



The Starcraft Starmaster 6

It makes even first-time campers feel right at home.

JAKE & GEN TURK

"IF YOU'VE never owned a Starcraft, you're the reason we built this one." This introduction, taken from the Starcraft owner's manual, sounded like quite a mouthful to us. The booklet goes on to say that this model can appeal to both the first-year camper and the seasoned outdoorsman. Having noted, for many years, the increasing number of Starcraft camping trailers on the road and in campgrounds across the country, we were more than anxious to test this unit and the company's claims. In essence, we found that Starcraft does, indeed, combine reliable performance with easy maintenance.

Our test vehicle was a Starmaster 6 standard model without options. When fully loaded, with the water and LP gas tanks full, it weighed 1900 pounds with a hitch weight of 180 pounds. Traveling over improved roads to our campsite, we found the trailer handled with ease under all traffic conditions. While performing our lane change test, the trailer followed very well.

As we set up the Starmaster 6, we became increasingly aware of the excellence of the owner's manual and the forethought that went into its contents. Reading directions that are clear and concise, plus being exposed to fine cooperation from a Starcraft dealer (Gary's Camper Sales in Kenosha, Wisconsin), can warm a fellow to a company every time.

With very little effort, we were able to set up the camper in 11 minutes (teardown time was 10 minutes). The hard top is raised by a cable winch located in the frame and operated with a removable crank. We found this operation to be extremely smooth, both going up and coming down. The bunk support rods are conveniently stored in a tube type of compartment on the trailer frame. This handy spot also



Photos from the authors.

serves well as a storage area for fishing rods and canopy poles.

THE Starmaster 6 can be completely set up with just a minimum of effort. Inside, the wardrobe simply unfolds from the floor, while the galley swings up and out and then locks into position. These operations each require only about a minute and a few short grunts.

The self-storing aluminum screen door also just swings into place. The canvas sides are permanently attached to the base of the trailer, except around the door where a Velcro closure holds the fabric in place and provides a snug, unrumpled fit.

The power cord, all 25 feet of it, is self-storing. The trailer includes a 110/12 v. power converter as standard equipment. A convenient hookup is provided for use where city water is available.

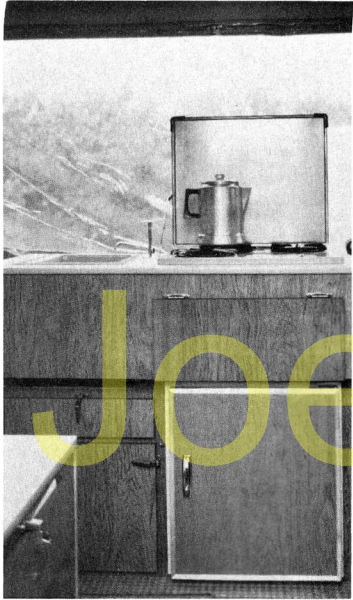
The entire frame is built with 1½ x 3½-inch steel channels around the perimeter of the trailer. The corners are braced by channels of the same size. The axle features leaf spring suspension.

We have found that, on all trailers we've tested, it is very easy to exceed

the recommended tire load limits. We don't believe our gear is any different than that of most campers, yet we find ourselves flirting with an overload, or nearly so, on every trip. The tires on the Starmaster 6 are the 5.30 x 12, six-ply type and have a load capacity of 1045 pounds each. In this instance, assuming that our load was equally divided between the two wheels, we were well within our recommended maximum tire load capacity.

The 78 x 120-inch floor area provides for the galley (sink, stove, and icebox), a dinette and benches, and storage areas. The galley measures 24 x 43 inches in all; the work area to the left of the galley offers a surface area of 39 x 21 inches. The dinette table is 36 inches square and may be moved to the right or to the left. This provides an additional work surface near the galley.

The Holiday stove, with three burners so placed as to add extra cooking room, sports a cover that doubles as a splash guard. Though we consider such a cover a sample of advanced thinking in space utilization, we wish the Starcraft people would have gone a step further and provided a cover for the porcelain sink as well. A fine 8 x 8-



Starcraft takes the backaches out of cooking with a 35-inch-high galley, a feature most camp cooks will appreciate.

inch vent in the roof is a welcome extra, along with the dome light over the cooking area.

The storage area inside the Starmaster 6 is adequate and well-planned. Every inch of space is utilized. There are two handy drawers to the left of the galley (each 15 x 15 x 8 inches), a silverware drawer in the galley itself, and a utility drawer (15 x 15 x 3 inches) to the left, inside the door. The storage areas inside the two dinette seat-boxes each measure 14 x 40 x 20½ inches. Still another storage area, 8 x 19 x 19 inches in size, is located under the stove, though it can be used only when the unit is set up.

