

TRUCK TREND

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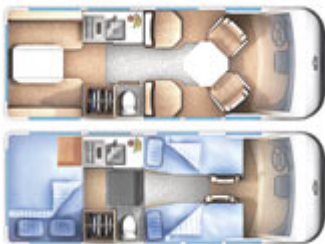
Travel Road Test: Chevrolet 3500 Van

Road-Trekking Motorhome: Luxury Meets Four-Wheel-Drive Utility

By Lazelle Jones

Home & Park Motorhomes of Kitchener, Ontario, has married the creature comforts of a motorhome with the utility of four-wheel drive. Filled with the amenities the luxury-RV lifestyle is known for, the new Roadtrek 4x4 190 also can get you to some primitive campsites.

By adding 4x4 capability to this motorhome, Home & Park has taken the possibility of adventure to a new level. An RV that features a full galley, bathroom, and king-size bed, this Roadtrek 4x4 maneuvers just as easily along rough trails as it does through congested urban settings. Furthermore, when not being used for adventure, the Roadtrek 4x4 can transport the soccer team to its next game or make runs to the market. The secret to this union is the chassis/platform Home & Park elects to use.



Beginning with a Chevy 3500 van chassis that comes equipped with a GM factory rear locking differential, 4.10:1 rear axle gears, and a heavy-duty transmission cooler, the empty van shell is augmented by Quigley Motor Company of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Quigley adds a full four-wheel-drive system by swapping in a General Motors double-wishbone front suspension and GM two-speed transfer case from a Silverado 2500 HD pickup truck. Drive choices include 2WD, 4WD High, and 4WD Low, and it has a Neutral detent. For convenience, you can shift from 2WD to 4WD High at any speed, but must be stopped or running at speeds less than five mph to shift into low range. This system is intuitive, friendly, and easy to use.

We set out to test a Roadtrek's mettle in the rugged backcountry of southern Utah. We lived in the RV for more than a week and covered 1700 trouble-free miles of Interstate, city, mountain, and rough roads. The Roadtrek 4x4 190 took us off the beaten path wherever we found a dirt road and did it all while keeping us wrapped in a cocoon of luxury.



To support stand-alone RV camping, Roadtrek provides a 2.8-kW auxiliary generator that draws its fuel from the chassis fuel tank. The generator can power the 12,000 BTU roof air-conditioner, three-way (AC, DC, propane) refrigerator/freezer, microwave oven, and LCD television. However, it also has a 750-watt inverter that draws its power supply from a separate house battery. The inverter is designed to power the television/DVD player and other small appliances.



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The bathroom features a marine-style toilet that comes housed in its own closet. To create a temporary enclosed changing room, close the bifold privacy doors. When you need a shower, remove a fiberglass panel to uncover a drain in the floor. Open the floor-to-ceiling privacy door and pull the track-mounted curtain around to complete the shower. The holding-tank capacities for fresh, gray, and waste are 25, 23, and 10 gallons, respectively. The six-gallon water heater and the 16,000 BTU furnace draw their propane fuel supply from a 10-gallon tank.

The rear of this Roadtrek features a U-shaped bench-seat dinette with a removable table. This lounge area can be converted into sleeping quarters, in either a twin-bed configuration or with a single king-size bed. There are two large storage cabinets: one lined with shelves (which also houses the DVD player) and a wardrobe. A third seat is positioned immediately aft of the passenger seat and can be made into a single bed. The cockpit passenger seats can be swiveled and a second small table quickly erected for full-service dining.

With its 6.0-liter Vortec V-8 engine and four-speed automatic transmission with tow/haul mode, the Roadtrek is rated to tow 7700 pounds. It gets respectable fuel economy, even cruising along at 75 mph, we achieved 14 mpg. At slower steady-state operating speeds (55 mph), we got almost 16 mpg. Keep in mind that this is a full-fledged motorhome.

Home & Park created this niche product for those who want the versatility of a motorhome and the ability to explore the unbeaten path. With a base suggested retail price of \$65,624, plus \$11,473 for the 4WD system, this could be the vehicle you've been looking for.

