

FEATURE

THE RAM REPORT



***For auto electrician
Angelo De Maria, the
RAM 1500 Quad Cab
provides all the answers***

“The RAM is so far ahead on what it offers in terms of ride comfort, space and equipment... I just love it.”



One of the great pleasures in motoring journalism is to catch up with owners and discuss what factors influenced them in the selection of their own vehicle. Was it an appreciation for the mechanical specification, the need for a specific vehicle suited to a work task, a particularly impressive local dealership with whom they wanted to remain close, or was it just the colour they liked?

The manufacturers make their decisions on the specification of vehicles that they believe will suit the market, sometimes erring on the looks rather than the efficiency and suitability for a specific application. What makes this job interesting is discussing these purchasing factors with buyers that have done extensive research, where often we learn of influencing factors that we had not considered ourselves.

Angelo De Maria of Innisfail is certainly not one to be influenced by simply the colour scheme. *Delivery* ran into Angelo at Mission Beach in Far North Queensland, where he was indulging in his sport of choice as a member of the highly-competitive Coconuts Outrigger Canoe Club at the Mission Beach Regatta.

Members of outrigger canoe clubs compete regularly in regattas where they paddle a selection of canoes, from a one-person canoe right up to 13-metre outrigger canoes that seat six paddlers. Moving them on the road requires a special trailer to carry up to five canoes and cope with an overall length, when including the towing vehicle, of just under 19 metres.

Hauling trailers of this length and size requires a highly stable towing vehicle, and for Angelo the choice tied in with finding the right vehicle for his work ute as well.

After having run Toyota Land Cruiser cab chassis units in the past, Angelo decided the RAM 1500 Express 4x4 Quad Cab ticked all the boxes and started off customising his selection to adapt it to be the perfect ute for both work and play.

As the owner of Advanced Auto Electrics and Mechanical of Innisfail, Angelo's company handles all automotive electrical and mechanical repairs and servicing, plus air conditioning repair and installation requirements for all types of vehicle applications, from utes and light commercial vehicles to heavy plant and equipment used in mining.

“One of the main reasons for buying the RAM 1500 was being able to fit it with a 2.4-metre by 2.0-metre tray and mount it on a dual cab. I wanted a petrol engine - not a diesel that had a DPF or AdBlue - and I also wanted a ute with coil springs for the improved ride comfort. The engine is the standard 5.7-litre V8 petrol unit with the only change to the exhaust system from the muffler rearwards.

“We import full suspension equipment from the US and I have since fitted progressive-rate springs and matched them with twin-tube remote-mounted canister dampers. Replacement lower radius rods are fitted to ensure the correct angles of the driveshaft are maintained. I also have fitted air springs as a supplement when carrying a full load.”



For frontal protection Angelo bought an imported TrailReady Bull Bar made in North America and supplied through Trucks'N'Toys of Dural in NSW. This was subsequently engineered to accommodate an additional cross bar to support four driving lamp mounts, plus brackets for UHF antennas and warning positional flags for display when on site in mining areas.

Tyres and rims were changed to 35 x 12.5 x 20 tyres supplied through John Muller Tyre Plus in Townsville. These can be fitted without any change to the factory-recommended rim offset requirements. Wheel arches were equipped with larger wheel arch flares manufactured by Husky Liners and fitted by Pickerings of Townsville, the original supplying dealership for RAM Trucks in the area.

The bodywork is extensive and in addition to the canopy being demountable off the fitted tray, it includes two 100-litre tanks, one for fuel and one for water. Twin Redarc units supply a 240-Volt electrical system putting 80-Amps of charge into two lead-crystal batteries and these in turn provide power through a 300-Watt inverter to electrical equipment including refrigerators and power tools for use when on site and away from mains power. An electric air compressor is also mounted on board.

"You would be surprised where this RAM will go, and it does the job so easily. It works in all sorts of conditions including banana plantations, paddocks, and mud as well as on mine sites," Angelo said.

"Having owned a Land Cruiser in the past, the RAM is so far ahead on what it offers in terms of ride comfort, space and equipment, plus it is more competitively priced than buying a LandCruiser and optioning it up to match the RAM. I just love it."



The RAM 1500 Express is powered by the V8 petrol engine of 5.7 litres. This produces 291kW of power at 5600 rpm, with peak torque of 556 Nm rated at 3950 rpm. This is matched to an eight-speed Torqueflite fully-automatic transmission and provides maximum towing ability of up to 4.5 tonne, dependent on rear axle ratio selection.

The 3.0 litre V6 EcoDiesel engine and the 5.7-litre V8 petrol engine are available as alternatives for the 1500 Laramie models. The 3.0 litre EcoDiesel produces 179 kW at 3600 rpm with peak torque of 569 Nm rated at 2000 rpm, again matched to an eight-speed Torqueflite automatic transmission. Maximum towing weights for the V6 diesel are retained at 3.5 tonne. **D**



Angelo De Maria