

Room to move in the  
*Avida Esperance*

Slide-outs fitted to motorhomes are an effective way to increase interior space and Avida's Esperance allows you to tour in comfort as a couple with the flexibility to bring along kids or grandkids

WORDS AND PICS MALCOLM STREET









Iveco Daily cab chassis is the vehicle of choice for medium to heavy motorhomes these days. Not surprisingly, it offers more carrying capacity than its Italian stablemate, the Fiat Ducato and is cheaper than Iveco's three-pointed star competitor. Possibly with less of a cachet but in the motorhome world, that's not everything. Another

minor matter that improved the Daily's sales chances was a couple of years ago when Iveco finally moved the floor-mounted handbrake, long the bugbear of anyone trying to swivel the driver's seat, to the more user-friendly dashboard position. No more bending and stretching to get the handbrake off. I realise there is much more to the Daily than the

handbrake position, but after a long day on the road, sometimes the little things count. That might all sound slightly irrelevant, except that almost all the motorhomes I've had my hands on lately have been Iveco Daily powered! Avida's Esperance C7844SL is no exception to this. It has Daily 50C18 underpinnings. Translating





3,700kg. There's plenty of payload capacity built into the Esperance because its Tare Mass of 4,336kg results in a payload of 864kg. Some of that is absorbed by the 200-litre water tank and the truck requirements of diesel (100 litres) and AdBlue (20 litres). The current Daily has all the latest safety features - front and rear disc brakes with ABS, an Electronic Stability Program, four airbags, an Advanced Emergency Braking System and Adaptive cruise control.

On the road, it's a very car-like experience to drive once the 7.85m length and 3.2m height are kept in mind. Indeed I find it quite a pleasure driving down the highway with my home directly behind me. I recommend an extensive test drive for anyone unfamiliar with motorhomes. Often when checking

out a motorhome, the house bit gets the complete treatment and the cab a cursory look, yet quite a few road hours will be spent in the driver's cab.

#### AVIDA CONSTRUCTION

The C7844SL is a C-class motorhome, the Luton peak being the obvious clue and designed for four persons. The exact layout is also available as a B-class motorhome, which looks more streamlined but only for two people. The Esperance is very much in the Avida style, using a lightweight sandwich panel construction with a fibreglass finish. Designed to be dent and hail-resistant, the walls and roof are all one-piece construction. Although not a new model, the latest generation has features like the step entrance, fridge vents, water inlets and taillights enhanced in black.



the jargon means a GVM of 5,200kg and a 132kw (180hp) turbo diesel engine. This Daily model has a GCM of 8,700kg for those interested in towing something. Maximum rear axle load is something that only some think about, but because of excessive loading, is becoming of interest. In the case of the Daily, it has a maximum rear axle loading of





External storage bins at a user-friendly height.



Pair of 4.0kg gas cylinders should be adequate for most needs



Externally stored AGM batteries



Mains connection is fully weatherproof



Storage bin door doubles as a picnic table

Underneath the motorhome, protective sheeting keeps the floor intake. Avida reckons their construction is strong enough to be walked on - with care. The SL part of the designation refers to the offside slide-out, which is two-thirds the length of the wall and has a purpose-built awning to reduce the ingress of water and leaf detritus.

For external storage, the Esperance is well-appointed. The motorhome sports several external bins, mainly on the lower area of the chassis. Three are dedicated to items like the two house batteries, mains electrics and the two gas cylinders. Most of the rest are under or in the slide-out (for under-bed and under-seat access), except for the bin at the nearside rear, which is larger than the rest and

designed to take something like a Weber BBQ.

Like any good motorhome these days, there's an awning (electric in this case) to cover most of the alfresco area. The entertainment unit with external speakers and the rear bin have hinged flaps that double as side tables. The supporting struts are detachable and the little trick is to remove them before closing the doors.

