

A Family Affair



Family vans seem to be making a comeback, and the Royal Flair Family Flair is ideally suited to Mum, Dad and kids touring

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY GIL SCHOTT



The bunk area is positioned right against the kitchen bench



Glass locker doors above the dinette



Twin gas bottles on the A-frame



Beam and spring suspension

ON THE OUTSIDE

The Royal Flair Family Flair is a bonny big van, though not a giant at 20 feet. It's fairly standard in external appearance, white aluminium cladding, tidy decals and Galaxy windows.

She's built on a Supergal chassis with dual beam axle and leaf spring suspension. On the A-frame is a pair of 4.5kg gas bottles and the house water tank underneath is protected by a galvanised shield.

A large forward boot provides plenty of storage, and the forward section is protected by a classy grey chequerplate style stone shield. Along the lower flanks is a protective layer of chequer-plate and the galvanised wheel arches are dressed with moulded spats. At the rear the bumper carries a spare wheel and there is provision for a bike rack.

An A&E rollout awning is fitted, along with an external light, grab handle light, fold-down picnic table and power outlet. A slide out BBQ is fitted just behind the front boot.

The power system includes a battery pack, and the chassis has been raised slightly to aid clearance.

ON THE INSIDE

With any family van, it's the inside layout that counts, and the Royal Flair looks to have the goods in that department.

The Family Flair is a rear door configuration, with the kid's bunk bedroom at the rear, the kitchen forward along the driver's side with the lounge dinette opposite, and the main bedroom up the front.

The kids' bedroom comprises a three-tier bunk arrangement, with a full-height cupboard and drawer combination between the entry and the bunks. This, I'd guess, would be the kid's clothes department.

The bunks look to be quite substantial and feel pretty comfortable. An access ladder/panel positioned alongside the kitchen bench allows access to the upper bunks. I'd not leave any crockery on this end of the bench while the kids are in their cots. I can see a grubby little foot kicking a cup (or worse) onto the floor on the climb down.

Each bunk has its own narrow window at the head of the bed. These are curtained for privacy and each has a power point and reading light.

The kitchen is positioned along the driver's side between the bedrooms and is practical enough for a family.



The interior of the Family Flair is quite spacious

Bunk vans. Remember when most caravans had bunks or seats that converted to bunks? Family touring seems to have taken second place to just couples over the past decade. I guess most families tended to head for resort style holidays rather than family vaning, and combined with the boom in retired couples hitting the road, family rigs fell from favour.

They're back with a bang now, though. A family holiday in a van is much more economically attractive nowadays. Gone are the days of the 'holiday house or shack' down the coast. It's far more economical to have that 'shack' on wheels, so you can still have your family holiday on the coast, without the hassles and costs involved in a permanent holiday base.

The Royal Flair Family Flair fits right into this holiday category.



The main bedroom

A narrow bench alongside the kids' room has a slide out pantry and drawer beneath. Alongside this is a stainless steel sink with drawers and cupboards beneath. A four-burner cook top (three gas and one electric) and grill is fitted at the forward end of the bench, with pot drawers beneath.

Above bench level a set of overhead lockers is fitted, with a range hood above the cook top and light above the sink. A microwave is fitted in the overhead alongside the top bunk. A curtained window is positioned behind the sink.

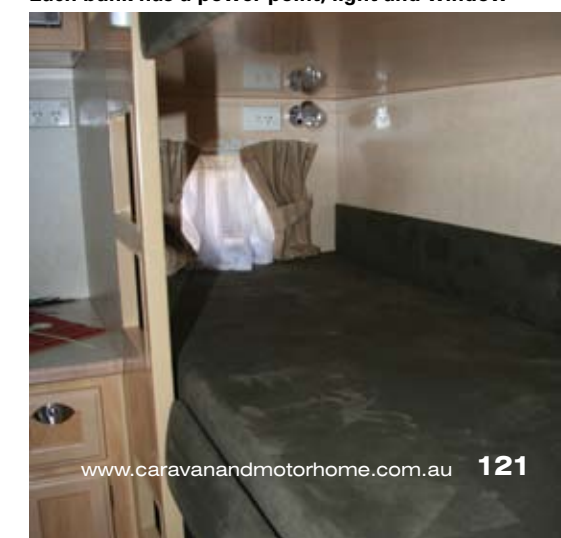
Forward of the kitchen bench is the fridge freezer, with a TV position above. The telly can be swivelled and seen from the main bedroom, lounge and the kids' beds.

The lounge dinette is an L-shaped layout with a large table. There is ample room here for a family to dine happily and the upholstery is comfortable. It's also a good spot for dad to kick back for a snooze while the kids are out terrorising the neighbourhood.



The kitchen bench area

Each bunk has a power point, light and window





Triple bunks at the rear for the kids

There is some storage under the lounge, and a set of leadlight glass door lockers above. There's a handy shelf at the door end of the overhead, and a neat idea is a shelf under the forward end where a Playstation II is fitted.



The main bedroom features a queen island bed fitted north south, with flanking mirrored wardrobes, bedside tables and drawers. Corner cupboards with mirror doors are positioned at the bed foot.

Big windows flank the bed, along with the forward window. These are curtained for privacy. A pair of lockers is fitted above the bed head, with a clock in between. There's plenty of storage space beneath the bed, along with a porta-potti provision.

In this bedroom I'd put a screen or curtain across to shut out the kids (pity it couldn't be sound proofed).

I think an external shower would be a good accessory to include in this rig, but all in all it's a pretty good family holiday wagon. The finish inside is neat and tidy and the layout is quite practical.

WRAP-UP

A family van is a very viable option these days. Gone are the holiday homes or shacks we used to have, but a mobile holiday home like the Family Flair is much more practical these days. And the really family friendly aspect of this rig is the reasonable price. ■

RATINGS

ON THE OUTSIDE:	7.5/10
ON THE INSIDE:	8/10
IN THE KITCHEN:	7.5/10
AT THE DINETTE:	8/10
IN THE BEDROOM:	8/10

SPECIFICATIONS

MANUFACTURER:	Royal Flair
MODEL:	Family Flair
BODY LENGTH:	19ft 9in (6.02m)
WIDTH:	7ft 9in (2.36m)
TARE WEIGHT:	1813kg
PRICE AS TESTED:	\$44,990

KEY ASPECTS

1. Kids bunkhouse
2. Internal layout
3. Lounge/dinette
4. Practical kitchen
5. Internal finish

THANKS TO

Dave Bellis and the crew at Queensland RV
 248 Nicklin Way
 Warana QLD
 (07) 5493 4699

KEY

1. Bed
2. Lounge
3. Table
4. Kitchen
5. Bunk beds
6. Storage

