

Outback Travel Mate is Great

I've always been a fan of portable fridge freezers for the simple reason that they rock.

They keep things frozen and other things cold and that's just fantastic with me. The only problem I had was affording one and they always seemed to be just out of my financial reach.

This all changed when the popular ice box making company Downunder developed and released their range of portable fridge freezers, the Outback Travel Mate series. This series has two models: a 45 Litre model and a 55 Litre model, and both have a two year

month long trip up to Cape York bashing around in the back of a 4WD with just a small generator and the car to keep the unit operational. But, being that I am like everyone else and have to work, the Travel Mate did more day and weekend trips, as well as BBQ work, than it actually did hard kilometres on the dirt tracks of northern Queensland.

And this is the important fact about the nine months I've owned the Travel Mate, I reckon I've used it like most people would, as a great way to keep things frozen and cold on weekends away with the mates and as a great drinks and food cooler for parties

free canvas outer bag, so we loaded it into the back of the Kluger, plugged it in, filled it up and hit the road.

As we do we left very early and arrived at Baffle Creek way before the time was right to hit the Camp Stay, so we did what all good fishermen

fine. You beauty!

In all the Travel Mate sat in the car, which was partially covered by shade trees, for about four hours between maybe 9am and 1pm. The temperature was not staggeringly hot, maybe 28C or 30C yet the car interior was a lot hotter than that.

The frozen goods were just starting to get that look



The smaller fridge compartment is perfect for all those things you want cold but not frozen.

do and that's go fishing. This meant the Travel Mate would be locked up in the car for a few hours without power and Bundaberg is not known for being chilly in November either. So we headed out to chase a jack and what do you know, we stayed out until well after lunch as the next bend syndrome kicked in (as it almost always does).

Back at the ramp it finally computed that our mince and steaks, our milk and cool cans would be hot, stinky and maybe even just off. I hesitantly opened the car door and waited for the stinky air to rush out, but only hot air blasted my face. I turned on the car to get the Travel Mate cooling down and then took the plunge into the back of the car to see what the damage was.

If you've ever had a mate stick a prawn or two in your spare wheel hatch, you'll understand just how nervous I was about opening up the fridge. If I had been able to use some of those gloves the vets use for checking the babies in cows they would have been on, but I didn't so I popped the two stainless steel latches and prepared for the worst.

Of course everything was fine in the fridge, otherwise this would be a pretty sad review, but the relief was overwhelming when there was no smell and I even felt cool air rush out of the unit.

With that done I poked and prodded around the frozen meats and found them still solid, I grabbed the milk and found it still cool, so I opened it and took that fatal sniff and everything seemed

and feel about them that they were about to defrost and the drinks in the fridge part were still refreshingly cool – not as cold as I'd like, but I'd



The sturdy latches are spring loaded and strong. They keep the lid securely down to keep in the cool.

say they were under 5C. So that is a big success for the insulation of the Travel Mate in my books and that is one reason why I'd recommend them.

THE FEATURES

The Outback Travel Mate is not just a box with a compressor in it that keeps everything cold. It's actually a well thought out and designed piece of camping and travelling equipment.

From the outside the unit is clean and simple. The lid and body are constructed from impact resistant plastics with the lid having a



The 55 Litre unit is large enough for a weekend away and very sturdy.

comfortable, moulded handle at the front. The body has two handles, one either side, and two stainless steel latches for locking the lid down while travelling. There is also an LCD temperature adjusting panel, vents to release the warm air from the compressor and a DC socket for the power. The unit comes with a DC connection cable for use in the car or while camping and it also comes with an AC/DC adaptor for mains power.

The canvas outer bag

probably helps a little with insulation, but its robust nature means your unit doesn't get all those annoying scratches and marks on it, so grab one of those if you buy a unit.

Internally there are two areas. The large area is the freezing compartment where a wire basket means you can load the space up with everything you can squeeze in it and still be able to pull out the wire basket and see what you put at the bottom. The smaller area is for things like milk and drinks that you don't want to get too cold.

OVERALL

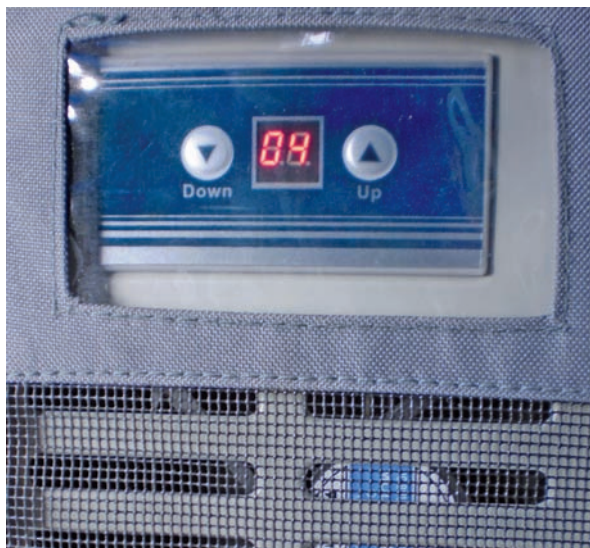
I'm pretty happy with owning a fridge freezer and the Outback Travel Mate has been on plenty of trips with me and the family and the mates. It's even cooled down a few fillets on the way home so that I didn't have to deal with slimy and dripping fish fillets when I got home.

If you're in the market for a fridge freezer, take the time to look at the Outback Travel Mate range. The price is very competitive and the in-field operation of the unit I have is sensational. The range is available at many leading outdoor and fishing outlets.

If you are struggling to locate one, log onto www.downundericeboxes.com or give them a call on (07) 5437 8477. The Outback Travel Mate makes travelling with perishable goods easy.



Strong handles on the side make carrying the unit a breeze and the power outlet is easy to access through the canvas outer bag.



The LCD temperature adjustment is simple - even I could use it. Here it is set at 4C so nothing is frozen.

warranty, which is good for someone like me who seems to break expensive things pretty easily. And they are cheap in comparison to most other fridge freezers on the market: The 45 Litre model retails for around \$799 and the 55 Litre model comes in at \$890.

Like most fisherman, big is always better so I went for the 55 Litre model and I have never looked back.

MY USE

I suppose the real test of the Outback Travel Mate would have been a three

and the like.

The biggest trip the Travel Mate went on was up to Bundaberg and Lake Monduran. We stay at a fantastic campground called Baffle Creek Camp Stay and the trip in is virtually all sealed road now. But the car gets stinking hot and our coolers we used to carry the food up in often had the meat defrosting and the milk just getting above that temperature I am comfortable with. The Travel Mate comes with a car power adaptor and when I got the fridge they threw in a



Neat, clean lines make this an easy unit to clean if you spill food or drink in the unit.