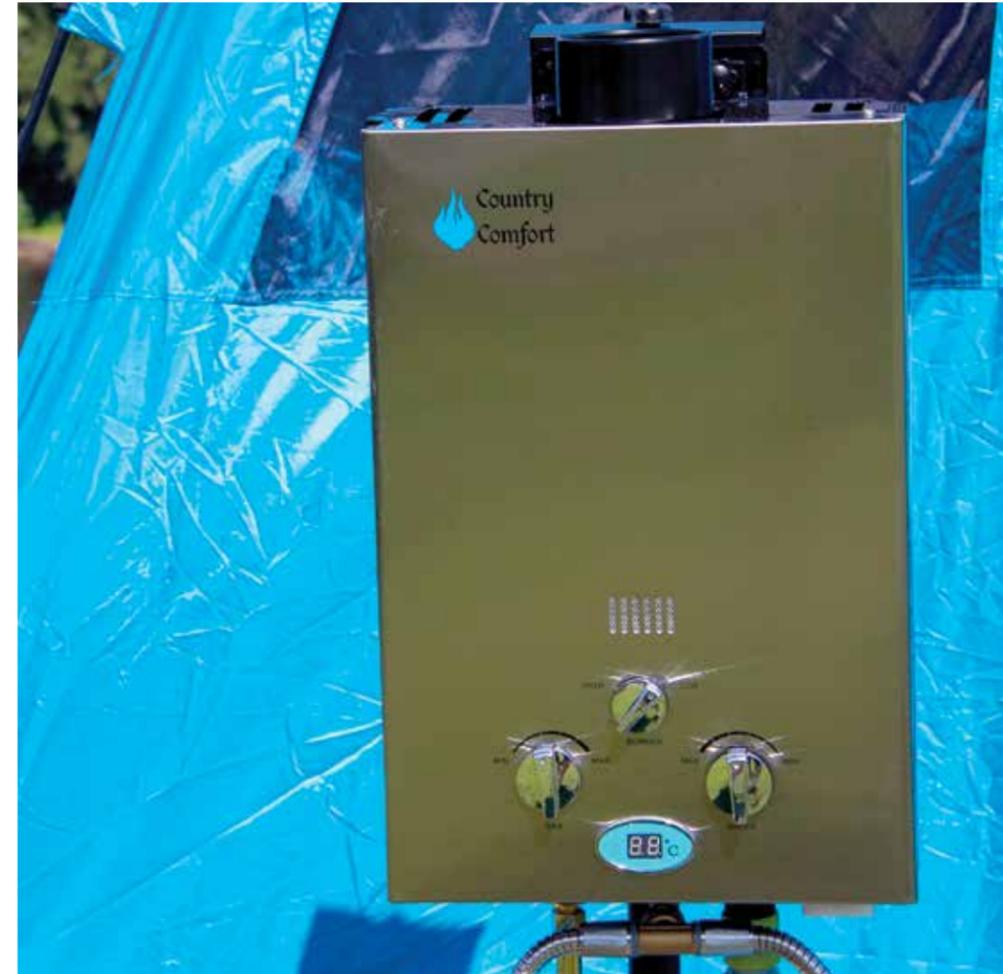


# Let's keep it clean

Don't let the fact that you have an older van or camper trailer stop you from enjoying a bit of heaven in the bush!

Words and pics by David Thorndike



## THE BASICS

COUNTRY COMFORT  
MODEL – JSD12-D6N

- Weight – 4.7kg
- Dimensions – 420 x 295 x 140mm
- Runtime from 9kg gas bottles – Given as 14+ hours
- Pump flow rate – 4 to 6L per minute
- Fuel type – LPG
- Water temperature range – Ambient to 50 degrees Celsius
- Powered by – 2x D batteries – (ignition only)
- Digital temperature display – Yes



### LIKES

Adjustable portable stand provided – made set-up very easy  
Option of upgrading to heavy duty pump – great for pulling water from longer distance  
Supplied and able to connect two outlet hoses from the main unit, so you could have the units supplying hot water to the kitchen and the shower at the same time.



