



# Mean machines

Tom Alder asks them why they like their wheels

Mandi Lamont:  
Datsun van 1985

IT WAS SNOWING DOWN the south of Huon Valley in Tasmania. I was travelling the east coast down the south of Huon Valley where I was living. I'd bought the van about ten years ago in Tasmania.

First the alternator went, then the lights went but luckily someone behind us had their high beam, shining their lights through the van so we could see where we were going. But I got to the corner and accidentally stalled it. After many goes I managed to start it while the people behind us just waited.

We never got the chance to meet them — they just honked their horn when we got into town. These things don't happen when you've got a brand new car. Most people would just pull over and ring the NRMA. That's one thing about owning an old vehicle is that you get many opportunities to meet strangers.

Twice I've been back to the mainland by ferry the second time I packed my stuff and came to Braidwood.

You can pretty much live in my van. You can sleep in the back when going on holidays. My dog at the time, Sirius, had the front while I slept in the back. One day camping down at Araluen I had about eight people sleeping in the back — but we weren't going anywhere.



It cruises down the Clyde Mountain at about 80, unlike most cars these days. It's not about speed it's more about getting where you want to go and enjoying the moment. There's plenty of time to enjoy the view!

With this new paint job I've done on the side of the van, it's just asking to



## CARS 'N STUFF

be pulled over by a bored cop by the side of the road. But you've gotta be different you know?

Jonathan Throsby:  
Land Rovers, Jaguar, tractor

I've owned it for nearly seven years now and I've been collecting them for nearly twenty years. I've got an 88-inch wheelbase at my Mother's house and I also have an 86-inch at a shed in Cooma.

When I was a child my father owned an old Land Rover. We used to go everywhere in it. I think that's where my passion came from. They've always been around ever since. I also like their simplicity. It's a bit like a big Meccano set, very basic, very functional and great for throwing the dogs in and the odd tool. It's also great for putting all the lawn clippings and firewood in the back. The great thing about them is they seem to hold their value — not that I plan to sell it mind you.

People say they're quite fragile, but I don't think so, I've never once broken an axle. For me they've always been really reliable. The only part that isn't reliable is modern electric fuel pump. My son Orlando adores it — he's claimed it for himself when he's older. I've had the tractor for a bit over 20 years now. It's been very reliable in the time that I've owned it. The only thing I've ever done to it is put in a new clutch in 2000. Except for the occasional fuel blockage it's been a very good workhorse.

I was up at a farm in Sydney at Windsor where there was a farmer who was a turf grower. He had all these new shiny Ford tractors. He came up to me and abused me and said I should be ashamed of myself driving around on that. It was in such an appalling state but very good mechanically. Touch wood I won't need any new parts for it.

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