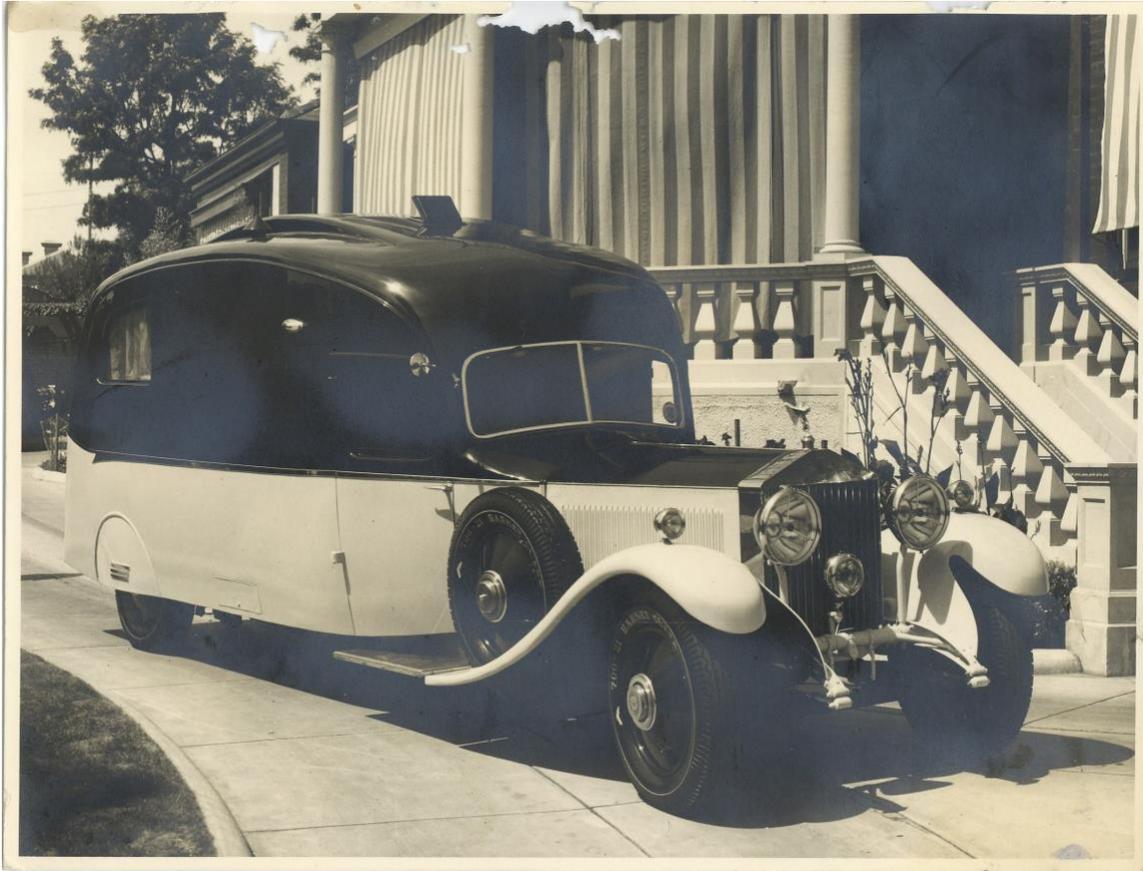


IN THE
REAR-VIEW MIRROR

LUXURY ROLLS-ROYCE CARAVAN



“LUXURY CARAVAN DELIVERED Rolls-Royce Chassis” were the headlines in The Argus on 8 February 1938, “Caravanning will have its peace and quietness for Mr G. R. Nicholas, of Toorak, who took delivery yesterday of one of these miniature homes built on the chassis of a 40/50 horse-power Rolls-Royce.”

“Beautifully finished in ivory and black, the caravan has accommodation for four persons and an enclosed front compartment with combined seat and sleeping berth for the chauffeur. It was built by the Romany Road Caravan Co. Pty. Ltd. of South Melbourne and weighs three and a half tons. The overall length of the caravan is 21ft. 10in., the height from the ground is 8ft. 5in., and the interior about

6ft. Special attention has been paid to the detail of the interior and external appearance of this luxury travelling home.

From a distance it looks like a huge limousine with the lower portion of the body in ivory, the upper half in black and a gently sloping rear. Large rectangular-shaped windows with rounded corners are in the sides and rear, the cap of the petrol tank filler and door handles are recessed in the coachwork and the rear wheels are covered with ivory-coloured shields finished with three narrow strips of chrome.

The walls of the caravan are insulated against sound and heat and although nothing which could make a journey more comfortable has been excluded, there is ample room to walk about the interior. Cushioned seats and a folding table are at the rear, and when not in use they may be converted into a double bed 6ft. 3in. in length. One side are an enclosed sink and petrol stove, ice-chest, bread cupboard, drawers and cupboards and on the other side a full-length wardrobe with mirror and more drawers.

Built in on the front panel are a wireless, electric light with rounded glass shade and an electric fan, which receive their current from two six-volt batteries. Other shaded lights on the side walls illuminate the interior.

Water is pumped from a large tank beneath the sink. On one side of the caravan and hidden away is a long box for carrying fishing tackle and golf sticks.

The interior of the caravan is finished in cream and jade green with tapestry curtains to match. The handles of the doors and cupboards are of black and chrome."

The chassis is 1929 Phantom I, 48OR, which was lengthened to take this body. Originally a Hooper laundalette it was delivered new to George R. R. Nicholas. His brother, Alfred M. Nicholas also had a 1929 Phantom I, 50OR, a Hooper sedancalette.

George made the first Australian acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin), which was registered in 1917 as "Aspro". He qualified as a pharmacist in July 1912 and after synthesising aspirin formed Shmith, Nicholas & Co., in 1915 with Henry Woolf Shmith, to commercialise the product. The name "Aspro" was adopted and registered in April 1917 and George's brother, Alfred, joined the company as business manager. The company was initially unsuccessful and Shmith pulled out, but throughout the 1920s it extended its operations into New Zealand (1923), England (1924), Europe (1925) and Asia (1927). George was managing director of the company 1937-47. During this time the company diversified into production of vitamin supplements, veterinary goods and pharmaceuticals.

[Acknowledgement: This item comes from 'Trove', a National Library of Australia website (trove.nla.gov.au), which provides access to digitised newspapers.]

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