

Overlander 4WD magazine - October 1989

Part Extract: Simpson Desert Sortie - The Tough Trek West

Re: Participation by Australian Outback 4 Wheel Drive Hire Co

ANY PROBLEMS?

ALL the vehicles which took part in this expedition were fully checked and serviced before we left Sydney. The trailer was brand new.

Many people, including the guys from Australian Outback, have taken LandCruisers through the Simpson before, but the unknown quantity was the VWs. We were confident they wouldn't let us down, but a bit unsure of their capabilities compared to the 'Cruiser.

When we joined the convoy the only problems they'd experienced were a wheel coming off the trailer; due to incorrect tension on the nuts, and a couple of thrown fanbelts on the Syncro.

During our time in the Simpson, we didn't have so much as a flat tyre. At Dalhousie, our TriStar had a bolt work loose on the accelerator cable which we fixed in a couple of minutes. Then, on the Hugh River Stock Route we threw a fanbelt as well.

The fanbelt problems were caused by rocks getting thrown into the Syncro's engine bay. However, Charles Perry from Ateco says he has already been in touch with Germany to have a plate fitted to the vehicles to prevent this problem.

In terms of performance, the LandCruisers had no trouble. Although I only drove one briefly, I heard no complaints from the other drivers either.

Our TriStar, with its full load and three blokes aboard, performed Purpose-built off-road trailers, such as the one we travelled with, are also available and these run on LandCruiser rims and the same 7.50' x 16' rubber as the 'Cruisers - for ease of tyre changing in the event of a flat.

Even with full loads, both VWs remained willing performers. The 2.1 litre flat fours never missed a beat. I would love to see the 16-inch wheel version in this country, but until it appears, I think Volkswagen are on a winner.

AUSTRALIAN OUTBACK 4WD HIRE

IF YOU are in the market to hire a 4WD vehicle for a trip such as this, you'll find it hard to go past Australian Outback.

I first met Jack Durack and Chris Marten-Cooney in 1987 at Innamincka. They were preparing for a Simpson Desert crossing similar to the one I'd just completed. The purpose of the trip was to subject their vehicles and themselves to the kind of treatment they thought a family hiring one of their vehicles would go through.

The vehicles they hire out are fully expedition-equipped, offering features such as winches and recovery gear, bull-bars, roof-racks, long-range tanks, jerry cans, RFDS radio, and even camping gear if you need it.

Australian Outback can set you up for your trip with sound advice based on experience. The vehicles they have available for hire are either Toyota LandCruisers, or VW Syncro campers.

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Shown above is the rare protection plate belonging to my van - special order to VAG by Australian Outback 4WD Hire Co



Australian Outback 4WD Hire Co syncro TRAKKA, leading the rescue vehicle ... Hartmut's rare RHD DOKAR Tristar with electric winch.

My syncro TRAKKA - first registered March 1991 by Australian Outback 4WD Hire Company, fitted with the above engine protector plate.

Monday, 18 May 2020