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October - November 2015 Issue 99 Aus \$6.95 NZ \$8.95



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ISSN 1320-5706



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# Form following Function

*The updated design and features of James Baroud's Revamped Evasion Rooftop Tent.*

Words & images: Christina Wiles Rogers

**O**ne could say that James Baroud's Evasion Evolution Rooftop Tent is the perfect example of form following function.

Its sleek utilitarian and over-designed capabilities hark back to its European origin, but these qualities also make it ideal for Australian conditions.

It's one of the few hard shells on the market and constructed to make camping simple, stress-free and, once you've spent a night inside the tent, glamorous.

Taking customer feedback into the equation, James Baroud changed a few ingredients and released a new range this year. The revamped Evasion Evolution could easily be the highest quality rooftop tent on the market.

## It's that easy

The reason I bought the Evasion is easy to answer. I am a single mother with two little boys. I love camping, but I don't like sleeping on the ground.

Because I'm often by myself, I can't use a good-quality swag with a mattress, as they are too heavy to put on the roof rack. Camper trailers are too difficult to set up and hitch.

I never thought a rooftop tent would be an option, most models are canvas and involve too many ropes and poles and seem overly complicated. I wanted something fast and simple that had a mattress and when I discovered James Baroud it was love at first sight.

I had the Evasion fitted at South East Queensland Campers & Gear; one of the many dealers nationwide that sell, service and fit James Baroud's range.

I already had a Rhino-Rack so the installation was, like the rooftop tent itself, simple and fast. And, once the Evasion was fastened to the top of my FJ, the sales team showed me exactly how to use it. It goes something like this: unlatch the two clamps at the back sides allowing the front to act as a hinge as the back opens. Then, unclamp the two

latches in the front and watch as the rooftop tent rises towards the sky. All in all, it took about ten seconds and I simply stood on the tyres to open the tent.

After the tent was opened, I attached the ladder and climbed inside. There are two ropes that pull the tent inwards, to keep the canvas inside when you close it, which needed to be unhooked. The four struts supporting the tent at each corner then needed to be pushed and locked into position. And that was pretty much it! The best part is that you can keep bedding inside the dust and waterproof tent while you are travelling. The double size foam mattress inside is large enough to accommodate me and my two little boys.

To pull it down, you simply grab a strap across the front, pull, latch and clamp. Then move to the back, pull the strap and once the tent is down, latch and clamp. I'm not the strongest lass, but I didn't even break a sweat. I looked at the sales team and said, 'I can't believe it's that easy.'

According to James Cockburn, the owner of South East Queensland Campers & Gear and a seasoned rooftop tent traveller himself, the best part about owning a James Baroud is the quality.

'Customers need to know that even though you may spend a lot more money buying a quality rooftop tent, eventually you'll see the value. You'll spend less on repairs and in the end have a much higher resale value. If you keep it for more than three years, you will get your money back.'

He also said the best change to the range was the high reflective canvas. 'In Queensland the sun is up by 4.30 am in the summer. In traditional tents, it's too hot to stay inside by 5.30 am, but in the James Baroud it's still cool inside past 8.00 am.'

## The bits and pieces

For the past 20 years, James Baroud has been researching, designing and making rooftop tents for the adventure and four-wheel-drive travel market.

The company, based in France, is staffed by experienced travellers and among them have a former Paris to Dakar rally pilot who personally tests each model. The tents are built to ISO world standards and the unique opening mechanism inside the tent is patent-protected.

The outer shell of the Evasion is a fibreglass-fortified polyester with two air vents and dust filters to improve air circulation and fight moisture build-up. The aerodynamic ribs on the shell improve wind noise, fuel economy and also strengthen the structure. The hull comes in either white or black.

The canvas is dark grey and uses six aluminised coats to reflect heat. The canvas is also UV resistant, 100 per cent waterproof, but still allows air to circulate, resisting mildew. All seams are doubled to be rugged and watertight.

Inside there is a high-density foam mattress with its own cover. There are two removable pockets and storage net on the ceiling. Three zipped canvas doors are fitted with insect screens. A window with an insect screen is integrated into the back door with an eave to protect the interior from rain. There are so many windows in the new Evasion, you wake up with a panoramic view in the morning.

The tent comes with an LED indoor light which doubles as a removable rechargeable flashlight. All wiring is supplied with the tent. The flashlight has an unbreakable polycarbonate lens and a battery charge indicator.



