

Melbourne dealer making its mark



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Do you remember when you bought your first new car? Like many people, you probably knew that you wanted something reliable and comfortable that would get you where you needed to go and back again without a hitch. You also would have had a clear idea of what features were important to you such as air conditioning, maybe a Bluetooth stereo, possibly seven seats if you had a large family, or perhaps even the ability to tow over two tonnes if you are a caravanner. Those were the easy decisions to make.

What a lot of people are less sure of is the actual quality of the brands, such as whether a Toyota is more reliable than a Nissan, is Holden more popular than Ford for a reason? Are the newer car companies making in-roads in Australia, such as Kia and Skoda, just as good as the well-established brands? These are the more difficult questions to find a straight answer on, and for many people, their final decision may come down to how comfortable they feel with the dealer at the sales yard, and if they trust what they are being told.

When choosing a new caravan you will come up against the same challenges. After having a good look around, you will find that there are many small manufacturers in Australia that are all producing very similar caravans on paper. The brochures will show you similar layouts and features, similar tare weights for

similar length vans, and a similar list of added extras that they can add to the van to up the level of comfort and convenience almost to what you experience at home.

So again it can come down to the people at the dealership and how comfortable you feel with them, and if you have shopped around a bit, you will have noticed that just because a company tells you they are selling a high-quality product, that doesn't mean you're not being led around the garden path. So how do you know who you can trust when it comes to one of your life's major purchases, such as a new caravan?

Well, this is where Fabio, Joe and Cettina from Melbourne City Caravans have decided to stamp their mark. They have set out to become above all else, a team that people can turn to and get a straight answer on, for anything they need in relation to their caravan purchase.

Started as a family business in April 2016, they did an exhaustive search on many of the caravan manufacturers in Melbourne before settling on the Grand Salute range for their dealership. According to Fabio, what first sold them about these vans was the passion and attention to detail of the four brothers that hand built each and every one of them. Unlike many of the larger companies, each of the

builders of Grand Salute have a specialised role in the manufacturing process and are hands-on with the tools on a daily basis. As Fabio said, "This, together with the comprehensive quality control process that they had put in place, ensured to us that each van that rolled off the line was guaranteed to be built to the highest quality, and if we were going to put our name and reputation behind something, we wanted that level of hands-on involvement from the manufacturers." Also, being entirely Australian made in Melbourne, meant they were backed by a comprehensive warranty and if a problem did occur, it could be fixed locally or in some instances, nationally and without a fuss.

Cettina was particularly impressed with the level of appointment within the vans, stating that most of the inclusions in a Grand Salute are usually only available as optional extras with many other brands. With a 20 year background in bookkeeping, having a focus on the bottom line comes as second nature to Cettina, and she immediately saw the value over similarly equipped caravans on the market.

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at. With a background in car sales, Joe is very hands on in making sure that potential new owners are made fully aware of what they are capable of towing with their current tow vehicle, as well as being able to share his knowledge of anything camping and caravanning that first timers may want to know about. As Joe says, "There are no silly questions when you are learning about caravans for the first time, and he is happy to spend whatever time is needed with customers to understand their individual needs and requirements.

Fabio is the more technically-minded of the three – having come from a building and construction background, he has a great deal of insight into the manufacturing processes and is happy to discuss anything from the internal construction of the vans, chassis design, the difference in tow hitch set-ups, electric brake controllers, sway bars, appliances and add-ons, power and heating options and anything else that people are curious about.

With a showroom in Somerton, Victoria, call in and meet the Melbourne City Caravans team anytime Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm or Saturday from 10am to 4pm, or see the Grand Salute range first on their website melbournecitycaravans.com.au