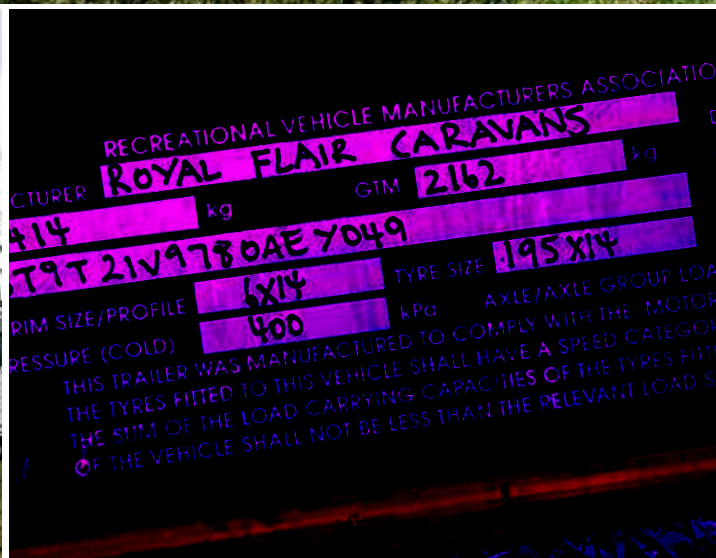




**Bottom right:** Outdoor entertaining is a breeze with the two-burner barbecue and side table. **Bottom left:** The Van Royce rides on a traditional seven-leaf tandem rocker suspension with beam axles and 14in alloy wheels.



# Host with THE MOST

ENTERTAIN IN STYLE WITH THE ROYAL FLAIR VAN ROYCE ELITE.

**D**o you like to indulge? There's no mistaking the sumptuous nature of the Royal Flair Van Royce Elite – even the name conjures up something akin to Rolls-Royce. Mind you, this isn't a van that will fit in everyone's garage – it has some length to it, and because it tips the scales at over two tonnes unladen, the family car needs to have a bit of grunt if it's to tow it.

### A CLASS ACT

It's a mistake to describe this Royal Flair as anything resembling bare: there are luxurious touches from stem to stern. While by no means garish, the decor is distinctly grander than one usually finds in a caravan.

Another obvious difference is the floor plan. In this case, the separate moulded shower and the toilet are amidships on opposite sides of the van and readily accessible from the bedroom. If you have used a toilet after someone's had a shower in a combined compartment, you'll appreciate the advantage of separate shower and toilet rooms.

Gold door trims and a full-height panel of diffusing glass on the side of the shower enclosure signal that this van is aimed at the above-average market.

No less impressive is the angled sink, cooking and workbench area: it simply looks right and makes kitchen chores as appealing as they can be. Cooking appliances consist of a cooktop with three gas burners and one electric plate, a grill beneath, and an eye-level microwave. A bit of a let down is the absence of an oven – I don't think anyone can do a Sunday roast in the microwave and get the same result that an oven does.

It's a class act, though, with a brushed stainless steel splashback along all the wet area. The lighting in all the shady corner spots is good, too – no need to guess where things are.

### A SOCIAL CENTRE

At the rear of the van is an extra large L-shaped seat which should accommodate six visitors, giving it the potential to be a social centre as you travel. It would be a squeeze to have six settings on the table though.

Above the lounge are so many overhead cupboards that one wonders how they could all be utilised. There's a handy bench top with a dual powerpoint at one end of the lounge seating – a place where the laptop could be plugged in and rested when not in use. Curtains with pelmets frame the hopper-style windows.

Immediately to the right as you enter is a wall-mounted TV/DVD combo flatscreen unit above what appears to be a cupboard. The innocent-looking cupboard has an opening front door plus a lid to expose an on-board washing machine. So there's no more hunting for coins of the right denomination, or standing in the queue outside the caravan park laundry, as the washer is a standard fitting.

Another nice touch is the board with key hooks and a rub panel behind – when this van was designed, somebody must have taken note of what a mess swinging keys can make.

With all the space available for food storage, pots, pans and other things, a few large drawers in place of some of the shelved cupboards would not have gone astray. It was a little disappointing to find that the drawers that were fitted didn't have stoppers, meaning they are prone to rolling all the way out.

In all fairness, though, this particular van hadn't undergone a pre-delivery inspection when we reviewed it.

In the kitchen is a two-door Dometic refrigerator-freezer. The upper air vent would be better positioned as high as possible above the condenser fins for an optimum level of heat transfer. The dealer, Ian Grant's Caravans in Traralgon West, Vic, said this and the lack of stoppers on the drawers would be looked at before the van was sold.