### SLIDE-OUT SPACE

There are exceptions to this, but slide-outs are generally good in terms of the space increase they offer in motorhomes. The one fitted to the Esperance is a good example. It's large enough to hold a café dinette, fridge, microwave oven and an east-west double bed, and when opened



Slide-out awning to keep out water and leaves



## SPECIFICATIONS

### VEHICLE

MANUFACTURER AVIDA  
MODEL ESPERANCE C7844SL  
BASE VEHICLE IVECO DAILY 50C18  
TARE WEIGHT 4336KG  
GVM 5200KG  
LICENCE LR  
PASSENGERS 4 (OPTIONAL 6)

### MECHANICAL

ENGINE 3.0-LITRE TURBO DIESEL  
POWER 132KW@3500RPM  
TORQUE 430NM@1500RPM  
GEARBOX 8-SPEED TORQUE CONVERTER  
AUTO  
BRAKES ABS DISC

### DIMENSIONS

EXTERNAL LENGTH 7.85M (25FT 9IN)  
EXTERNAL WIDTH 2.46M (8FT)  
EXTERNAL HEIGHT 3.2M (10FT 6IN)  
INTERNAL HEIGHT 2.02M (6FT 7IN)  
BED SIZE (REAR) DOUBLE  
BED SIZE (FUTON) DOUBLE

### EQUIPMENT

COOKTOP MOBICOOL 4 BURNER, GRILL & OVEN  
FRIDGE THETFORD N4175A THREE-WAY ABSORPTION  
MICROWAVE OVEN NCE  
LIGHTING 12V LED WITH MOOD LIGHTING  
BATTERIES 2 X 100AH AGM  
SOLAR PANELS 170W  
AIR CONDITIONER WEBASTO  
TOILET DOMESTIC CASSETTE  
SHOWER SEPARATE CUBICLE  
HOT WATER HEATER TRUMA 14 LITRE GAS/ELEC  
HEATER WEBASTO DIESEL  
WATER TANK 200 LITRE  
GREY TANK 100 LITRE  
GAS CYLINDERS 2 X 4.0KG  
PRICED FROM (NSW D/A) \$258,770  
AS DISPLAYED WITH OPTIONS \$260,940

### OPTIONS FITTED

LEATHER UPHOLSTERY, ELECTRIC AWNING,  
GLASS SHOWER SCREEN DOOR.



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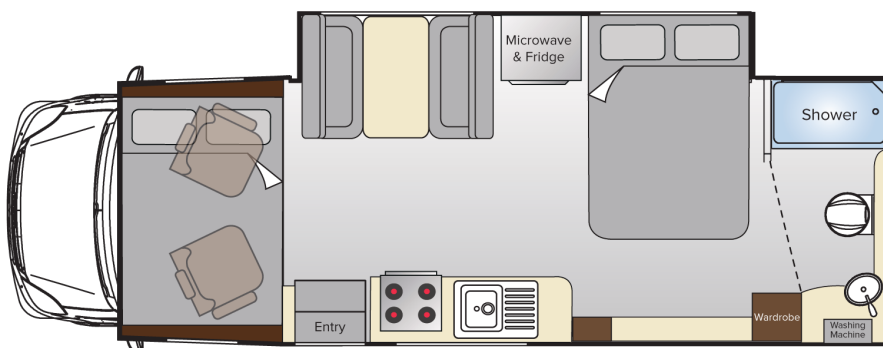


up, it offers plenty of movement room and easy access to the rear bathroom.

A decent window area and large roof hatches allow for a bright interior, adding to the spacious feel. Avida has opted for a fairly neutral colour scheme, albeit in which the glossy grey laminate finish on the cabinetry certainly stands out, as does the black leather upholstery on the seating.

### CAB SPACE

Up front, the Luton peak offers the alternatives of a bed or storage area or a more open area above the cab seats, with the bed lifted. Something I much prefer when moving to and from the cab regularly. Much easier on the head and back. When used for sleeping, the Luton bed is quite well-equipped. The ladder is barefoot-friendly and there are windows and roof-mounted reading lights on either side. A bit of shelf space can be found above the nearside cupboard, at least for the person sleeping on the outside.