### DISLIKES

Carry bag was a difficult size to manage. Would prefer two smaller bags



### PRICE

RRP - \$349.00



### CONTACT

blackdiamondsupplies.com.au

Hot shower systems for camping have come a long way since the humble black water bag left out in the sun all day. There are now several options for bringing a portable hot shower with you on every camping trip, and let's face it, climbing between the sheets at the end of the day feels far more comfortable (not to mention hygienic) after a decent shower, so why wouldn't you take advantage if it's an easy fix?

Of course, many modern caravans and campers already have some type of hot water system installed, but if you don't have a built-in ensuite, you may not be able to take full advantage of it for a decent shower. Throw in the fact that some of them rely on 240-volt power and you will almost certainly be left high and dry on remote trips.

This is where portable hot water systems have found a niche in the camping world.

There are several brands available in the market, (many looking strikingly similar), that all work on a similar principle. So, we gathered four different showers from Country Comfort, Bushranger, Joolca and Coleman to find out how they actually work, how well they heat water and to what temperature, whether they are easy to set-up and pack-up and most importantly, do they let you have a decent shower.

## How do they work?

All the units are dual powered (LPG for the heating of water, and 12V DC for the operation of the water pump), and three of the tested models have controls for both the flow of water and the temperature, which is displayed digitally on the front of the unit. The Coleman is the exception to this as it doesn't have a control for the water flow.

### THE BASICS

COLEMAN  
MODEL - HOT WATER ON DEMAND H2OASIS ELITE

Weight - 5.5kg  
Dimensions - 420 x 250 x 530mm  
Run time - 80 minutes  
Pump flow rate - 2.3L per minute  
Fuel type - Coleman LPG cylinder  
Total output - 20,000 BTU's  
Watertemprange - Ambient to 50 degrees Celsius  
Powered by - Lithium Ion rechargeable battery pack  
Digital temp. display - Yes



LIKES

Smallest and easily portable  
Handy for the kitchen  
Digital screen shows when pump is working, and pilot light is lit



DISLIKES

Six-hour battery recharge is a pain and still needs to be connected to a 12V system. Doesn't use regular LPG bottle  
Plastic drum provided leaked had to be moved and tilted to use all the water.



PRICE

RRP - \$349.90



CONTACT

colemanaustralia.com.au



There are several basic parts including the main unit (heat exchanger), the 12V pump, hoses and fittings, a gas hose and shower head. Both the Country Comfort and Bushranger models have a power switch on the bottom of the unit and they, together with the Joolca, require two D-cell batteries to power the digital display. The Coleman has its own internal lithium-ion battery and requires a six-hour charge from mains power prior to the first use.

Once the units are fully set-up with hoses

and pump connected and the gas is turned on, the shower operation begins by starting the pump which draws water from your water tank (for the purposes of this field test, we used a 15L plastic drum for each unit) into the main unit where the water pressure causes the gas to ignite automatically (except in the case of the Coleman where the ignite button must be held in place for several seconds). This then heats the water on its way to the shower hose. All units tested had an on/off switch on the shower head giving easy



control to water flow. The heads also have three or four settings to change the water flow and strength.

### Do they heat water up quickly and to what temperature?

In each model, the water heated up to a decent shower temperature within seconds and all can be adjusted up to 50°C, although somewhere closer to 40°C is more comfortable for a shower. The Joolca, Country Comfort and Bushranger units all

have an automatic safety cut-off switch at 50°C which turns off the burner. To restart the system you need to adjust the water temperature down and restart the pump to reset the ignition.

