



## FIRST IMPRESSIONS: JAMES BAROUD HORIZON VISION ROOF TOP TENT

Light and compact, the newest tent from James Baroud is an innovative approach to tent design.



by Christophe Noel

Published on December 2nd, 2014

Like many overlanders, there was a time a few years ago when the allure of a roof top tent spurred me to search for the perfect specimen, something that would be quick to set up, offer comfortable sleep, and hopefully endure years of hard use. I thought I found the perfect solution, but the setup proved arduous, the sleep quality so-so, and then there were the host of negative attributes I didn't fully appreciate at the time of purchase.

My chief complaint with most roof top tents was relative to weight and collapsed size. Even on my rather large Land Rover Discovery II, most tents sat atop my roof like a pallet of bricks. Even the *lighter* options tipped the scales at well over 100 pounds, and as an avid backpacker, I just couldn't believe there wasn't a lighter more compact alternative, one that could be used on a smaller vehicle if desired. Pundits of the then current offerings were quick to tell me it just wasn't possible to create such a tent, something I knew couldn't be true. Fortunately, James Baroud felt the same way.

The new James Baroud Horizon Vision is the tent I had been looking for years ago. At 88 pounds it is easily 20 to even 50 pounds lighter than similar tents. With a collapsed size of 59x43x9-inches, it is also up to 20% more compact than most of its peer products. We all know, size matters, but there is far more to this tent.



Like all James Baroud tents, the Horizon Vision displays a level of innovation and forward thinking that I have come to associate with the brand. If you haven't noticed, the roof top tent market is awash with me-too products, most of which are little more than watered down derivatives of decades old models. The Horizon Vision is refreshingly different and represents a new approach to tent design.

The first soft-sided tent to include hydraulic struts to assist with opening and closing, the Horizon Vision ticks the box for ease of use. Once the cover is removed and the two compression straps released, the tent is effortlessly coaxed from its folded position in one easy motion. The two support legs snap into place quickly, and with the ladder secured, the tent is fully pitched. From start to finish, I have routinely had the tent sleep-ready in under four minutes, even in the dead of night with cold fingers. There is no rain fly to fuss with, no wire struts to insert, no crank to turn. Closing the tent takes more time, but even then I can get the tent fully stowed in as little as six or seven minutes with no rushing or effort involved.





*If you opt not to store the ladder atop the tent, the profile shrinks to just 9 inches tall.*

Once deployed, it's obvious there is something different about the tent. The most unique feature is the aluminized synthetic fabric.

Proprietary to James Baroud roof top tents, that heavy-duty fabric is fully waterproof, resists UV damage, and reflects harsh light providing for a cooler tent interior. To further improve internal temperature control, the tent has two full-size mesh doors and four large zippered mesh windows. Not only does this create a pleasant panoramic view, it does wonders for air pass-through on warmer nights. The tent can also be fitted with an insulated liner for use in extreme cold weather.

The architecture of the tent is provided by an all-aluminum structure with no use of wood or other materials that could age, weather, or degrade. The rounded shape paired to the stout frame makes the tent steadfast in even the ugliest of gales. In their pursuit to make tents worthy of the most offending environments, each James Baroud tent is wind tested to speeds up to 70 mph.



*The use of additional support legs gives the tent solid footing and allows the user to select a preferred angle for the ladder.*

The inside of the tent is quite luxurious with a sleeping platform that measures 59-inches wide and almost 87-inches long. At a touch over 6-feet tall, I have ample headroom with the 47-inch peak height, and laying down my feet and head have plenty of distance from the opposing walls. Two adults have more than enough room to move around freely, even with a modest amount of gear stashed in the periphery. There is also a small area of floor space uncovered by the foot of the mattress that I find convenient for storing certain items like shoes and other things I may not want on the mattress.





*The aluminum framework, assisted by two gas struts, folds into position with minimal effort and creates a sturdy framework for the shell fabric. The outer shell is cut to perfection with no sagging or bunching.*

It is a well designed tent, perfectly suited for smaller SUVs and wagons. The lighter weight and compact size feel proportionate when mounted to our Expedition Portal Jeep Patriot and don't adversely impact handling or fuel efficiency. This is not to say it wouldn't be a great solution for a full-size truck, particularly for those with a smaller roof, or one not well suited to a larger hard-sided roof top tent.

Next, we'll provide a more in-depth review of the installation, setup, and features of the Horizon Vision. Like all of our reviews, we think it is important to put these products to good use to best appreciate the pros and cons. After our first two months with the tent we can say with confidence, it is long overdue and quite impressive—but we somewhat expected it to be.

[www.jamesbaroudusa.com](http://www.jamesbaroudusa.com)



## The Little Overlander: Expedition Portal's Jeep Patriot

For many overlanders a proper rig must be capable of traversing the worst roads imaginable. For some of us, our overland travels involve mostly gravel roads and a good bit of tarmac. This is often the terrain of the ubiquitous Subaru but there are alternatives. The 2011 Patriot may not seem like an obvious choice for mild adventures, but it has proven a perfect platform for knocking down a full day's pavement to get to a far away trailhead or remote camping spot. Paired to the lightweight James Baroud Horizon Vision, it is even more enjoyable.

