

Family Affairs

With a layout geared towards families, the Saxby F-Series from Sydney-based Suncamper Motorhomes forgoes unnecessary trappings in favour of ample sleeping space and some well-chosen essentials.

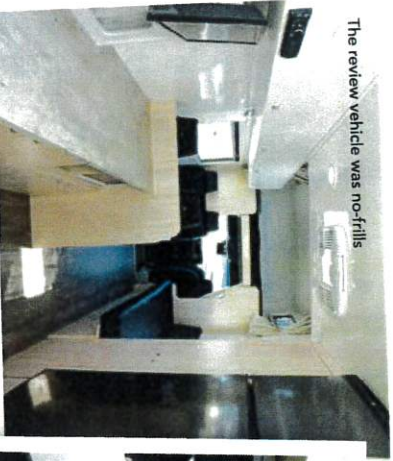
WORDS AND PICS MALCOLM STREET



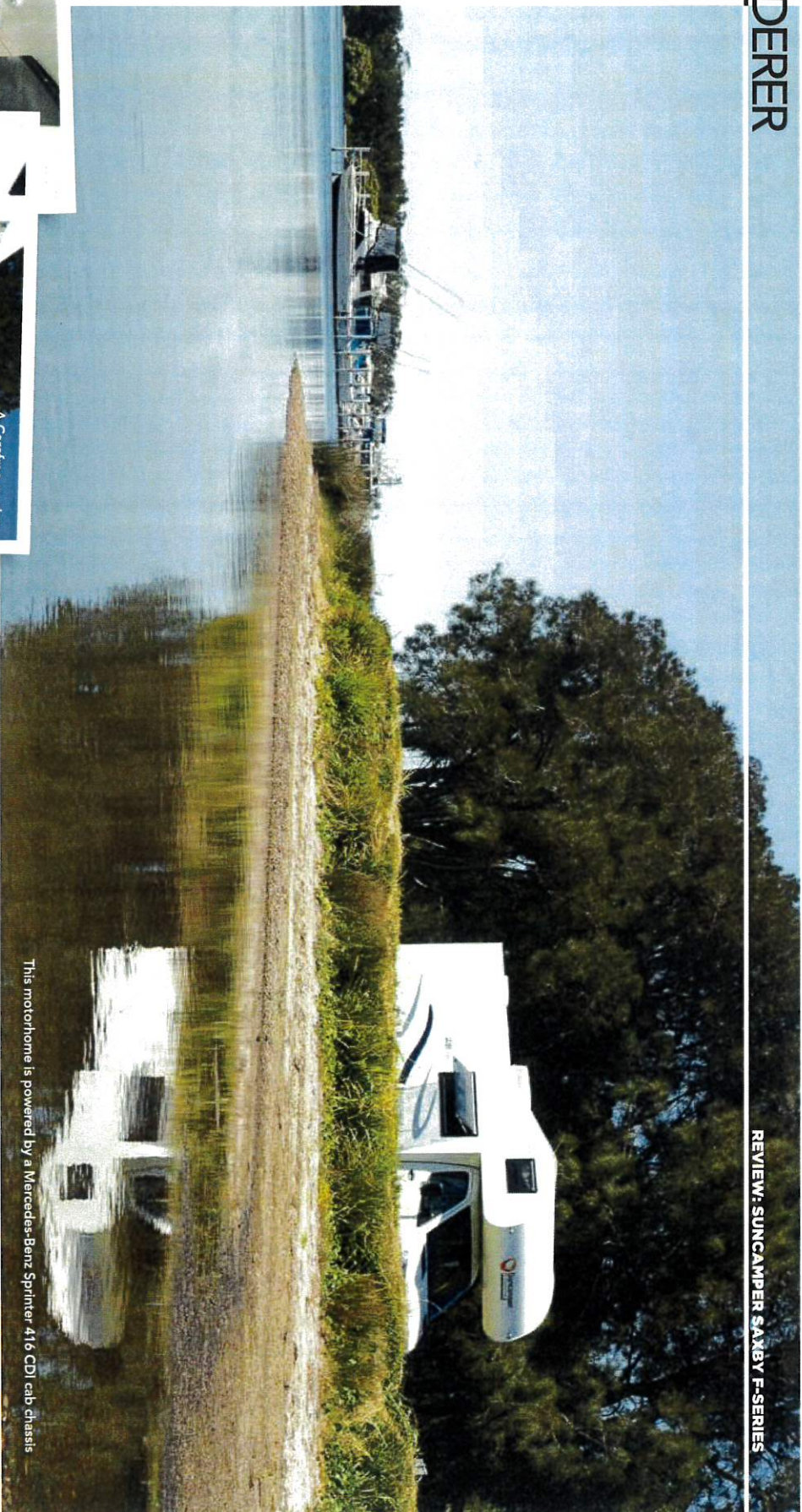
The luxury peak of the F-Series is prominent, to say the least.

