

Destination Dreaming



***What's in a motorhome
name? Plenty, according
to Malcolm Street....***

Having been in this business for many years I'm fascinated by how manufacturers come up with model names. While some origins are obscure others are quite clear. I think the clever ones create something of an evocative feel about them, which is smart because they draw you in. This is precisely why I found myself behind the wheel of TrailLite's Wanaka 759X. I'm a frequent visitor to Wanaka – mostly in the winter time – and I quite like spending a bit of time there. Now I understand that's not an entirely logical process for choosing a motorhome for review, but it's the way things go sometimes!

With an external length of 8.5 m (27' 11"), the Wanaka 759X is not a short motorhome. It also has a tare weight of 5100 kg, which given the gross vehicle mass (GVM) of 5995 kg gives a good payload capacity of just under 900 kg. If that is not enough then the GVM can be increased to 7000 kg but that will of course require a Class 2 driver's licence.



The latest Iveco Daily is proving a popular choice, thanks to its robust construction, load carrying capacity and 3.5-tonne rated towing capacity.



Underpinnings

Using the Iveco Daily 70C17 is a smart move. It allows for the option noted above of increasing the GVM (not available in the Mercedes Benz Sprinter range), whilst retaining the Euro features of a flat-floor cab and swivelling seats (not available in Japanese trucks). It also means you get the super-smooth eight speed fully automatic gearbox.

Being a larger vehicle, TrailLite has wisely opted for the twin-turbo 3.0-litre diesel, which delivers maximum power of 150 kW and a very handy high torque of 470 Nm.



Top: The single slide-out houses the dinette. It's a good compromise between additional living space and added cost, weight and complexity. **Above:** The Wanaka's clean lines are accentuated by the smooth integration of cab and body, while silver paint adds to the overall, upmarket appearance.

Bodywork

Built on a steel chassis above the Daily's, the Wanaka's body is a frameless structure using walls made of a sandwich panel construction that consists of Alufibre, foam core and ply wall lining. Alufibre is an external finish that consists of a layer of fibreglass with a thin layer of powder coated aluminium on the outside. The body isn't all square walls, however, with both the front and the rear having fibreglass mouldings.

In particular, the front area with the skyview hatch above the driver's cab definitely has a classy look about it and fits in well with the

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white and silvery-grey colour scheme. Included in the body structure is the driver's side slide-out, which takes up nearly half the wall length.

Dometic Seitz windows are fitted all around and the entry door is a Hartal fitting, with two features of note: In addition to the normal key entry there is also a digital keypad, plus the door catch looks like it has marine origins and is much better than the usual hook and eye.

External bin space is a little smaller that you might expect in a motorhome this sized. Apart from the gas cylinder bin behind the driver's door there is one on the same side that gives access to the under-bed area. The only other is on the kerb side by the entry door, which although it houses the house batteries does still have storage space left over

The Wanaka 759X rides on the Iveco Daily 70C170 and comes with a near 900 kg load capacity when driven on a standard Class 2 licence.



Body Building

For freedom camping enthusiasts the Wanaka 759X is certainly well equipped, boasting a massive 375-litres of fresh water, plus 200-litres of grey water storage. The limiter here is the toilet cassette tank with its 19-litre capacity, although an option is for a second cassette. However, serious getters-away-from-it-all might like to consider a black tank.

A little point to keep in mind is that one litre of water weighs one kilogram...

On the gas and electrics front the 2 x 9 kg gas cylinders and 300 watts of solar panel capacity to charge up the huge 325 AH AGM house battery should keep everything going for a while. Options available are upgraded power systems as well as various capacity inverters.



External storage space is limited but this could be due to the massive 375-litre fresh and 200-litre grey water storage capacities.



On the Road

Before I drove out of the TrailLite Christchurch depot the staff told me that there might well be a few creaks and groans from the rear, especially around the slide-out. They were indeed correct about that, however the TrailLite philosophy is to let the slide-out 'bed in' by being driven around for a few hundred kilometres before final adjustments are made, to ensure a smooth and quiet operation over the longer term. Apart from that, the Iveco powered Wanaka performed as I would expect – meaning the twin-turbo diesel adding a bit of extra grunt and the air suspension seats certainly made the overall ride more comfortable. I also appreciated the rear view camera, which gave an excellent view when manoeuvring.