## Clockwise from far left:

The Evasion Evolution fits easily on your roof rack, only weighs 60 kg and is designed to be both aerodynamic and set up in a matter of seconds. ✦ Inside, the tent is spacious, comes with a foam mattress, solar-powered ventilation fan and a 360 degree view once the windows are unzipped. ✦ The revamped rooftop tent comes with a self-adjusting ladder so it stays firmly attached to the tent and ground. ✦ The Evasion Evolution has three entrances, one on both sides and one in the rear.





James Baroud rooftop tents are used by the support crews in the Paris to Dakar rallies.

James Baroud are the only rooftop tents with a full 5-year guarantee.

Completely waterproof and wind tested to 120 km/hr.

The only rooftop tent that opens and closes in seconds!

#### Evasion Evolution Specs:

- Wind resistance of tent when opened: 120 km/hr
- Reinforced stainless steel fittings upper and lower hull
- 4 x ALKO supporting gas struts
- 2 x adjustable safety catches to secure closed
- 2 x built-in aluminium rails to attach the hull onto the roof racks
- 6 x mounting brackets for attaching to roof bars
- 2 x air inlets with dust proof system
- 2 x fixing points for the ladder on the hull
- 1 x aluminium ladder (and storage cover)
- 1 x removable and rechargeable LED torch

#### Fabric

- 3 x door openings with mosquito netting, zipper and Velcro fastening
- 1 x window opening built into the back door, with mosquito netting and rain awning
- Top quality double stitched, aluminised polyester fabric (6 x ISO ratings)
- Stitched-in elastic drawstring around the tent retracts the fabric when stowing
- High-density foam mattress with zipped cover. (3 x ISO ratings)
- 6 x fabric coatings, reflects the sun's rays, anti UV, non-perishable, 100% waterproof and breathable
- 2 x removable storage pockets
- 1 x ceiling storage net

Visit [www.jamesbaroud.com.au](http://www.jamesbaroud.com.au) for more information.



Top to bottom:  
James Baroud's Evasion Evolution is the perfect family set-up, easy for kids to climb into and high above the ground. ❖ The tent's canvas is painted with six aluminium coats, keeping the tent cool in the summer sun but also insulated for cooler weather.

There is also an automatic and silent motorised controlled ventilation powered by a 24-hour life battery recharged by an integrated solar panel kit. It removes stored heat to avoid moisture and mould.

#### The new range

I spoke with Valerie Nicaise who, with her partner Jean-Marie, distributes the James Baroud range in Australia. She gave me the scoop on all the features included in the new range and what the biggest changes were to the Evasion.

'Well, first of all there is much more screen,' she explained. 'You have a great 360 degree view that provides more ventilation in the summer, but the windows and doors are still the same insulated, thermal canvas so the screens don't affect the inside temperature during winter.'

'Also, James Baroud listened to feedback from customers and made the new range much easier to close with the new system, especially for women. Instead of pulling hard on the struts, it's easier to close the tent.'

'The other major improvement is the ladder. It's the same system with the ladder automatically adjusting to the vehicle's movement. The hooks where the ladder attaches to the tent have been improved to be much more secure, so it's safer and easier to use.'

James Baroud Australia will also be releasing a new soft shell tent to the market in October. Like the rest of the James Baroud range, it's unique in that, even though it's a soft shell, the technology and materials are all state-of-the art.

Similar to the hard shells, the opening system contains the same struts, so once it's unlatched, it simply unfolds open. Aluminium is used for the flooring so there is no plywood, also no rope, no string and no poles. The canvas is specially made so that you can fold it closed even if it's wet. It's the same canvas Audi uses on its coupe model vehicle; water resistant and very strong.

The new soft shell weighs about 48 kg, which is about 12 kg less than the Evasion and will be available for sale from 1 October 2015. ❖

## ON TOP OF THE WORLD

James Baroud have long been the internationally respected name in rooftop tents and adventure 4WD accessories and are now well established as the market leaders in Australia through the unparalleled durability, capability and design of their products.

At James Baroud, there is a constant strive for perfection and this has culminated in the launch of the 2015 model range and the unveiling of what is considered to be the best 'soft' shell roof top tent on the market, The 'Vision Horizon'. The Vision is much lighter, but packs in all the key features from the hard shell range:

- 100% waterproof
- 360° views
- Gas struts
- Aluminised canvas
- Full ventilation
- Easy to set up and stow away

James Baroud hard shell roof top tents are the ultimate solution for people wanting to spend more time holidaying in comfort and less time worrying about it!

James  
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