### AIR OF DISTINCTION

The bedroom boasts a standard-size innerspring mattress on an extendable base to suit taller travellers. The bed base is a slatted unit which is also adjustable for the weight of the user.

The space beneath is positively cavernous – excellent for the storage of bulky goods. Deep wardrobes – again something not often found – flank the bed



Clockwise from main: Two TVs and a washing machine are standard; the angled benchtop maximises the available space; the L-shaped lounge could seat six.



and each has a mirrored front. There are also overhead and bedside storage spaces. Large windows provide plenty of light.

A second combination Daewoo 15in TV/DVD is wall-mounted for viewing

from the bed. An Explorer through-the-wall antenna point services the bedroom TV, while a roof-mounted Winegard antenna services the TV in the living area.

The roof hatches at each end of the van are supplemented by a remote controlled rooftop Cormorant reverse-cycle air-conditioner by Aircommand. With the Cormorant's 3.5kW of cooling and 4.2kW of heating capacity, occupants should be comfortable in almost any weather.

Outside, there's the 18ft (5.5m) awning – a good spot for evening drinks. There is a drop-down table and a two-burner gas barbecue fitted as standard under the awning area.

Electrical outlets – five doubles and three singles – are all in useful places, and there's one 12V outlet of the car cigarette lighter style. Large fluorescent lights on the cabin ceiling and halogen reading and downlights do a more-than-adequate job of lighting the inside, while a pair of incandescent lights is located under the awning along with an illuminated door handle.

All lighting is low voltage. There's a welcome boot light as well. A single 102Ah ACDelco maintenance-free 12V battery sits inside the front boot and is topped up by an Electro 20A charger.

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See News and FAQ's on our web site for more information.

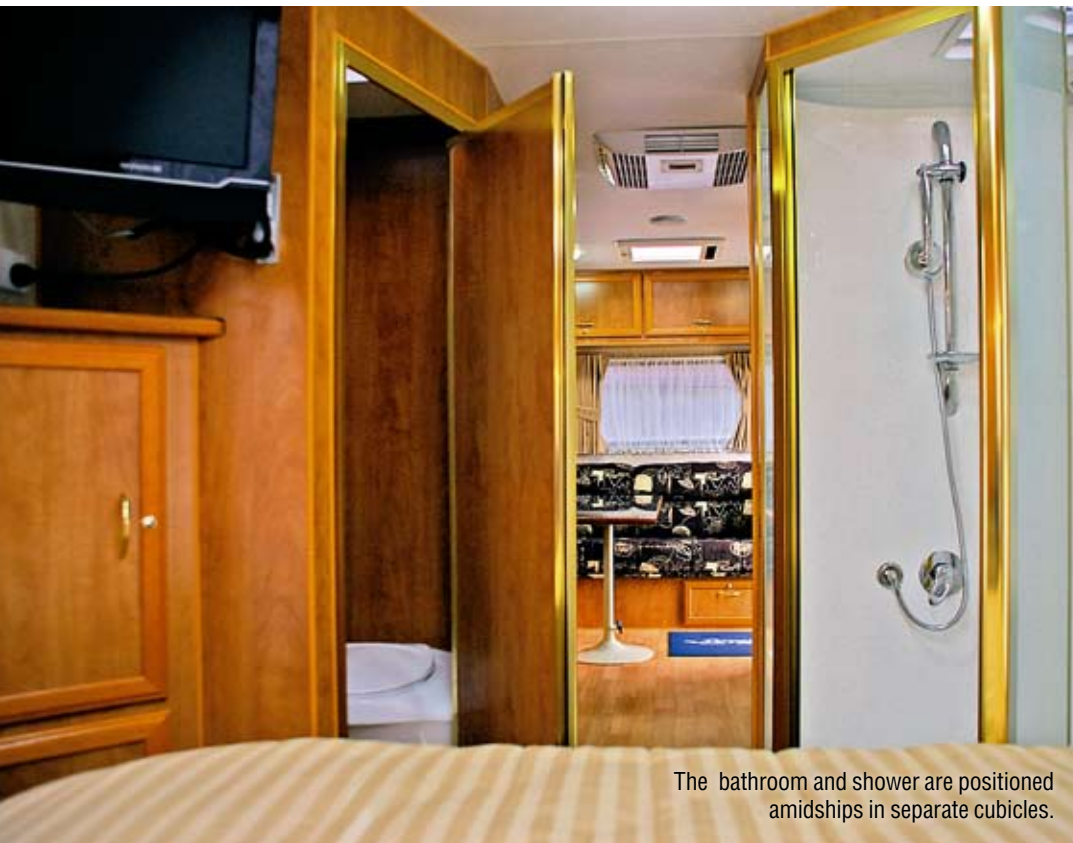


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The bathroom and shower are positioned amidships in separate cubicles.