Top: While local motorhome manufacturing is a shadow of its former self, TrailLite has secured a comfortable niche built on quality, plus design attributes not matched by imports. **Right:** Door entry is by key or digital keypad, a feature exclusive to TrailLite as far as we are aware.



Inside

Stepping inside the Wanaka, the first thing to do is open the slide-out. That switch, along with all the 12 V switching and hot water service switch, is handily located above the entry door.

Fitted into the slide-out are both a club style lounge with table, plus a 190-litre fridge towards the rear. Even though the table is fairly close to the kitchen bench on the opposite side, there is still room to easily pass through with the slide-out closed. With it open there is plenty of space in the front living area; that being formed by the club lounge, kitchen bench and cab seats that easily swivel (TrailLite having solved the usual Iveco handbrake

obstruction problem in a rather effective manner).

Three big hatches, including the front skyview, plus a fairly light decor result in good natural light levels by day. By night things aren't much different, with LED fittings everywhere, including strip lighting that runs almost the entire length of the motorhome!

A characteristic of this layout is the considerable amount of internal storage. The front area has compartments on either side above the cab seats, plus there's a full height multi-shelved cupboard behind the passenger seat.



Featuring an optional Landmark interior design upgrade the test Wanaka 759X looked more like a prestige city apartment than a traditional motorhome. And even with the slide-out retracted, as pictured, there's still acceptable walk-through room in the front living area.



Lounging and Dining

In addition to the swivelled cab seats there is of course the club lounge dinette. Given the shape of the seat and back cushions, the lounge is definitely orientated more to relaxing, especially as the Zwardvis mount allows the table to be moved around without much difficulty, whilst still giving a stable mount when needed. The 24" flat screen TV is mounted on the fridge wall, which is definitely awkward viewing from the forward facing lounge seat, but otherwise okay. My pick for viewing would be from the swivelled cab seats.



Top: Unusual in design, the Wanaka's dinette does genuine double duty as an after-hours relaxation spot. Along with the dinette the fridge and microwave also reside in the slide-out, opening up the front living space to great effect.



Certainly, the slide-out pantry is better than average and includes a cutlery drawer in the top section.



In the Galley

Mostly because of the very light colour scheme and recessed, easy to use drawer handles, the kitchen has a simplistic look about it. That's deceptive of course because the drawers – even the odd shaped one that fits around the sink plumbing – are well sized. Certainly, the slide-out pantry is better than average and includes a cutlery drawer in the top section.

As you'd expect the full kit is supplied for cooking, with a four burner hob, grill and oven fitted into the bench top and a Panasonic inverter microwave above the fridge. Although there is a locker above the kitchen bench it's mostly occupied by 240-volt circuit breakers, Fusion radio and rangehood venting.

Top: While the kitchen might look a bit simple it's actually well designed and very well equipped. **Above:** Masses of kitchen storage plus a full cooktop, grill and oven will please any travelling chef...

Sleeping

The bedroom area, with the 1.86 m x 1.53 m (6' 1" in x 5') queen-sized bed butted up against the offside wall, is very well appointed. Wardrobes and a tier of three drawers are fitted on either side of the bedhead, plus there are lockers overhead. Impressively, both sides of the bed have a light switch, 240-volt double power point and twin USB charger outlets. Just in case you feel like a little late night music there are also speakers and a radio control panel under the overhead lockers. Additional storage space comes from two drawers underneath the bed, plus there's a wardrobe with three drawers below in the rear kerb-side corner.

Right: Overall the bed is a good size, although at 1.86 m (6' 1") long it might be a bit short for taller travellers. That aside, bedroom storage is excellent as is the fit-out.

Below: Living space is transformed when the slide-out is extended.






Keeping Clean

At first glance it looks like this motorhome has a full width rear bathroom, but because of the corner wardrobe it doesn't. Does that matter? I don't think so, given the bathroom comes with all the essentials: a driver's side corner shower cubicle, loo, vanity cabinet with wash basin and plenty of cupboard and drawer space.

Top: The three quarter-width rear bathroom has a contemporary look and feel, and can be closed off for full privacy. **Right:** The full size shower cubicle is in the driver's-side rear corner and has good natural light and ventilation, as does the whole bathroom.



