



# ACM PLATINUM

Words: Robyn Dallimore Photographs Bruce Mountain

*The Covi Motorhome Caravan and Outdoor SuperShow is brilliant for exposing visitors to the large range of RVs now available, from two-berth campers right up to 8.3 metre-plus luxury homes on wheels.*

This year was no exception with a range of large vehicles to wow and inspire the crowds when they came through, both imported models and custom-built bespoke quality Kiwi-built models.

One in particular that took my eye on the Kiwi Autohomes and ACM stand was the big IVECO 70 – actually it was hard to miss because it was hoisted high off the ground, and the wonderful coloured exterior in dark brown/black/bronze/orange and white certainly took the eye.

This beauty featured something I really liked – high tech, individually driven hydraulic lifting levellers, which at the push of a button operate individually to level the vehicle on just about any slope you might imagine. What a Godsend if you had to change a tyre on a vehicle this big! Just select the right unit, and it will lift that area for you. From experience you still need to be Superman to man-handle a motorhome tyre, but this would certainly help.

Talking with Keran Miller from Kiwi Autohomes I find this model is the latest to be built by Auckland Coach and Motorhomes (ACM) and their largest build to date.

ACM are the manufacturers of all the



motorhomes in the Kiwi Autohomes rental fleet, as well as the new Platinum and Sapphire motorhome range available for sale. Keran and Chris Cunard from ACM, work closely on the design and quality build aspects of this range of motorhomes, building vehicles specific for our New Zealand conditions. ACM also do repairs, refits, damage and insurance repairs, as well as installing accessories to motorhomes,

caravans, horse trucks, and they even build food trucks.

This model has been designed with input from ACM's new design and business systems man, Grant Wakerley. Grant joined the ACM team after meeting Chris and wife Jasmine when he returned from a few years working in PNG. Readers may recognize the Wakerley name from the bespoke quality motorhomes



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often seen on the roads around the country, which, until 2013, were built in Tauranga.

After a meeting of minds, ideology and passion for the motor home industry and its end users, Grant is thrilled to be back on the design side of RV building, working with Chris and his team. He is happy to share his experience and passion for perfection with Chris in the ACM manufacturing environment.

Grant has joined the company at a time when it's well under way with growth and development. When I first met Chris five years ago, he was operating out of a small 150sq. m. factory near the airport. Since that time, the factory has expanded up to a 400sq. m. area, with the production of their own motorhomes as well as the repairs/installations/insurance work, and in April this year they were scheduled to move again to a larger 800sq. m. property that

is large enough to meet all their growing needs

The successful relationship with Kiwi Autohomes, making niche motorhomes that work for their owners (even putting a piano in one as we saw at last year's Covi show and reviewed in this magazine) as well as being a major refurbishment and repair business to the larger RV industry, has given ACM a strong base to operate from.

If you dream it, they'll try to make it happen, within the limits of physical reality of course.

## PLATINUM 8.3 METRE

Based on the large IVECO Daily chassis 70C and powered by a big 3.0 litre turbo 205hp/470Nm engine with Hi-Matic 8-speed auto transmission (ZF), I have no doubt this bad boy gets up and boogies. Two of the requirements specified by the owner were no

crawling up hills at low speed, and must be able to tow something if required, and this certainly fulfils those requirements. Adjustable headlights and fog lights with a smart cornering function, heated and electrically adjusted mirrors, and daytime running lights are standard on this model IVECO chassis.

The body is built with a fully-insulated steel frame floor, with a one-piece fiberglass under-floor belly, so water ingress issues aren't a worry. The walls have an aluminium-framed



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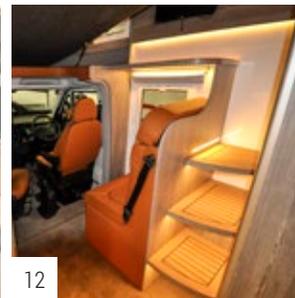
1. Back lounge view – check out the size of the windows. The roman blinds are a great tidy window covering and very modern
2. The unusual colour tones on the exterior caught the eye immediately, and check out the C'vana awning with stripes
3. Good sized 185L fridge/freezer unit. USB and power points on the shelf above, overhead storage above that
4. The front suspension cab seats swivel, are heated and have multiple adjustment settings. Lots of technology on offer with Iveconnect + Bluetooth-steering controls, cruise control and a GPS/Sat Nav system
5. The habitation entry door has viewing ports, but also a privacy blind and built-in fly screen. Note the teak-finish entry steps
6. Subtle lighting in the luton bed area, and a TV well placed for viewing
7. Pull down the bed when required, walk up the sturdy wide stairs on the sides and you're tucked up in bed
8. Nice under-bench drawers, and at each end a pull-out pantry unit. A pot drawer sits under the oven unit. Quality soft close fittings, with push locks and integrated handles
9. Large overhead locker storage all around, good sized roof vents as well. Roman blinds on the rear windows



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3mm fiberglass exterior and the interior has vacuum formed sandwich panels. Windows are large double-glazed acrylic awning style that offer expansive viewing from inside. The C'vana awning is substantial as well and runs the length of the body, and large exterior boot storage ticks all the 'must have' boxes.