### A SOLID MATCH

The van is built on a substantial G&S tandem galvanised chassis with stacked 150/100mm main rails and a 50mm riser under the suspension. Drop-down manual corner jacks are used to steady the van on-site.

The suspension used is a traditional seven-leaf tandem rocker with beam axles and 14in alloy wheels. Stopping power is supplied by 10in electric brakes. The tyres fitted are Maxway eight-ply rating 195R14 each at 950kg capacity. One spare wheel is mounted on the light-duty rear bumper.

A pair of 4.5kg gas cylinders is fitted on the A-frame as standard – these can be optioned up to 9kg cylinders on request. Inside the van, an LPG gas detector/alarm is fitted.

The Elite carries a pair of 95L water tanks above and behind the axle assembly, with water level readouts inside the van. One filler point is used to replenish

the tanks. Hot water is provided by a Suburban gas-electric unit.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

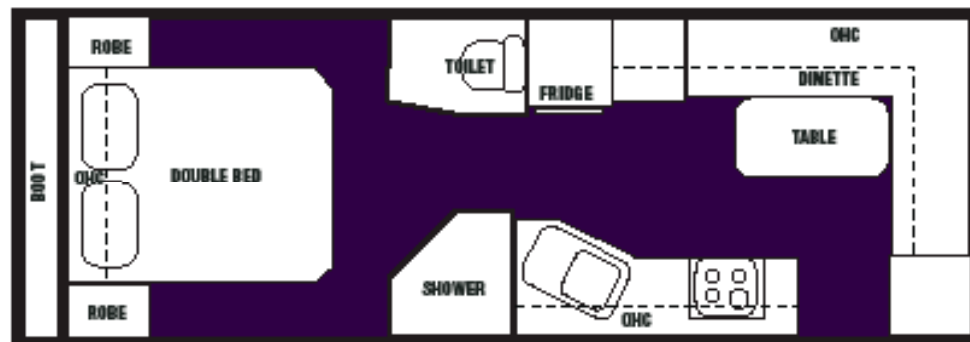
The Royal Flair Van Royce Elite is a sumptuous caravan with space, flair and amenities to suit long-term getaways.

Attention to the position of the upper fridge vent and stoppers for the drawers would add to the overall appeal, although it was encouraging to note the dealer was on top of these issues.

I asked at the start of this story if you liked to indulge. If the answer is “yes”, then this might be the van for you.

**Ian Grant's Caravans, Princes Highway, Traralgon West, Vic, (03) 5174 1381, (03) 5174 8976, [www.iangrantscaravans.com.au](http://www.iangrantscaravans.com.au)**

**For more information, including your nearest dealer, visit [www.royalflair.com.au](http://www.royalflair.com.au)**



## Royal Flair Van Royce Elite

**External length (cabin)** 7m (23ft)

**External width** 2.4m (7ft 9in)

**Nameplate ATM** 2414kg

**Nameplate Tare** 2014kg

**Nameplate GTM** 2162kg

**Frame** Meranti

**Chassis** 150mm box section

**Suspension** Seven-leaf springs, loadshare tandem beam axles

**Brakes** 10in electric

**Fridge** Dometic RM7851 186L three-way with separate freezer

**Cooking** Swift four-burner cooktop, grill, microwave and external barbecue

**Gas** 2 x 4.5kg cylinders

**Lights** 12V halogen, fluorescent and incandescent

**Battery charger** Electro 20A

**Battery** 1 x 102Ah 12V, sealed

**Hot water** 21L Suburban gas/electric

**Fresh water** 2 x 95L tanks, mains connection, bib tap on A-frame

**Shower** Moulded one-piece

**Toilet** Cassette

**Air-conditioner** Reverse-cycle

Aircommand Cormorant

**Washing machine** Lemair 2.2kg automatic

**Price** \$64,990 (as reviewed)

### liked

- Quality appointments
- Separate shower and toilet
- Spacious, unconventional, but very functional floor plan
- Light in the boot

### I would have liked

- Improved ventilation for the fridge
- Stoppers for the drawers
- Protection for the external barbecue gas connector from road grit
- More drawers instead of cupboards for kitchen storage

### floorplan