



WADE EQUINE COACHES: A CULTURE OF INNOVATION

If you find yourself staring at a truck in a competition parking area, and feeling a tiny stab of envy at its beautiful lines, spacious equine area and comfortable living interior, it is highly likely that you are looking at a Wade Equine Coach.

This New Zealand owned and founded company has been leading the way for the past twenty years and shows no sign of slowing down on the innovation front anytime soon. Wade is well placed to identify upcoming equine transport trends, and they are always quick to stay ahead of the game. According to Alyssa Lobb, Wade Group Marketing Manager, one trend has been the move towards more European style horse trucks.

"The move towards the more moulded look is definitely a current trend. People want to see that more rounded, European style while still being durable and practical," explains Alyssa. "We finished one recently that was very closely styled on the European trucks, using a large, high-roofed Volvo Globe Trotter. It showcases our new Euro body kit which has a moulded, rounded look with rolled corners, wheel arches and light surrounds. The raised living floor, so you can fit all your feed, hay, tables and chairs etc. Despite the raised floor, you still get plenty of headroom in the living area because the truck is so high. The truck makes great use of space and sleeps six people, including a

double queen bed over the bathroom area. "The truck also features Wade exterior feed bins, is fully air conditioned, boasts mood lighting throughout and has some convenient glass cabinets (so it's easier than ever to get the champagne flowing after a big competition win!). The finished product surpassed the customer's expectations and we were thrilled. Every truck we create is developed a little bit further than the last and we're always looking for new ways to innovate. This truck was a great example of that philosophy in action."

Another product development has been the AMT (automated manual transmission) - no clutch pedal cab chassis that a lot of clients are opting for now. "Seventy per cent of our new truck customers are choosing that option," says Alyssa. "It means you don't have to change gear manually but you don't lose any of your horse power either. That's because the truck still has a manual gear box but the clutch and gearbox are computer controlled. All you have to worry about is the accelerator and brake pedal." As well as being suitably practical, the Wade Equine Coaches are attractive to the eye, both inside and out. With a background in design, Alyssa particularly enjoys assisting clients

with turning their vision into reality. "I assist with design, from the exterior colour and graphics to the interior design," says Alyssa. "We work with the customer on the colour palette to enhance the space and make the most of the inside of the truck. I enjoy working with different tastes and styles - some customers like to keep things minimalist while others like a bit more detail. We can customise anything to suit the client."

"I also get a lot of satisfaction out of helping customers choose the initial floor plan," she adds. "Over time, we have developed a number of truck floor plans that we can suggest to clients. These range from the Wade Equine A Series, our most popular layout and design, to the maximum length E-series, which can include up to three slide-outs in the living area. The floor plans make it much easier for the client to match their requirements with a truck. We can recommend certain plans based on their needs and then customise it together. It's very collaborative." Along with the modern design and creative touches, another thing that sets Wade apart is their close relationship with the New Zealand equestrian community. Alyssa has herself spent time on the competition circuit and has a

genuine understanding of what works and what doesn't.

"My husband and I used to event to Advanced level and we needed transport, so we built our own," Alyssa explains. "Wade used to only build horse floats but as our needs increased we developed the Wade Equine Coach to meet them. The business grew through word of mouth. We now employ 25 people who build our whole range of trucks. We do export a few to Australia as well and definitely want to increase our exposure over there. It does help to have that product knowledge. The trucks have been tested by us and developed from what works. I think the other thing that gives us an edge is the passion we have for our trucks," she adds. "Everyone who works for us is so proud every time we finish a truck. You can see it on their faces - they're beaming. When those finishing touches are added, the soft furnishings and the graphics, that's when we get that satisfaction that we've done everything we can do and produced it to the highest standard. It's a great feeling. We have never had an issue with customer satisfaction. We stay close friends with all truck owners and many come back for their second or third truck. We even have some who are on their fourth. Then you have others who stick with their original Wade, as they are so durable and have a long life. No one that I know of has gone to other builders, which is a great compliment. We love to keep thinking hard, redesigning and making things better." ■

What to expect when you buy a Wade Horse Truck:

- 1) You book an appointment with Wade to have a chat about your needs and what your dream truck looks like. Wade has done all the groundwork on designing the A-E Series plans and can advise you on the most suitable truck for your needs.
- 2) Wade has a computer programme that calculates the eventual weight of the truck and which chassis is needed. This is vital as having the wrong chassis for the body can render the vehicle non-road legal. A few people have been burned when purchasing from disreputable truck builders that have sourced the wrong chassis. Wade is very particular about this stage, for good reason!
- 3) As soon as the chassis has been ordered, Wade starts building. You will get regular updates on progress and begin the interior design process by about week 4 of a build.
- 4) The build usually takes 12 weeks.
- 5) There is a three-year warranty on all workmanship and materials so even after the truck is on your driveway, you can have peace of mind that you are well protected.