What I think

In short, I'd be happy to take the Wanaka 759X away for a month or three and give it a thorough test in the Lake Wanaka area. Given it comes with a diesel-fired heater, winter time would be especially good! The slide-out adds considerably to the general living area and there's certainly plenty of internal storage. All-in-all the TrailLite Wanaka 759X is very well equipped for New Zealand – or even Australian – touring! 



Clever use of concealed LED strip lighting, a huge over-cab 'skyview' hatch, large roof hatch and good-sized windows make the Wanaka 759X's interior a bright and enjoyable living space both night and day. Note the half-vinyl/half-carpet flooring, which delivers an extra touch of luxury.

Specs

GENERAL

Make	TrailLite
Model	Wanaka 759X
Type	B-class
Berths	2
Approved Seating	2
Licence	Class 1

VEHICLE

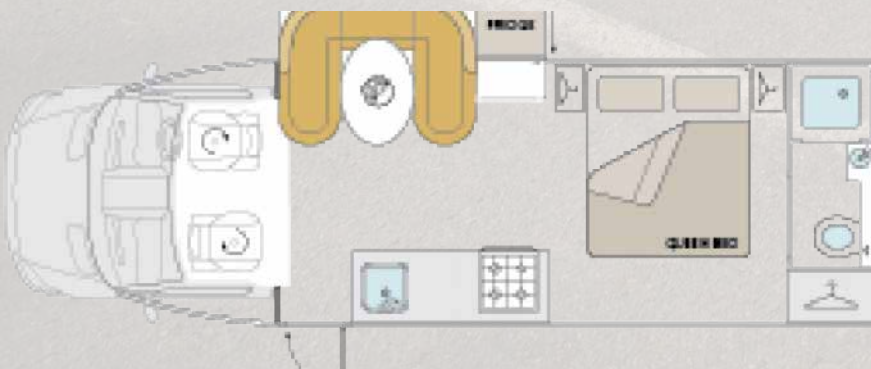
Make/Model	Iveco Daily 70C17
Engine	3.0 L 4-cylinder twin-turbo diesel
Power	150 kW @ 3100-3500 rpm
Torque	470 Nm @ 1400-3000 rpm
Gearbox	8 speed automatic
Safety	ABS, Stability Control, Traction Control front and side airbags
Fuel	100 L

WEIGHTS

Tare Weight	5100 kg
Gross Vehicle Mass	5995 kg (can upgrade to 7000 kg - Class 2 licence required)
Max Payload	895 kg
Braked Towing Capacity	3500 kg

DIMENSIONS

Overall Length	8.50 m (27'11")
Overall Width	2.44 m (8')
Overall Height	3.30 m (10' 10")
Internal Height (minimum)	2.10 m (6' 11")
Main Bed	1.86 m x 1.53 m (6' 1" x 5')



Specs

EQUIPMENT	
Slide-Out	Yes
Awning	Thule Omnistor
Entry Steps	Electric
Hob	Thetford Caprice 4 burner, grill & oven
Rangehood	Dometic
Sink	Stainless steel no drainer
Fridge	190 L Dometic RMD 8555 AES 3-way
Microwave	Panasonic Inverter
Lighting	12 V LED
12 V Sockets/USB Outlets	Multiple
Air Conditioner	Optional
Space Heater	Eberspacher diesel
Hot Water System	Suburban LPG/240 V
Toilet	Thetford cassette
Shower	Separate cubicle
CAPACITIES	
Batteries	1 x 325 AH AGM
Solar	300 W
LPG	2 x 9 kg
Fresh Water	375 L
Grey Water	200 L
Hot Water	22 L
Toilet	19 L cassette
PRICE	
On Road New Zealand From	NZ\$282,239
As Tested	NZ\$297,036
Warranty - Vehicle	As per Manufacturer
Warranty - Motorhome body	5 years structural
Warranty - Appliances	As per manufacturers

Pros

- Quality
- Style
- Spacious living area
- Comfortable lounge
- LED lighting
- Internal storage
- Payload
- Iveco Daily driving
- Water capacity

Cons

- External storage capacity
- Relatively small kitchen
- Awkward TV viewing from some seats
- Sink without drainer

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