Our little overlander has been fitted with a Rocky Road Outfitters lift kit, sliders, and Cooper AT3 tires. It also has a 40 quart ARB refrigerator, and Goal Zero Yeti 400 power pack mated to dual 15 watt solar panels.

You can read more about our Jeep Patriot [\[HERE\]](#).

**First Impressions: James Baroud Horizon Vision Roof Top Tent**

Published by Christophe Noel on December 2nd, 2014

Tagged: featured, james baroud, james baroud horizon vision, Jeep Patriot, roof top tent

Share:  on Twitter  on Facebook  on Google+



**About the Author: Christophe Noel**

Christophe Noel is Expedition Portal's Editor and the Senior Editor for Overland Journal. Born into a family of backcountry enthusiasts, Christophe grew up backpacking the mountains and deserts of the American West. An avid cyclist and bikepacker, he also has a passion for motorcycles, travel, food and overlanding.

**Related Articles**



**Overland Journal: Air Compressor Test**

Jonathan Hanson takes an in depth look at several of the best compressors



**Overland Journal: Sand Ladder Test**

Scott Brady gives us some traction on the subject of sand ladders



**Finding Your Way, the Modern Way**

All-in-one GPS receivers for two- and four-wheel overlanders By Chris Marzonie

**Where the Rubber Meets the Road**

Overland Journal performs a comprehensive comparison on seven of the most popular all-terrain tires.





Jack of all Trades

Bruce Elfstrom of Overland Experts discusses the finer attributes of an off-road classic, the Hi-Lift jack.



Jack of All Trades

Bruce Elfstrom of Overland Experts offers a detailed tutorial on the use of this most essential tool.

28 Comments

Expedition Portal

 Login ▾

 Recommend

 Share

Sort by Oldest ▾





Join the discussion...



The JennCast • 9 months ago

I will be particularly interested in tear down and putting the cover on. That always seems far too painful.

 |  • Reply • Share ›



Christophe Noel **Mod** > The JennCast • 9 months ago

The next installment will cover...the cover. I agree it is the cover that is always the biggest pain, but the JB cover is not only light and easy to handle, the attachment system is simple and effective. For me, average solo setup time is around 3-5 minutes total with only 90 seconds of that fiddling with the light cover. The more I use this tent, the more I love it. This coming from someone prone to not just dislike the RTT, but loathe it.

1  |  • Reply • Share ›





**Brandon Libby** · 9 months ago

This is such a fun little car.

PS. You might want to hide this tent from Chazz Lane. I hear he's refusing to sleep inside the "Fozz". :)

| · Reply · Share ›



**Chazz Layne** **Mod** > Brandon Libby · 9 months ago

I tried to grab it, but it was half bolted onto Christophe's Jeep already and I didn't want to scratch up his shiny paint... :)

1 | · Reply · Share ›



**Chris** · 9 months ago

cost? their website sucks.. doesn't even list mattress thickness or size

| · Reply · Share ›



**Christophe Noel** **Mod** > Chris · 9 months ago

I believe standard MSRP is \$2300US. I will have more details including impressions of the mattress and other features in the performance evaluations to come next week. I believe the mattress is 3". It's a higher density foam, that is in my estimation, a tad on the firmer side, which I think is superior to some of the thinner mattresses that compress under modest loads. Great sleeping mattress in my opinion, but such things are highly subjective.

| · Reply · Share ›



**adam** > Christophe Noel · 9 months ago

its a really nice RTT but damn, thats steep.



| · Reply · Share ›



**Christophe Noel** **Mod** > adam · 9 months ago

I can fully appreciate that sentiment. In my assessment, what you're paying for is ease of use, comfort, and a tent that will likely outlive several vehicles. I see tents like this as the modern iteration of the Westy. Steep entry point, but to those



looking for a good sleep solution, the cost is justified. Sure beats paying \$1500 for the tents likely to fall apart and have minimal customer support.

 |  • Reply • Share ›



**Craig** > Chris • 9 months ago



Chris,  
The cost on the Horizon is \$2299.95. Also thank you for your input on our web page. We have recently updated the page and we are still working on the page. We will be adding all the dimensions of the tent with it opened, closed and inside dimensions, along with the measurements of the mattress. The mattress for the Horizon is 80" x 54"x 3". If you have any further questions feel free to contact me at craigd@jamesbaroudusa.com.

 |  • Reply • Share ›



**Samuel Clarke** • 9 months ago

Good write-up Christophe. I love the comfort and campsite flexibility of our current RTT, but hate its weight, setup/pack-up time and awkward at best cover (esp after traveling on outback tracks). We've been tossing up a hardshell James Baroud and other than the cost, the space it takes up is the biggest issue - the Horizon might just be perfect. Looking forward to the next part of the review!

 |  • Reply • Share ›



**Christophe Noel** Mod > Samuel Clarke • 9 months ago



It is a great little tent. When it came time to lift it onto the roof, both Chazz and I about flipped it into the air it was so much lighter than we expected. More details to come.

