



Luxury at **HALF THE PRICE**

Paradise Motor Homes has released a new range of top-quality motorhomes sure to tempt the budget-conscious buyer

WORDS PAUL RODGER PHOTOS NATHAN DUFF



Paradise Motor Homes. It's hard to think of a company with a more appropriate name. Not only does the company call the sunny Gold Coast home, stepping into one of its luxurious motorhomes and closing the door is like discovering an oasis of calm.

Luxury doesn't come cheap, but it's not for nothing that Paradise has developed a reputation as a premier brand. Purchase one of its flagship Independence models and you'll get all the bells and whistles your heart desires – but you won't see much change out of half a million.

Paradise wants to attract the discerning buyer. But because its motorhomes don't come cheap, the company felt it was turning away some customers who liked what they saw, but couldn't stump up the moolah. Time for a re-think.

Paradise's Integrity range is the result.

The five vehicles (three of which feature slide-outs) are billed as offering the quality and safety of the Paradise name, but at prices that won't break the bank.

Founder and managing director Colin MacLean is keen to point out that no one is ever buying a 'lite' version of a Paradise motorhome when they buy into the new range. In fact, the Paradise folk gave the new range the name 'Integrity' to show their customers that no shortcuts were taken.

What Paradise does better than anyone else in the business is manufacture luxury slide-out motorhomes while applying the highest standards of safety. All Paradise vehicles feature a high-strength super-structure comprising an internal and external dual-skeleton frame that provides the safety of rollover protection. This unique frame also mitigates side intrusion.

Most motorhomes have to sacrifice weight to ensure this kind of structural integrity. But Paradise insists on using lightweight materials throughout, saving a kilogram here and a kilogram there to keep weight down. In fact, when Paradise customers come to collect their vehicles (many of which have a bespoke fit-out), they are given a 'weight estimate form' outlining the weight of their purchased unit.

Among the weight-saving inclusions are lightweight composite panels. As well as reducing the TARE weight, these panels



BELOW Using an Iveco engine rather than the more expensive Mercedes-Benz donk helps to make the Integrity range more affordable.



offer fire protection (unlike traditional ones using polystyrene) and they don't suffer from the condensation, water absorption, rust and poor insulation that traditional motorhome panels can. Keeping Integrity motorhomes as light as possible means they can be driven on a standard car licence; a motorhome tipping the scales at 4.5 tonnes fully loaded requires a light truck licence.

Some mighty clever design work has gone into Paradise's slide-outs. Whereas other manufacturers bolt in slide-out kits, Paradise manufactures its patented slide-out as an integral part of the motorhome's structure. The slide-out locks into place, meaning it will never move as the vehicle is being driven, nor will it cause any noise on rough roads. Paradise has also avoided hydraulics, which it claims can exert too much force. Park too close to a car and the Paradise is clever enough to halt the movement of the slide-out, rather than trying to push the car over.

In-depth research has resulted in an outstanding safety record for Paradise. It says its motorhomes have never suffered a structural failure and its slide-outs have never had a mechanical failure.

For MacLean, who says he was appalled at the poor standards of safety in the industry when he founded the company, nothing could be more important – or elementary – than safety. He says it's a

common misconception that a well-known name equates to a safe product.

"The public assume that because a motorhome is on sale it will be safe," he says. "But the only reason these companies can produce these products is that the current ADRs [Australian Design Rules] are not actually stopping them."

Many motorhomes leave a lot to be desired, he says, because manufacturers build them to be like caravans – with no roll-over protection and inadequate restraints for drawers, TVs and the like in a collision. On a tour of the Integrity Lite Deluxe, he illustrates how the Paradise range differs by bringing all of his (not insubstantial) strength to bear on the television bracket. It doesn't budge. The load on it would obviously be much greater in a severe impact, but the fact remains that televisions in the Paradise range do not need to be stowed while driving because the brackets prevent the TVs becoming a deadly missile in an accident.

Other safety features abound inside the Lite Deluxe. The company uses patented auto-locking drawers featuring electro-magnets that lock tight when the ignition is turned on (just one of 64 major industry innovations the company claims to have patented). These electro-magnets are so strong they can withstand 20 times the drawers' weight. Cabinet doors feature



high-gloss timber edges and piano hinges screwed along the entire length, so they are extremely strong.

To the rear is a large mirror. Instead of glass, however, it is made from high-quality mirrored acrylic. It's safe, light, and if it does sustain a scratch, the damage can be polished out with car polish.

It speaks volumes that the interior of the

ABOVE Interiors in the Integrity range are almost indiscernible from their more expensive cousins. The specially designed toilet keeps things fresh and clean and is sure to help resale values.

Integrity range can barely be distinguished from the luxury Inspiration range. So just how has Paradise managed to cut costs?

For a start, it has opted for an Iveco Daily 3.0-litre chassis across the Integrity range.

It features a manual transmission (though a six-speed auto is optional), cruise control, A/C, reversing camera, and driver's-side and passenger-side airbags. Crucially, it's more keenly priced than the Mercedes Sprinter chassis used in Paradise's other motorhomes, although the Merc chassis can be optioned (only after Christmas 2011). As it is, Iveco provides Paradise with a longer-

The warranty isn't made void if you take your Integrity on a dirt road



than-normal wheelbase, which improves the chassis' ride.

Using slightly cheaper appliances also saves some expense (although MacLean says those appliances are still on a par with those of main competitors). Once again the high-quality appliances found in the luxury models can be optioned on request.

Perhaps the biggest cost saving comes in the use of an (industry-standard) fibreglass gelcoat exterior for the Integrity range instead of the usual two-tone 2-Pak paint used to coat more expensive motorhomes. It costs almost \$20,000 to do a paint job on a 26ft motorhome in Paradise's paint booth, so there's a real saving to be gained.

Elsewhere, luxury reigns. Up front are swivel driver/passenger chairs in leather, and the lounge is leather, too. There's also an island queen bed with memory foam mattress and a large flat-screen TV.

Kitchen appliances include a three-way

150-litre fridge, a three-burner cook top with tinted glass lid, and a microwave oven. There's a Dometic hot water service with stainless steel tank, plus 127-litre fresh water and 100-litre grey water tanks. High-output energy-saving lighting is throughout.

Other inclusions suggest the Integrity range should retain high resale values. Towards the rear is a Dometic toilet with china bowl – not plastic. There's also a patented odour extraction system, which MacLean cheerfully suggests sucks smells straight out through your legs.

The company's faith in its products is evident in a three-year, 200,000km warranty that even covers the appliances. There's also a five-year structural integrity warranty that isn't made void if you take your Integrity out onto a dirt road.

Super-smart toilet, the highest of safety standards, and a knock-out warranty. If that doesn't constitute paradise, what does? ACHRV



Fast Facts

MANUFACTURER: Paradise Motor Homes
MODEL: Integrity Lite Deluxe
LENGTH: 7450mm
WIDTH: 2495mm
TRAVEL HEIGHT: 3030mm
TARE WEIGHT: 3740kg
OPTIONS: Auto transmission, convection microwave, front or top loader washing machines in ensuite, kitchen bench extension, sat-nav, tow bar, front nudge bar, satellite TV dish, Dometic under-floor central heating, oven/grill
PRICE: \$192,242 drive away (QLD)

THANK YOU

A big thanks to Colin and Ben MacLean at Paradise Motor Homes for their help with this story.

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