



Most folks know that that you can hire Walkabout Rental's all-new six-berth Mitsubishi Fuso however it's not common knowledge that these roomy RVs are also directly sold by Walkabout, ex-factory.

WORDS + PHOTOGRAPHY *Donna Blaber*

Just name the day and I would drive back to South Auckland to have a coffee with Shane Smale of Walkabout Rentals. He's an affable chap who provides insightful conversation on almost any given topic including Walkabout's new Mitsubishi Fuso 3.9 Litre Intercooled Turbo diesel six berth motorhome.

Solidly constructed and built in New Zealand using aluminium framing, polystyrene infill, and with an external cladding of fibreglass, this 5 Speed Manual RV comes with front and rear stabilizer bars to improve vehicle stability, cornering and general road handling, not to mention enhancing passenger comfort on the road!

Other safety features include ABS and Exhaust Brakes, power steering, an air bag on the driver's side, seven seatbelts - three in the cab (with seat covers), as well as those for an extra four persons on moulded squab

seats running lengthways down either side of the cabin behind the cab.

Ergonomically the driver is pretty well catered for with a dash-mounted gearshift, an adjustable steering column, extra-large heated side mirrors and remote central locking. And everyone will benefit from the cab's electric windows, air conditioning, and CD stereo – assuming you all like the same music!

Naturally there's access to the cab from inside the motorhome and if you're boarding at the entry door, there's a pull-down footstep and a handle as you step up, should you need to steady yourself. I liked the location of the 2 volt batteries, tidily housed beneath the step and easy to access from the outside.

Upfront is the aforementioned seating for four passengers with a Truma gas and electric hot water system located under the left forward seat. A large stowage, perfect for soft luggage or storing items that are not





frequently used, is under the right forward seat. A nifty touch is the stowage location for the forward mounted table – locked into position under the seat cushion on the right. Above this seat are the controls for the diesel heating, while the gas and electricity controls are located on the opposite side. If you are travelling with a full complement of passengers this upfront sitting area converts readily into a double bed measuring 1.80 x 1.40 metres.

Directly above the cab is the futon, reached via a solid built-in ladder, so there's no mucking about every time you want to climb up. I also liked the slide out panel, which, pushed back, provides easy access to the cab by day, and pulls out to complete the full futon bed area of 2.1 x 1.25 metres at night. There's also windows on either side, handy cubby holes built into the curved aperture to stow bits and pieces you like to have with you, and a privacy curtain.

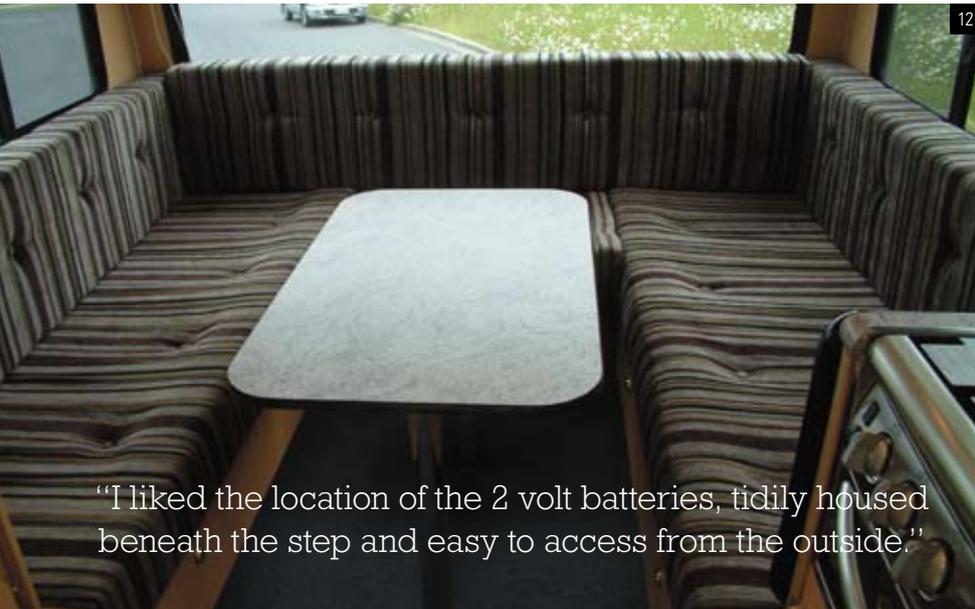
Opposite the entry door is the bathroom

and toilet facilities. This features an all-in-one fan and light, height adjustable shower, electric flush Thetford, mirrored glass cupboards and a pull down basin. Directly behind the bathroom are a mirror and a wardrobe, followed by a TV bench with a LG 22-inch LCD colour TV. Located under this bench is further kitchen storage including a cutlery drawer, and plate and cup holders.

Directly opposite, the catering area comes complete with a Sharp stainless microwave, four-burner gas hob and grill with electric ignition, rangehood, and 85 litre Vitrifrigo fridge/freezer. The louvres on the kitchen window and the glass top on the Smev hob (which looks almost like ceramic glass) gives a nice effect. There's also a bench extension for those who like to spread out.

The classic NZ back makes up into two bed sizes, either a king measuring 2.15 x 1.85 metres or two singles measuring 1.80 x .7 metres. Easy access drawers – ideal for clothes or other frequently used items – are >





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located underneath. There are head height stowages all around, including one located close to the TV with a power point inside and powered up for an inverter.

Beech-toned laminated ply interior cladding, thermal backed Roman blinds, scratchproof non-acrylic tinted windows, and 12/220 volt halogen lighting feature throughout. There's also three roof vents and if you are travelling during the cooler months, heating comes courtesy of both diesel and electric blow heating.

Outside there is more than enough locker space for outdoorsy pursuits including

space for the all-important fishing rod and a 130 watt solar panel is mounted on the roof.

Self-containment certificates are approved and issued with the vehicle so there's no waiting around and according to Shane, if you want reliability a Fuso is just the ticket. These vehicles are good for at least 400,000 kilometres, and the clutch and brakes at least 150,000 kays – or so he reckons. And he would know. "I can't afford to run a rental company if I've got vehicles breaking down," he says. "The Mitsubishi is number one in reliability in big vehicles." ☺



TECHSPEC:

MANUFACTURER: BUILT UNDER CONTRACT FOR WALKABOUT RENTALS & SALES

MODEL: MITSUBISHI FUSO

Base vehicle	Mitsubishi Fuso FE150E3
Engine	3700cc Turbo Diesel
Gearbox	5 Speed Manual (In Dash Gearshift Control)
Max power	JIS Gross: 109kW at 2900 rpm
Max torque	JIS Gross: 392Nm at 1600 rpm
Brakes	ABS Disc – Auto Adjust and Exhaust Brakes
Tare weight	3700kg
GVM	5600kg
External length	6.6 metres
External width	2.2 metres
Internal height	1.95 metres
Hob	4 Burner Gas Hob & Grill
Fridge	85 Litre Vitrifrigo Fridge
Gas	9kg bottle
Lighting	Halogen Lighting (12/220 volt)
Toilet	Thetford Electric Flush
Hot water	Truma Combi - gas and electric
Fresh water	95 litres
Grey water	95 litres
Price	\$140,000

Plus onroad costs of \$1600

NB. A price increase is expected in 2009 due to international currency changes

Manufacturer/ dealer:

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