### Are they easy to set-up and pack-up

They are all very simple with and we could set them up for use within a few minutes (once we knew what we were doing). The Country Comfort, Joolca and Bushranger are all roughly the same size units, although the

### THE BASICS

BUSHRANGER  
MODEL - 78X04

Weight - 4.7kg  
Dimensions - 500 x 300 x 140mm  
Runtime from 9kg gas bottles - Given as 14+ hours  
Pump flow rate - 4 to 6L per minute  
Fuel type - LPG cylinder  
Watertemprange - Ambient to 50°C  
Powered by - 2x D batteries (ignition only)  
Digital temperature display - Yes



LIKES

One large heavy duty carry bag for transport and storage  
Option of upgrading to heavy duty pump - great for pulling water from longer distance



DISLIKES

No portable stand provided  
Blackwater hoses didn't have quick connectors for the pump, so this unit took a little longer to set up with hose clamps, screwdriver and O-ring seals.



PRICE

RRP - \$295.00



CONTACT

bushranger.com.au

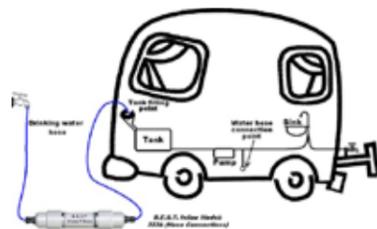
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### THE BASICS

Joolca HOTTAP  
MODEL - CA11001

- Weight - 4.3kg
- Dimensions - 370Hx275Wx165Dmm
- Runtime from 9kg gas bottles - Given as 15 hours
- Pump flow rate - Max of 6L per minute
- Fuel type - LPG
- Water temperature - Ambient to 50 degrees Celsius
- Powered by - 2x D batteries (ignition only)
- Digital temperature display - Yes



#### LIKES

- Colour coded hoses for quick and easy connection
- Long power cord for pump with both cig lighter and battery clip power options
- Packed up into two convenient sized bags.