### THE INTERIOR

Access to the interior is via a Dometic habitation door (with an integrated fly screen) via a pin-entry access pad that is also linked to the central locking from the front cabs doors, and that's just the start of the technology within. Push the electric step bottom on the right and you have easy access to the nautical teak steps.

My first thought was: Wow, this is just like a luxury super yacht!

Being inside an exhibition hall, the van's interior was in nighttime light mode that looked sleek and sexy. LED technology today is being put to brilliant affect in motorhomes. The floor runs flat from the front cab through to the rear, and the same nautical teak flooring as the entrance stairs features in front of the kitchen bench area and in the bathroom as well – such a luxury finish. The living area is carpeted.

To the left of the entry are stairs going up to the over-cab master bed area, complete with its own TV, roof vents and windows. To the right behind the driver's cab seat is comfortable

seating for two passengers with seat belts. Opposite the entry door is the bathroom area with separate shower, top quality black fittings within, and a glass shower door.

The kitchen bench is on the right immediately inside the door, and a nice touch is the rounded-edge to the bench space at this end, and the rounded wall at the end of the bathroom turning to the fridge area. The bench top is a quality Coran solid surface with formed sink and drainer. A four-burner full oven/grill takes care of all cooking needs, under the bench are drawers and cupboards, and there are pull-out pantries on both ends, with locker storage above as well. The black tapware is a touch of class once again, and a lighting panel on the ceiling above the work area is practical as well.

The rear of the vehicle is all big windows with seriously comfortable long lounge settees, and a removable dining table option for meal times. This area converts to either two single beds, or one very large bed as required.

This is where the bespoke build really kicks in: we noted the luxury teak flooring straightaway on entry, and the rich, quality leather seating is just sumptuous. No pleather/eco leather or cheap imitations here – quality like this could run to \$15 maybe even \$20K, and it does the job beautifully.

I love strong colours myself, so this resonated with me.

The finish of the cupboards and walls, and

the colours work so well together it results in an interior that stands out as a luxurious quality apartment that anyone would be over the moon to be in.

This is a brilliant example of how the four-way business team of Keran (Kiwi Autohomes) and Chris, Jasmine and now Grant Wakerley (ACM) work together with clients to build vehicles which enable the owners to fulfil their dreams and enjoy their passion, in dream motor homes that are a pleasure to drive.

I've seen their version of super-yacht cool and luxurious, and I've met the owners of the ACM Platinum motorhome with their piano installed inside. Look out people - clearly synergies have aligned in Kiwi RV land, and there's a force to be reckoned with developing here. **RV**

### PLATINUM 8.3 METRE 4-BERTH \$305K

IVECO Daily chassis 70C  
3.0L diesel turbo 205hp/480Nm with Hi-Matic  
8-speed auto transmission

Living  
Thetford swivel 20L cassette, electric flush toilet

Full size separate shower with glass doors  
Fresh and grey water 300L

300W solar panel with dual battery system  
500 amp/hour deep cycle battery

2.2kw Eberspacher diesel heater  
12v LED top and bottom mood lighting

Fully automatic night lighting  
Finscan controller

185L 3-way auto fridge/freezer  
Beds: 2 rear singles (2000x700mm) or 1 rear double (2000x2200mm). Over cab double (2100 x 1400mm).

10. From rear to cab view; quality finish on the walls and ceiling – a non-scratch 15mm double laminate lightweight ply for all joinery, no custom wood or particle board finishes here. The flooring is a mixture of teak inserts with plush carpet overlay, normally a heavy-duty vinyl would be used, but Chris designed this to fulfil his nautical bent 11. A Thetford 20L electric flush pedestal toilet sits to the left of the shower unit, a window for ventilation and light, vanity sink, shelf and under cupboard storage, as well as overhead locker storage – again love that teak floor 12. Steps go up.... Upon entry to the left you have access steps to the bedroom above. In this photograph, the bed is pushed to the ceiling for walk-through head space; you simply pull it down at night, up the stairs and into bed 13. From the front looking to the rear. Fintec control panel and monitor screen above the entry door, kitchen on the right, bathroom opposite; expansive U-shaped lounge area in the rear. The detail of the teak flooring adds such a luxurious nautical feel to the space