MOST of the Starcraft models offer quite a large wardrobe for hanging clothes. On the Starmaster 6, the wardrobe measures an ample 47 x 20 x 15 inches and extends to within 18 inches of the floor. It unhooks for travel, folds down, and rests on a support on the floor. We wish the manufacturer had installed instead a bar-type support that could double as a towel rack. We rarely have provisions for hanging wet towels, and every camper has towels. Starcraft also provides latch-type closures on all cupboards, thus eliminating their use as towel hooks.

The galley and counters in the Starmaster 6 measure a full 35 inches high—an important plus in reducing backaches for the camp cook. We were unhappy with the counter surfaces in the working area which, though a pleasant yellow color, had a soft, rough finish that was most difficult to clean and keep clean.

The icebox is located in the galley opposite the door. Thus, for access on the road, one must crawl across the floor to reach it. But Starcraft, while claiming that the icebox is handy, shows pictures of a little girl bringing out the goodies. We like this kind of honesty, and our girl, Mary, fetched things just fine.

Upholstered, solid-color cushions which reverse to a flowered pattern in shades of yellow, brown, and orange, give the interior of the trailer a bright, airy look. The 78-inch ceiling height adds to the feeling of roominess. There are nine screened windows all around, plus a three-way setup for the picture window which allows use of a screen, a transparent plastic, or a canvas covering. The heavy plastic window admits light while it closes out the weather.

The Starmaster 6 accommodates six adults, and the sleeping facilities are bountiful. The beds are equipped with foam mattresses three inches thick and measure 72 x 47 inches. The auxiliary bed, made by using the dinette table and the three-inch-thick bench cushions, measures 74 x 40 inches.

However, we feel that seating six people at a 36-inch square dinette table, for eating or anything else, creates an extremely crowded condition. The storage and work areas are more than adequate, but room is gained there by sacrificing some seating area. Typically, if you gain one, you lose one.

SINCE families who go camping differ in their needs, sizes, and habits, they require various kinds of camping trailers. To meet their demands, Starcraft offers a wide assortment of camping trailers in different models and price ranges. The company seems to have gone into the camping trailer business in a realistic and methodical way that shows excellence in engineering and forethought in design.

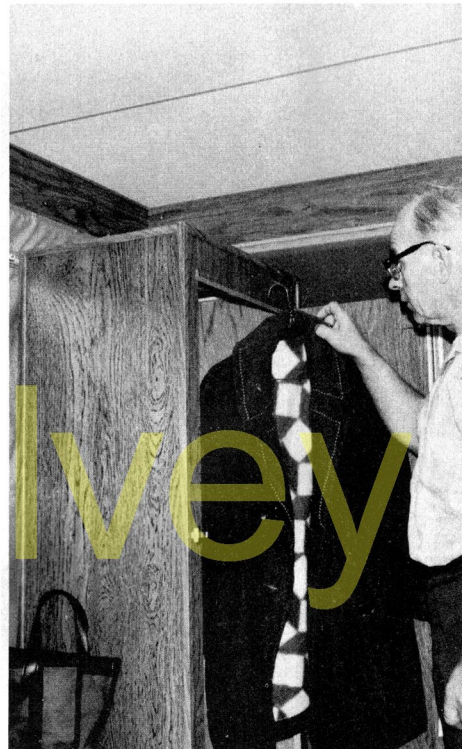
After testing this camper, we can understand the thinking of a new Starcraft 6 owner camped near us at a campground recently when he said: "We spent an entire year studying evaluations and ads in magazines and going through trailers. We found that this one met our needs the best and gave us the most for our money. We're happy with it." ✓

PRICES AND SPECIFICATIONS

STARCRRAFT STARMASTER 6

Made by the Starcraft Company, Goshen, IN 46526. Test vehicle equipped with the following standard features: 3-burner stove, swing-up kitchen console, insulated fiberglass icebox, 10-gal. water tank with galley pump, outside fill and drain, fold-down wardrobe closet, cable, hand winch raising mechanism, A-frame construction, vinyl bunk covers, anodized aluminum bunk frames, two rear lever-actuated stabilizing jacks, chrome wheel covers, weatherproofed outside receptacles, 3-way windows, 110/12 v. converter lighting system, 110 v. self-storing power cord, pole storage compartment, twist spring-loaded roof vent, city water connection, frame-mounted bumper, sectionalized canvas, storage room for Porta-Potti, aluminum exterior, insulated roof, leaf-spring suspension system, dinette, sink, aluminum door, wood cabinetry, reversible cushions.

Dimensions: Total base weight, 1435 lbs.; hitch weight, 150 lbs.; overall length, unit folded, 168"; width, 83"; height, 54"; overall length, unit open, 216"; height, 95"; interior work space, length, 120"; width, 78"; headroom, 78". Tires, 5.30 x 12, 6-ply; load capacity, 500 lbs. **Handling:** (12-ft. lane change made in 3 seconds at 45 m.p.h.) Very good. Price as tested, approximately \$1575, plus taxes and license. **Circle No. 101.**



The Starmaster 6 sets up quickly and easily, revealing lots of storage space. Next to the bed, the wardrobe tilts up and into place, then simply folds down for traveling.