#### DISLIKES

- No portable stand provided
- Water flow adjustment not easy to work out



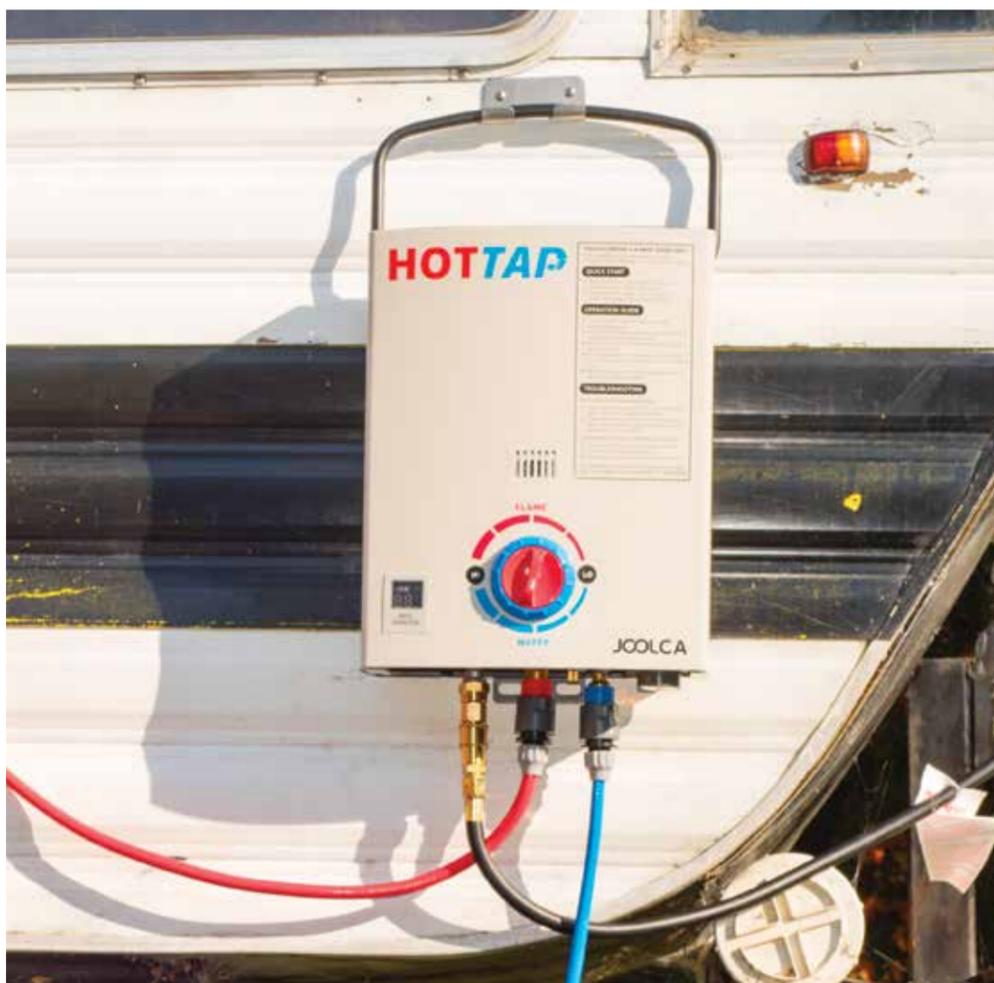
#### PRICE

RRP -



#### CONTACT

joolca.com.au



Joolca packs easily into two zippered bags that can be stored and carried easily. The Country Comfort and Bushranger pack up a bit larger into the one bag, however they also offer a much bigger pump as an optional extra, which comes in very handy if you are camping remotely and need to draw water from a river or other water source over long distances. Of course, you will also need an extra-long hose for this as well.

The main concern I have with the set-up is where and how to mount each unit close

to the shower tent. Country Comfort was the only one to provide us with an actual stand that made the job easy. It has two extendable poles and bolts to attach the unit to the stand, making easy work of set-up and positioning. The Joolca unit offers a mounting pole that you can attach to your camper trailer or caravan drawbar and this will work well in 90% of cases, unless you want to set-up further away from your campsite so that the shower water doesn't drain under your camper or into your campsite sitting area.

The Bushranger unit doesn't offer a stand at all, and the Coleman is the only unit that doesn't need a stand, being able to sit on the ground or even on a small table.

### Do they give you a decent shower?

All units offered decent water pressure thanks to the shower head options available. As water pressure in the shower is largely a personal comfort consideration, it will come down to what each person likes, but don't expect it to be the same as your shower at home. Still, there was plenty there to wash all the soap and shampoo off without any hassle, and it certainly felt like a luxury at the campsite.

### How long can you shower for?

We tested each unit the same, adjusting the water temperature to 40°C and pulling water from a 15-litre plastic drum. There wasn't much difference at all with each unit operating from the small pump provided giving a five-minute shower. Of course, if you want longer showers, then draw water from a larger water tank and you can go for as

long as you like. Both the Bushranger and Country Comfort also supplied us with the heavy duty pumps as an optional extra, and these are a welcome addition if you need to pump water from a nearby river or dam, instead of from a water drum.

### Is there anything not included in the kits?

The Coleman Unit comes with everything you need including a plastic collapsible water drum. The only extra you will need is a couple of Coleman's proprietary gas cylinders as Coleman says it cannot be connected to a regular LPG cylinder, although adaptor hoses are available.

The other three kits come with the main units, gas hose, water hose from the pump to the unit and the unit to the shower head. However, you will still need to purchase an LPG gas bottle if you don't have one, and ensure it has the connection for a POL fitting. Also, depending on where you are drawing water from to the pump, you will probably also need to invest in a longer hose and a separate water drum.

I mentioned above that the Country Comfort was the only one to offer a

portable stand, so thought must be given to where you will mount the shower units for operation. We used a hand trolley for this test and it worked ok, but this is obviously not something that most people will take camping. A couple of star pickets hammered into the ground and some cable ties would do the job admirably - but once again, you would need to add this to your regular camping gear list.

### Conclusion

No surprise really that all units tested worked as claimed and we were able to enjoy a hot shower at the campsite each evening. There is not too much to separate the units on pricing, but there are a few accessories available with each that may sway you to choose one over the other. See our breakout boxes for each brand, their individual specs and what we liked and disliked about each.

