

TRANSTYLE

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ROLLIN' BY THE RIVER

by Travis Godfredson, Moby Dick Content

IS THAT SHOUT OF 'TRAILER TRASH' JUST TO INSULT SOME AMERICAN HILLBILLIES? OR IS SOMEONE TRYING TO WARN YOU THAT SOMETHING NASTY IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN TO YOUR BOAT'S ROAD RIDE?

It's a dark, moonless night and you're cruising down the road en route to your secret fishing spot. The tunes are humming quietly while the wife and kids are in a deep slumber. Your tummy is well-satisfied with a Double Quarter Pounder soaked in a Chocolate Shake. You imagine the perfect sunrise in the morning; visions of the perfect cast to your favourite tree stump. Your imagination is rudely interrupted when the boat and trailer start snaking down the road behind you. You ease off the gas, clattering to a stop to review the carnage. The boat and trailer are leaning stubbornly to one side; springs collapsed under twisted metal. The tyres are rubbing hard up against the steel, leaving the acrid smell of mechanical failure in your nostrils. You're 100kms from nowhere, the missus wakes up, clears her eyes and is deeply unimpressed – and now the damn kids have just woken up. Then it occurs to you. Maybe you should have bought a better trailer...

HERE ARE THE COMMON TRAILER PROBLEMS - AND HOW TO AVOID THEM:

THE WHEEL DEAL

Overheating bearings are the most common trailer problem. A bearing is designed to hold grease or oil, lubricating small rollers within a housing. Over time the grease will dissipate due to extreme heat and seepage. Without grease, water will enter the bearing and corrode the steel. Then, under load, the bearing will overheat and collapse and your wheel will either seize up or fall off.

The two indicators for bad bearings are noise and heat. Keep an ear out when towing, and also put your hand around the hub after stopping to check for excessive heat (don't worry, you'll know!). This is more likely to occur when touring – when the boat is loaded with gear placing more pressure on the bearings.

Bearing buddies are a nifty product, enabling you to pump grease into the bearing. Pump in just enough so the front spring pops out – not too much, or you'll pop the seal on the inside of the hub.

Change your bearings once a year (whether you have buddies or not) and consider keeping a full replacement kit in your car for emergencies. Just make sure you have the right parts and tools to do the job. A practice run may save you a world of time and pain.

UFO SIGHTINGS ON THE HUME HIGHWAY

Have you ever been cruising down the highway, been overtaken by a bounding wheel – and then realised it's yours? Or, perhaps you've had one come your way? Losing a wheel happens all too often. It's usually just the wheel nuts and is very easy to prevent.

Keep a wheel brace handy and nip them up every couple of trips and put a small amount of grease on the stud to make nut removal easier. Sadly, you can't always trust your mechanic to look after your nuts. I took my trailer to a reputable tyre supplier, only to watch my wheel bound down the road in excitement. The cause, as described by the fitter, was a faulty air compressor that didn't generate enough pressure to drive the operator gun. Bollocks.

PRESSURE ACTS

A patch of rubber no bigger than your hand separates your shiny new boat and trailer from the tarmac. If tyres run flat, there's a good chance you'll expose the weak sidewall to the road and damage them. Tyre walls can also be damaged when they rub against a curb. Over-inflating tyres can be just as wicked. We inadvertently ran truck tyres at the maximum load, and they lasted about 50kms before blowing to Kingdom Dumb.

Keep tyre pressure around 30 – 40psi and run 8-ply tyres rated for towing, if you can. And avoid low profile tyres, which may give you that Snoop Dog look, but won't offer the same cushioning effect of a taller tyre.

Tread is a critical component of tyres. Well “der”, I hear you say, but it still surprises me how many people cruise down the highway in their 200 Series Landcruiser worth more than a small island, towing a trailer with tyres that ran bald some time before the Vietnam War.

