van
Engine	2.8 litre turbo diesel
Max power	93kw@3600rpm
Max torque	300Nm@1800rpm
Transmission	Five speed manual
Brakes	Disc all round
GVM (Gross Vehicle Mass)	3510kg
UVM (Unloaded Vehicle Mass)	2525kg
Berths	Two
Seat belts	Five
Stove	Cramer three burner
Sink	Stainless steel
Fridge	IndelB 12V 85 litre
Microwave oven	Sharp 17 litre
Hot water	20 litre, heat exchanger/240V
Fresh water tank	80 litre
Grey water tank	80 litre
Gas	1 x 4kg
Awning	Fiamma
Lighting	12V halogen downlights
Antenna	Winegard
Space heater	Webasto diesel
Price	NZ\$113,933 including GST plus on roads. This includes the Webasto diesel heater, metallic paint, alloy wheels and wind-up TV antenna.
Contact	TRAKKA NZ Ltd 6 Tony Street Henderson Auckland Ph (09) 839 2229