Small drawers fitted to both dinette seats



### TAKE A SEAT

Upholstered the way it is, the dinette has an inviting look. Time to sit down and relax, or, in my case, do a visual inspection and make notes comfortably. The dinette is raised slightly above floor level. In this motorhome, there are two seat belts fitted to the rear seats but there's an option for two more to be fitted to the rear-facing seat. In that case, an extra bed will be needed, made up by lowering the table on its central pedestal and moving a few seat cushions around. Both the seat ends have drawers fitted. Not particularly large but ideal for small items and much better than no drawer at all - no need to get down on hands and knees to find things. In the air space above the dinette are two reading lights and two overhead lockers.

### EXTENDABLE KITCHEN

Motorhome kitchens have a slightly familiar look, and nothing unusual here. A stainless-steel sink/drainer and a Mobicool four-burner hob with a separate grill and oven are fitted into the benchtop. There's a nominal amount of bench top space and the cooktop lid can be used

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Kitchen with all the essentials. The fridge and microwave oven are on the opposite side



Hinged extension behind the front passenger's seat, fitted with a couple of shelves makes it a handy pantry

when nothing is cooking. In addition, a hinged extension has been built into the cupboard behind the front passenger's seat for those who need it. It's fitted with a couple of shelves and makes a handy pantry. The caveat is that a little care is required when using the habitation door!

Drawer space makes up most of the kitchen bench storage but there's also a cupboard and a couple of overhead lockers. Although there's a rangehood, the window behind the kitchen and the adjacent door is great for removing cooking odours.

### EAST WEST BED

The double bed fits neatly between the fridge and bathroom walls in the rear of the slide-out. There's no bedside cabinetry, instead, just a magazine pouch, a small corner shelf on either side and two overhead lockers.

At the foot of the bed, it's a different story, with a corner wardrobe with drawers underneath. Where the bed butts up against them, the waist-high wall cupboards

Both bed occupants get a bed shelf and device charger outlets







## Clearing up the confusion about A Frame Towing

While companies claim that their products are compliant to specific design rules or regulations, they cannot claim compliance unless the products have been certified by the governing authority.

In the case of A-Frame Tow Devices, ADR 62/2 "Connections between Vehicles" defines what the design loads and testing methods are. The Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts are the governing body for road vehicles through the ROAD VEHICLE REGULATOR (ROVER). ROVER integrates all applications and approvals under the new Road Vehicle Standards Legislation

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For an A-Frame towing device to be compliant it must be tested as outlined in ADR62/2 and then certified by ROVER.

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## REVIEW | AVIDA ESPERANCE C7844SL

have a shallow depth but are suitable for smaller items. Above those cupboards, where a window might generally be, there's a large flat-screen TV instead. Just digressing slightly, I'm not really a TV watcher, so I'd prefer a window instead. Although the TV is quite large, the viewing angle from the dinette is awkward.

### ROOM WITH A VIEW

Avida's ensuite bathroom is well-appointed, but I really liked the large window in the rear wall. It makes the somewhat confined bathroom area appear more spacious than it is. The shower cubicle occupies the offside corner with the vanity cabinet on the opposite side, leaving the Dometic cassette toilet centre stage. Above the vanity cabinet, an NCE front-loading washing machine takes up the wall space. A sliding door closes off the rear area as needed to keep things private.

Dinette, fridge and bed are all built into the slide-out



Rear bathroom is quite compact



Corner shower moulding has soap and shampoo holders



### OFF GRID

For those who like to free camp or spend a few days away from mains power, the Esperance is quite well equipped with its 200-litre water tank. Two 100Ah AGM batteries and a 170W solar panel supply the 12V load, which is reasonable, given the three-way fridge and diesel heater, so a Lithium LiFePO4 upgrade is only essential if the power requirements change.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

The Esperance isn't a new model but one that represents a continuing line of Avida development - refining

rather than a totally new model. The slide-out is an extra dimension in the motorhome layout that does much for the floor space. It's a motorhome that is mainly designed for a couple to tour in comfort, and the addition of the Luton peak also adds flexibility for a family or grandchildren.



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