Sydney-based Suncamper Motorhomes isn't the largest RV manufacturer in Australia, but it does build a wide range of motorhomes — from the Toyota Hilux-based Sherwood series to the Mercedes-Benz or Iveco Daily-based Saxby models, Sovereign models, and the exotically named Santa Cruz, Suncamper has a motorhome to suit plenty of travelling styles. Included in the range is the Saxby F-Series, a motorhome that's very much designed for a family with up to six berths able to be built in. Suncamper built this same motorhome for rental fleet use.

The review vehicle was no-frills



A Carefree awning on the side



This motorhome is powered by a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 416 CDI cab chassis

UNDERPINNINGS

Powering the Saxby is a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 416 CDI cab chassis, which means it comes with a 2.2 litre 120kW/560Nm turbo diesel, a seven-speed automatic gearbox, and a GVM of 4100kg. With a Tare Mass of 3300kg, the Saxby has a payload of 800kg, which is definitely a handy feature when travelling with the whole crew on board.

Like the rest of the Suncamper fleet, the motorhome is built using a steel frame base and welded aluminium wall

frames with fire-retardant insulation. Externally, there's no structural wood to get wet and subsequently rot, while internally the cabinetry is made of crewed and glued marine ply. The body has fibreglass walls and a single-piece roof.

BODYWORK

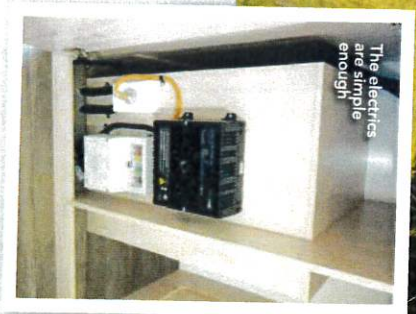
The obvious clue to the Saxby F-Series' intended purpose of being a family motorhome lies in its rather prominent luton peak. A little surprisingly, there isn't a great deal of external storage capacity apart from the gas cylinder bin beside the rear habitation door and a mid-offside storage bin which utilises internal under-seat space. Familiar are the double-glazed acrylic windows and at the rear is a Dometic entry door, with its trademark hourglass window insert.

This particular Saxby was essentially built to be a no-frills motorhome, but it does have the external essentials like a Carefree awning, electric step, and LED wall light. Setting up the motorhome for the night barely takes minutes.

“The colour scheme might sound a bit bland, but it works well for this layout”



The exterior is free of wood, meaning you can forget any potential rotting issues down the line



The electrics are ample enough

ELECTRICS AND GAS
In keeping with the design of the rest of the motorhome, the electrics are fairly simple. A 1200Ah AGM battery supplies the 12V load and that's charged up by both the CBE 22A mains charger and a 135W solar

panel. For those considering off-grid camping, a second 135W panel is available as an option. There is but one 9kg gas cylinder — the obvious disadvantage of this over two 4.5kg cylinders is that there's no spare if you run out.



