



**“Known as Big River Country, five rivers meander through this enormous valley as they surge towards the mighty Clarence, further down on the coastal flats”**

alongside clear, perennial rivers, steep forested mountains and rolling farmland, the 180km road was considered a feat of engineering, quite literally carved into the cliffs. A 20m-long rock tunnel is its most impressive (and photogenic) feature, its 3.3m clearance enough to allow old Cobb and Co transport coaches to pass, along with the horses and carts of the logging, mining and livestock industries that boomed here during the 19th century.

Relics of bygone wealth can be found in the ghost towns of Dalmorton and Newton Boyd, although we only made it to the former on account of the fact we had planned to camp at a private cattle property on the Boyd River at the Grafton end of the Old Glen Innes. Once a bustling hamlet of 5000 people in the 1860s and 70s, legend has it Dalmorton was a rowdy town frequented by bushrangers, pioneers and gold miners alike. Apparently it had 13 pubs, which goes some way to illustrating what the culture of the place must’ve been like. But once the rivers of gold in the hills ran dry, the town was largely abandoned, and is now ghostly. As you wander around the old shops and homes, it’s easy to allow your imagination to fill in the eerie silence of this forgotten valley with the hustle and bustle of a wild mountain town of yesteryear.

The area was a popular hangout for bushrangers Captain Thunderbolt and Black Tommy, and the latter is immortalised geologically in the Mann River Nature Reserve, where Tommy’s Rock towers over the valley. The story goes, Tommy used the rock as a vantage point to spot approaching travellers, before descending to rob them. From its dubious construction methods to its wild west-style isolation, the Old Glen Innes was certainly treacherous in the bad old days, and still feels somehow charged with the fables of the past. More recently, the tiny township of Newton Boyd sent 30 of its young men off to serve in World War I, but tragically only one came home. It’s hard to imagine how a small village recovers from such a loss; an entire generation wiped out in one fell swoop.



**ADVENTURE AWAITS**

Despite being narrow and, at times, quite steep, the Old Glen Innes itself does not offer a true 4WDing experience (it’s passable in a soft-roader), but there are a number of smaller roads running off it that will go some way to scratching that itch. It’s worth the drive, however, for the history and the scenery, which is nothing short of spectacular.

Known as Big River Country, five rivers meander through this enormous valley as they surge towards the mighty Clarence, further down on the coastal flats; the Mann, Boyd, Nymboida, Henry and Orara rivers. They glisten in the sun as they flow swiftly over shallow rocky bottoms and through intermittent deep pools. Despite coming from the mountains and it being April, the water was the perfect temperature for swimming, which made our lush, grassy campsite on the banks of the Boyd all the more enjoyable.

**TOP:** Nothing like a good yarn around the campfire at the end of a big day.  
**ABOVE:** Crystal clear waters and blue skies made for perfect camping conditions.

# TOY STORY

WHAT DOES THE CREW FROM PATRIOT DO WHEN THEY’RE NOT BUILDING ONE OF AUSTRALIA’S MOST VERSATILE OFFROAD CAMPER? THEY HEAD OUT BUSH WITH THEIR TOYS! WORDS **EMMA RYAN** PICS **ELLEN DEWAR**

It had been almost a year since CTA photographer Ellen Dewar and I ventured into the heart of the Kimberley, WA, with the crew from Patriot Campers. So when the brand’s owner and manager Justin Montesalvo called me up to ask if we wanted to join him and a bunch of his family and mates for a long weekend near Nymboida in northern New South Wales, I quickly said yes. This trip would be all about the toys, Justin assured me; an R&D exercise for the brand’s new TH560 toy hauler camper trailer. And from what I had gleaned about the Patriot team’s obsession with offroad fun on the Kimberley trip, I had absolutely no doubt we were in for an adrenalin-packed weekend.

We planned to meet at the turnoff to the Old Glen Innes Road on the Gwydir Highway, just a few kays west of Grafton. Luckily, there was a huge grassy shoulder at this intersection; we arrived to find what can only be described as a veritable Patriot army pulled off the road. What seemed like dozens of people milled around parked cars and camper trailers, a

tangle of eager kids and adults all decked out in matching Patriot t-shirts and all thrumming with excitement.

