

Hardcore tech

We get hands-on and review the latest in caravanning gizmos

AMPFIBIAN RV-PLUS

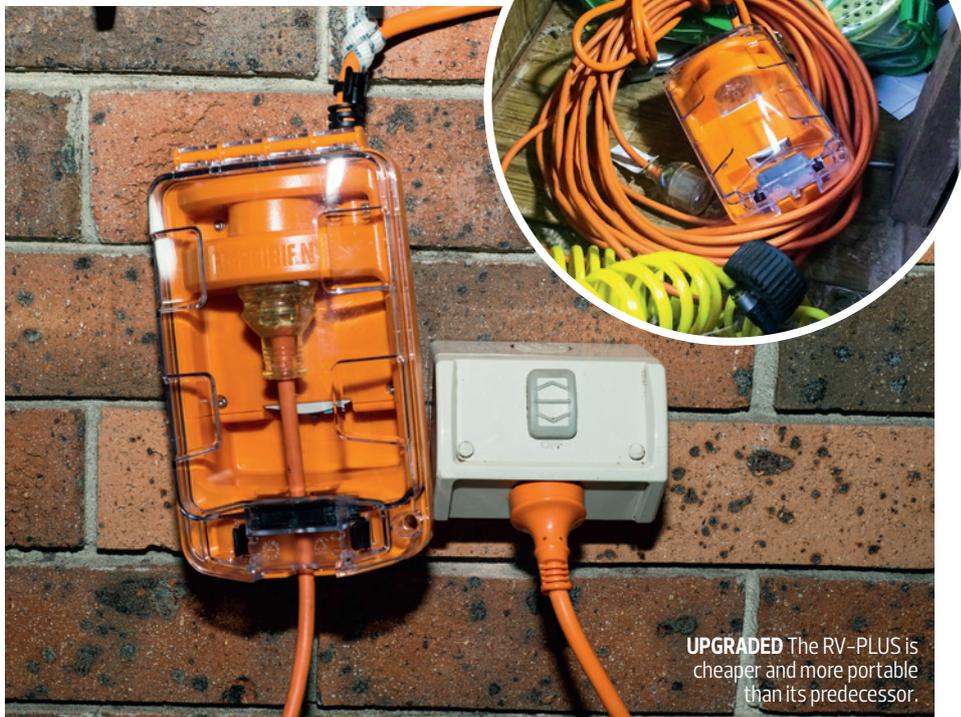
If your house is anything like mine, it wasn't built expecting you to plug in your caravan to charge its batteries and keep the fridge running between trips. While I have a power point outside, it's only for 10amp cords, so the large blade of the standard 15amp extension lead I use in the Viscount can't be plugged into my house.

This same situation occurred at my brother's house when we camped out there over Christmas. It left me with the less-than-ideal options of firing up the generator in his backyard, illegally modifying a 15amp cord or having an electrician come out and replace the circuit just so I can charge a fairly standard battery every little while.

But that's when I picked up one of Ampfiban's latest products – the RV-PLUS. This is a 15amp to 10amp power cord adaptor, which means I can still rely on the 15amp cord, while being guaranteed access to mains power whenever I need it.

Ampfiban aren't new to the scene. Many people already carry the Ampfiban MAX. This is a similar product that does basically the same job, but is rated for heavy-duty and commercial use and costs 30 per cent more. Its price was likely a barrier to more caravanners taking it up.

The RV-PLUS is just \$149 and built into a smaller package, making it far more convenient to carry and use. Essentially, it's a waterproof box that accepts a 15amp



UPGRADED The RV-PLUS is cheaper and more portable than its predecessor.

plug and then has a 10amp lead coming out the other end. In the middle, there's a 10amp 2400W circuit breaker, which will trip if there's any chance of your caravan overloading the standard power point. It also has an RCD (residual current device) for personal protection from electric shock. It's weather and dustproof to IP55 standard, meaning it can be sprayed with a

jet of water from any direction and not get wet inside.

When a lead is plugged in, the main seal is tight enough so it's very hard to accidentally disconnect the power cord inside the adaptor, even if it's being pulled. It's also thoughtful that Ampfiban has included a padlock hole to keep it more secure.

\$149 | ampfiban.com.au



REAL FLIPPER
Go from a standard laptop to a touchscreen tablet with ease.



ACER ZENBOOK FLIP

A caravan magazine isn't the usual place to find a review of a laptop computer, but changes in entertainment and media mean that computers are now replacing other everyday items. In the case of this ZenBook Flip from Asus, it's a machine capable of replacing your TV, books and your conventional laptop and separate tablet.

I travelled for a couple of weeks with the ZenBook, which has the ability to completely fold back on itself and quickly transform from a computer and keyboard to a tablet completely controlled via touchscreen. The device weighs just 1.3kg, is only 13.9mm thick and has a high-resolution screen. Great for the rigours of travel, it features a 512GB solid state hard drive and 8GB of RAM, with an Intel i7 processor. Depending on usage, battery life is up to 12 hours.

Overall, I found the ZenBook really convenient to travel with. From the box, this small and light laptop also comes with a protective sleeve. I often used it flipped as a tablet to watch movies and, if I could get a decent Wi-Fi connection, even streamed a few shows from Netflix. In its traditional keyboard mode, it was ready to go as soon as I opened it, making it perfect for taking notes and updating the *AC+RV* blog as I travelled.

My only bugbear is that it uses too much power while in sleep mode, so the battery runs flat after putting it to sleep for a day or so, rather than turning it off. My everyday Apple MacBook Pro, on the other hand, will sleep for weeks without draining too far. However, my MacBook cost nearly twice as much. All things considered, the Asus is an excellent travel companion.

From \$1350 | asus.com/au