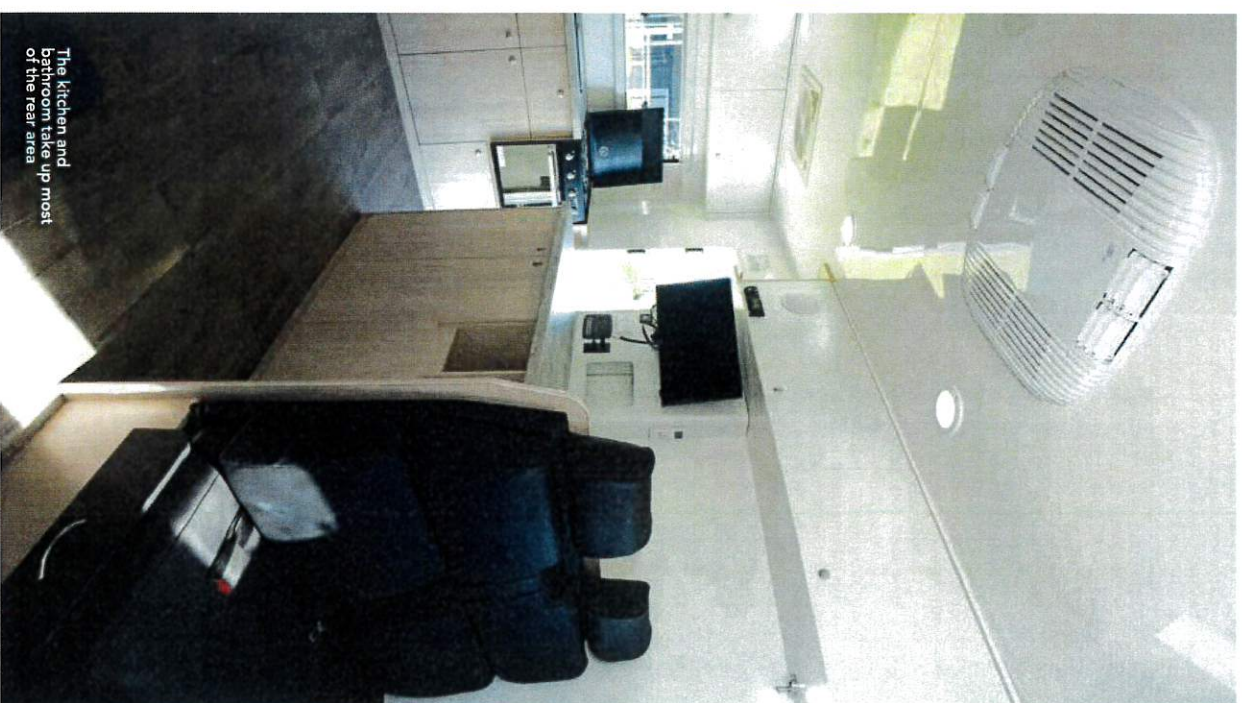
Inside you'll find a spacious layout

THE INTERIOR DEPARTMENT

Stepping aboard reveals not only a spacious layout but one that's a bit unusual for a motorhome. For starters, the rear area is all kitchen and bathroom. The latter takes up the offside corner space, leaving the rest of the space for a kitchen consisting of benches across the rear wall and along the nearside wall, and on the opposite wall a fridge cabinet that adjoins the bathroom. Completing the cabinetry is a wardrobe that butts up against the fridge.

All the forward area consists of seating: a cafe dinette located on the nearside with a sideways facing lounge opposite. It creates quite an open feel in this area, which is a good touch because the cab has been treated more rental motorhome style via fixed cab seats and the luton bed above.

While the colour scheme — black for the upholstery, white for the walls and ceiling, and laminated timber look for the cabinetry — might sound a bit bland, it's one that works quite well for this layout. The white walls certainly create a light filled interior, with the black seating offering up a nice sense of contrast.



The kitchen and bathroom take up most of the rear area

“Many a family RV I have seen have relatively small kitchens, but that’s not the case here

SPECIFICATIONS

VEHICLE	Manufacturer Suncamper Model Saxby F-Series Base Vehicle Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 416 CDI Tare weight 3170kg GVM 4100kg Licence Car Passengers 6 Berths 5/6
MECHANICAL	Engine 2.2 litre turbo diesel Power 120kW@3800rpm Torque 380Nm@1400-2400rpm Gearbox 7F-Tonic Brakes ABS Disc
DIMENSIONS	External length 7.65m (25ft) External width (incl. awn) 2.35m (7ft 8.5in) External height 3.35m (11ft) Internal height 2.01m (6ft 7in) Bed size 2.16m x 1.5m (7ft x 5ft)
EQUIPMENT	Cooktop Thetford Triplex 3 burner & grill Fridge Thetford 274 litre 12V compressor Microwave Oven Samsung Lighting 12V LED Batteries 1 x 120Ah Solar panels 1 x 135W Air conditioner Belair 3500 Toilet Thetford cassette Shower Separate cubicle Hot water heater Swift 28 litre gas/elec Heater No Water tank 108 litre Grey tank 108 litre Gas cylinders 1 x 9.01kg
PRICE	\$163,000

MORE INFORMATION
suncampermotorhomes.com.au



The F-Series doesn't have an abundance of storage, but there is enough for most travellers



A Thetford three-burner cooktop



Plenty of bench space to slice and dice



A Thetford cassette and basin

FAMILY-SIZED CATERING

Many a family RV I have seen have relatively small kitchens, but that's not the case here. The Thetford three-burner cooktop with grill/oven and stainless-steel sink take up the rear bench top space. On the other side of the doorway, the microwave oven is fitted under the nearside bench top. This, along with the fridge located on the opposite side, creates a kitchen with room to move. There's a fair bit of cupboard and overhead locker space, but

somewhat less drawer capacity with just one for cutlery in the rear bench. In addition to the kitchen in the rear section, the wall space by the habitation door doubles as the power and entertainment area. Mounted on the protruding panel is a battery monitor, 12V control panel, water tank gauging, a 240V power point, and a USB charger hub. The main fuse panel is in the cupboard below. Both the television and radio are mounted on the wall beside the electrics.