1  |  • Reply • Share ›



**Guest** • 9 months ago

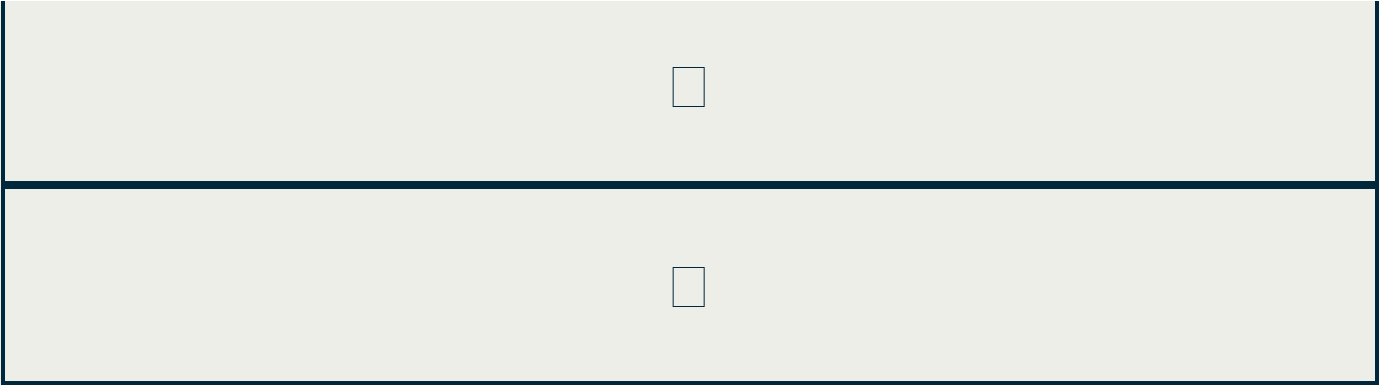
the pop top conversion is the only true hassle free camping solution I think?

 |  • Reply • Share ›



**Eli Moss** • 9 months ago

the pop top conversion is the only true hassle free camping solution I think?



1 | • Reply • Share ›



**Christophe Noel** Mod > Eli Moss • 9 months ago

That really would be nice, wouldn't it? On the other hand, this compact RTT is a good way to convert a daily driver into something more.

| • Reply • Share ›



**Eli Moss** > Christophe Noel • 9 months ago

For sure Christophe , I have went through a lot of research and development of my 3 month trip around Australia and looked at all the options , This would have been very high on my list of option's. I just needed something that had no covers or packing at all, as i will be travelling by myself . you can follow my trip on [www.outbackandsides.com.au](http://www.outbackandsides.com.au)

| • Reply • Share ›



**Guest** • 9 months ago

Cool tent. Similar specs to the Front Runner Feather-lite at "1.3m (4.3') wide x 2.4m (7.9') long when unfolded. The super low 200mm (7.87“) profile (excl. ladder) when folded and 40kg (88.18lbs).

| • Reply • Share ›



**Christophe Noel** Mod > Guest • 9 months ago

The do have very similar specs. I have not used the Feather-lite, so it's wholly unfair for me to draw conclusions or comparisons outside of the obvious. They are constructed with extremely different materials and designs. There is also a significant price difference. Great to have more options though.

| • Reply • Share ›





dd > Christophe Noel • 7 months ago

Sorry, did you guys actually weigh the tent as part of the evaluation?

According to Craig Davidson at James Baroud USA, the tent actually weighs 110 lbs:

"Yes the Vision weights 110 lbs. The 88lbs came from Portugal when we made the catalog and web page. We put a tent on the scale ourselves and found that it weights 110 lbs. WE are in the process of changing the web page and our catalogs.

Thanks

Craig"

👍 | 🗨️ • Reply • Share ›



David Coy • 9 months ago

Nice tent. But of course the "background" scenery sort of eclipses the subject. Is that Lockhart Basin?

👍 | 🗨️ • Reply • Share ›



Christophe Noel **Mod** > David Coy • 8 months ago

Not sure if it's Lockhart Basin. I drove south on Cane Creek road just a mile or two past the last designated campground. I'd say just 6-10 miles from Moab.



ADVERTISEMENT

"You'll feel so emboldened, you'll want to wander through a crowd of grabby street urchins."

- Chicago Tribune

"The advantage of wearing Pick-Pocket-Proof Pants is that it doesn't force you to change your traveling style... (the business travel pants) look like the khaki pants I wear normally except these are like a CIA version."

- Forbes

[illegible]





ADVERTISEMENT



[BACK TO THE TOP](#)



©2005-2015 Overland International, Inc. All rights reserved.