The thing with tread is that it creates static friction and the more static friction at the contact point, the better the traction. Good tread assists this process. Jack-knifing is not caused by heavy winds or unbalanced trailers (though they don't help), it's caused when tyres lose their grip (or friction) on the road and slide sideways.

WORTH THE WEIGHT?

Weight is the serial killer of trailers. It creates excessive stress on frames, springs and bearings. Many trailer-boat owners work the margins, staying just within legal limits for braked trailers, however it all gets thrown out the door for the Christmas holidays when half-a-tonne of BCF product is loaded into the boat. Compounding the weight problem is that the load sits up above the axle, creating a higher centre of gravity and reducing stability.

Another problem is sending weight too far forward in the boat (and onto the trailer hitch), which compromises the ride. Your suspension is supposed to absorb impact through the wheels – not the weight of five Malvern Star bikes and a Swedish steel pram. Australian trailer manufacturers have compensated for our sins, building better quality trailers with a lower centre of gravity. Ride quality has also improved with independent suspension.

ALLOY VS STEEL

IRONING OUT THE ISSUE

Deciding between alloy or steel is the biggest consideration for trailer buyers.

Alloy is lighter, resulting in fuel cost savings under towing conditions. Lighter trailers can also (potentially) bring the total package weight within the required limits required for braked trailers (resulting in cost savings for brake components).

Alloy won't rust, which suits a saltwater environment and the I beam construction on alloy won't hold water, minimizing corrosion.

Sure, an alloy trailer may flex a bit, but that's a good thing as your boat won't absorb the impact.

On the down side, alloy trailers are generally more expensive – and early models suffered from quality issues. Designs from reputable Australian companies like Transtyle have largely overcome this stigma.

Steel has the benefit of strength and is generally regarded as more cost effective. Repairs are easier too, with a wider access to qualified steel repairers. On the down side, steel trailers should be inspected to prevent rust. Paint scratches should be touched up to prevent oxidation and repairs on galvanized trailers will need to be properly re-galvanized to prevent corrosion. 🐟

 **TRANSTYLE**



LOW PROFILE TYRES MIGHT GIVE YOU THAT SNOOP DOG LOOK, BUT TALLER TYRES WILL GIVE YOU A SOFTER RIDE



I-BEAM SECTIONS WON'T HOLD WATER LIKE SOME BOX SECTIONS CAN



SAY GOODBYE TO LEAF SPRINGS WITH RUBBER TORSION AXLES



TRANSTYLE OFFER GREASE OR OIL-FILLED BEARINGS

EAST COAST PILGRIMAGE

Jack Murphy, from Moby Dick Content, reflects on his trip with a Transtyle Trailer.

The trip from Melbourne to Far North Queensland along the coast isn't an easy drive by any stretch of the imagination. Doubly so, if you've got to trek it back again at the end of your adventure. All up, you're looking at over 8,000km of hard wear and tear on you and your boat trailer. Along the way you'll also find treacherous road works, corrugated dirt roads, cattle grids and plenty of potholes, which all try and put the boot in. Call me crazy, but I've completed this fishing pilgrimage back and forth three times!

On my first two voyages, I experienced cooked wheel bearings, flat tyres and even a snapped winch post! However, on my last trip I got there and back without a single problem. Yep, I travelled 10,000km without any trailer niggles. With a single-axle Transtyle under the belly of my baby, Red Dog (a Stabicraft 1650), the crew and I travelled in safety and style.

Put simply; a good trailer is one that you forget about. That's why I loved the Transtyle trailer. The low centre of gravity meant it didn't dance, bounce or sway behind the car, nor did it flex too little or too much. The oil bearings were an initial concern, only because of the rumours I'd heard. However, they ended up being really simple to use and only needed to be filled up twice in 10,000kms. When it came to launching, the three-roller/skid combination worked a treat. The boat wouldn't instantly slide off the trailer when the straps were removed. A touch of reverse from the outboard would get it off easily, which is ideal for those solo missions. 🐟

Welcome to
KURANDA
Home in the Rainforest
1km

TRANSTYLE

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