Among the fray were three of the brand’s original X1 camper trailers and three of the beefy TH560 toy haulers, each loaded to the brim with ATVs, dirtbikes and quads — one bloke even had a lawnmower. There can be no doubt about it, the extended Montesalvo family takes camping and the pursuit of fun very seriously. They’re Toyota purists through and through, and hauling the campers that were hauling the toys was a throng of LandCruisers in various states of modification. We’ll run you through the full, dirty lineup of tow trucks shortly. But for now, back to the destination: the sparkling Boyd River alongside the Old Glen Innes Road.

**HISTORIC ROUTE**

The Old Glen Innes Road was built by convict and underpaid labour in the mid-1800s, providing passage from the mountains of New England to the sea. Weaving scenically



**FROM TOP:** The Patriot TH560 in action; The Patriot crew was all decked out in matching T-shirts for the occasion; How many toys can you fit on a trailer? Plenty it seems.



wave crashing over the front of the buggy upon impact and completely soaking us both, causing the kind of breathless laughter usually reserved for kids on rollercoasters. Words do not do this level of fun justice.

On the final day, we set off to another part of the property to set up an area where the kids could ride their dirt bikes and some of the adults could head off and explore in the buggies. A TH560 was set up here as a base for the kids, and it became obvious that as much as the Patriot gang likes to get out and enjoy their toys, spending time with the family and encouraging

the kids to get out and enjoy the outdoors is high on the list of priorities, too.

The weekend was a blur of buggies, dirt bikes, quads, whitewater canoeing, 4WDing, swimming and camping in some of the most beautiful scenery northern New South Wales has to offer. The Patriot crew of family and friends was extremely welcoming, as per usual, and after spending the weekend with them, it's obvious that they work hard all week so they can enjoy their camping and toys on the weekends.

Read on to find out exactly what those toys are...

**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Relaxing around the fire after a hard day of play; Nothing like the smell of bacon to get you out of bed; Making a splash; CTA's LC200 powers up a hill; The side-by-side ATV kept the crew entertained; This weekend was all about spending quality time with family in the great outdoors.

### CTA'S LC200 LONG-TERMER

Making its maiden voyage after coming on board as CTA's new long-term press vehicle, the LC200 GXL was the steed of choice for our crew. It barely noticed the Patriot X1 camper trailer it dutifully towed, the unit's 700kg Tare scarcely making a dint in the vehicle's massive 3.5t towing capacity. As mentioned, the roads were pretty soft from a 4WD perspective, so we looked forward to testing the vehicle in the rough stuff of the New England national parks we were set to explore in the weeks to come.

There's no doubt the 200 Series is a supremely comfortable highway cruiser, so getting up to northern New South Wales was a treat. We crossed the divide at the Blue Mountains on the stunning Bells Line of Road, pottered through Mudgee, Armidale and Glen Innes before crossing the divide again on the Gwydir Highway and meeting the crew near Grafton. The 200 Series proved itself to be a powerful and fuel efficient blacktop tourer (we got nearly 1000km to the 120L tank up the New England Highway), its smooth ride and plush interior making for a very pleasant road trip.



## PATRIOT TOY HAULER 560



There were three TH560s on this trip, each carrying a Polaris 1000cc RZR buggy on their massive 1.7x 3m decks.

The TH560s are a sight to see; with the

carrying capacity on the back plus all the features and the living area of the smaller Patriot X1 Camper on the front.

It's the next-level camper trailer for serious

touring with the capacity to carry five dirt bikes, one side-by-side ATV, a pair of jet skis, or two ATVs.

Pictures really don't do it justice.

## JUSTIN MONTESALVO'S 2015 LC200

Among the pack of 200 Series LandCruisers at the camp, Justin's highly-modified 2015 model stood out. It has had the back chopped and a 650mm chassis extension performed by the guys at Creative Conversions. In addition, it has a Patriot Campers custom tray that includes a 70L water tank under the tray with an electric pump, a slide-out kitchen, a tray-mounted stereo, a set of Maxtrax, and a hi-lift jack. The finish of the tray is of extremely high quality and holds the same look and feel as the X1 and TH560 trailers.