The luton bed measures 2.16m x 1.5m and is accessed by an aluminium ladder



CLEANING UP

Tucked in the rear corner, the bathroom isn't quite the same size as, say, a full-width one found in many RVs these days — but it has all the essentials, including a separate shower cubicle. A little surprisingly, there's just a simple shower curtain, instead of a translucent door. Outside the shower cubicle, there's the expected Thetford cassette and a vanity wash basin with cupboard below. A large wall mirror and ceiling fan hatch complete the ensemble.



Subtlety always wins out

SEATING AND SLEEPING

Mid motorhome, it's all about the seating thanks to a four-person cafe dinette one side and the sideways lounge on the other. Both forward and rear facing dinette seats have seatbelts and, when travelling along, the occupants get a fair view on both sides. Given the seating positions, the rear TV — when hinged out — can be seen fairly easily from the rear and side facing seats.

This is also the bedroom area, with the cafe dinette folding down to form a bed. Likewise, the lounge on the opposite side can be used as a single bed. It's not fitted to this particular Saxby, but the lounge can also have an additional double bunk bed fitted. Above the cab, the luton bed measures 2.16m x 1.5m (7ft x 5ft) and is accessed by a decent aluminium ladder. There are awning windows fitted on both sides and reading lights on the nearside. When not in use, the bed can be lifted up out of the way to minimise head knocks when moving to and from the cab.

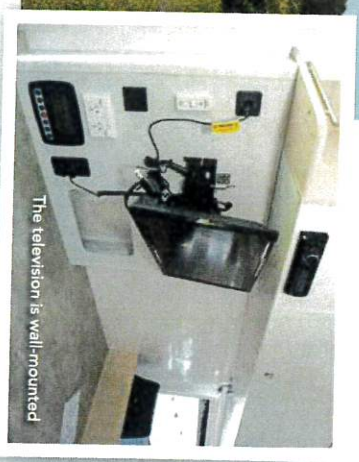


Setting up takes all of a few minutes



It's not for everyone, but this motorhome would be well-suited for families or couples wanting some extra space

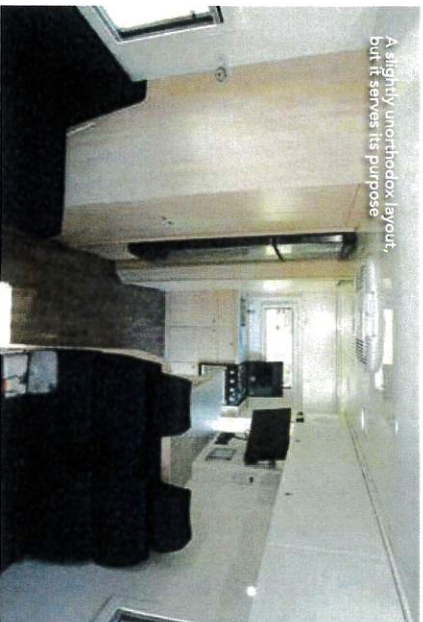
THE BOTTOM LINE
 It's easy to see that the Saxby F-Series motorhome layout isn't for everyone, but the good news is that there are other layouts available in the Saxby range more suitable for couples — some with fixed beds, and some with dropdowns. However, there's no doubt that the Saxby F-Series is well-equipped for families or couples that don't necessarily want a fixed bed but do like a bit of space set aside for relaxation. **F.**



The television is wall-mounted

ON THE ROAD

I spent a fair bit of time behind the wheel of the Saxby. The Mercedes-Benz diesel engine is certainly a smooth and willing performer, as is the 7-G-Tronic gearbox. The driver's cab is an unadorned setup, but all the essentials are fitted. Like most motorhomes, there's a fair level of road noise, though this didn't hinder conversation too much. There were also a few creaks and squeaks — some of which I could easily identify, like the cockpit lid and grill. Those being eliminated by the usual method of a tea towel and cushion, but there were others that I'd be investigating and fixing to ensure a reasonably quiet drive.



A slightly unorthodox layout, but it serves its purpose

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