The 200 Series is fitted with a wish-list of accessories making it an exceptionally capable tourer. Up front is a TJM bar and winch sporting a set of Great White spot lights and LED lightbars powered by a 100Ah lithium battery with Redarc BMS1230 and TJM battery monitor. The Cruiser rides on a set of Icon remote-reservoir coilovers, with front and rear lockers pushing 35x12.50x17in BFG mud terrains to get it out of any tough spots.



A Torqit diesel tuner and pedal torque are set up to squeeze some extra power out of the turbodiesel V8, and with a 4in stainless-steel Beaudesert Exhaust, the LC200 sounds tough and looks the part to match. A Rhino-Rack roof basket gives extra storage and a long-range fuel tank increases touring range.

When asked what sort of attention he gets

driving the LC200 towing the TH560, Justin said: "I literally can't take that setup anywhere without being mobbed every time we stop. We get barricaded on the highway by people wanting to check it out."

For this trip, the Cruiser had the kids' trio of Yamaha dirt bikes on the tray, while a Polaris RZR 1000 rode on the Toy Hauler.



The Patriot army assembled.

## ROBERT MONTESALVO

### LC200 SERIES

Robert Montesalvo runs a standard Toyota LandCruiser 200 Series. It tows a Patriot X1 sporting the Patriot Howling Moon Tent with the extra kids' room. He also brought along a Yamaha YZF quad bike, towed by his brother Jamie.

## JOE HUTCHINS

### LC200 SERIES SAHARA

Family friend Joe Hutchins brought along his LC200 Sahara with some basic mods — a Redarc brake controller and ARB front bar. He was towing a TH560 sporting a 1.8m family Patriot Howling Moon Tent and carrying a Polaris RZR 1000 and a Honda CRF450.

## CAMPBELL EDWARDS

### LC79 SERIES

Campbell's custom-black LC79 Series is arguably a toy in itself. With a 75mm lift, 35in muddies, front and rear lockers and a recently-installed 3.5in Lukey exhaust, the ute would likely go anywhere the ATVs could, albeit at a more respectable pace.

## CHASE MONTESALVO

### TOYOTA HILUX

Chase must be the black sheep of the family as he was the only brother not running a LandCruiser on the weekend. He opted for the tried-and-true Toyota HiLux with a Bilstein-based 50mm lift, ARB bars front and rear, a Safari Snorkel, IPF HID and lightbar, Flipdeck tonneau cover, BFG All-Terrain tyres and custom bash plates. Chase's HiLux is a reliable workhorse more than capable of towing his Patriot X1 Camper anywhere.

## MATHEW GALEA

### LC200 SERIES

Another family friend, Matt "Pinkie" Galea rocked up with another LC200 sporting a strong touring capable setup, including front and rear lockers, a diesel tuner chip, front and rear bars, winch, snorkel, BFG ATs, Old Man Emu suspension and a long range fuel tank. This setup tows his TH560 sporting a James Baroud Evasion Rooftop Tent and carries a Polaris RZR 1000 Side-by-Side.

## NICK DORNAN

### LC200 SERIES

Nick Dornan acted as the support vehicle for the weekend with his LC200 Series running a set of BFG tyres, 3in stainless exhaust, an ARB front bar with Warn XP 9500 winch, TJM side-steps, TJM snorkel, ARB roof rack with James Baroud Rooftop Tent, dual Waeco fridges, 90L stainless water tank, dual batteries under the bonnet and three more batteries in the back, and front and rear ARB air lockers. It's well setup and ready to tow a standard car trailer with all manner of toys, including a Yamaha YZ250, KTM 300, Honda ATV and the small, white Polaris Sportsman Ace. 

## JAMIE MONTESALVO

### 2014 LC200 SERIES

Jamie's Sahara runs Bilsteins and all-terrains. It was towing a standard car trailer carrying a Polaris RZR 1000 and Robert's Yamaha YZF450 quad bike.

## ADRIAN RASCO

### PETROL LC100 SERIES

Adrian made the trip with his family towing a RZR 1000 behind his big black LC 100 Series that rolls on big alloys.