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STORING YOUR STUFF

WORDS & PHOTOS | SAM CRAVEN

A LOOK AT SYSTEM ALPHA BY TREKBOXX

"What did you buy this time?" my business partner Mat asked accusingly when a truck delivered a large wooden crate to our office just before dark.

"I'm remodeling our house with wheels," I replied with a smile, "and I need your help." I was thankful we were both working late that night and we jumped to work unboxing. If there was ever an early indicator of the craftsmanship that went into the crate's contents, it was the crate itself. Having been a car nut my entire life I have become very familiar with crummy packaging of heavy parts, but that was not the case this time. The crate was more than sturdy; taped to the box were unpacking instructions complete with a color-coded screw layout that made unboxing fun instead of an exercise in civil engineering. If they put this much care into the packaging, then surely the product is high quality as well.

My wife and I started overlanding about five years ago when we were fresh out of college. We couldn't afford plane tickets across the globe but could buy fuel to travel across the country. We purchased a Land Cruiser with 200,000 miles on it and set off finding our place in the world. Year after year we have added to and remodeled our home away from home to make our time on the road a little more capable, a little more comfortable.

The latest renovation focused heavily on comfort. Over the years I had developed a hatred for all things that float around the back of our Land Cruiser. I had a home-brew drawer system but it didn't eliminate what I can only describe as an ever-evolving garbage pile that floated around on top of that platform. Every morning, breaking camp required me to completely unpack and repack that pile in an attempt to bring order to chaos, and after five seasons on the road I was over it. Combine the floating garbage pile with the fridge that's so high it can only be accessed from your knees on the tailgate, and both my five-foot tall wife and I were double over it.

When we aren't traveling I can be found pulling long hours in the office growing our real estate investment company. Let me be clear, I can't swing a hammer to save my life, but being in the business of remodeling houses has given me an appreciation for excellent cabinetmaking and what great fit and finish really look like. So when I set out to buy cabinets for our Land Cruiser my standards were high.

With our latest renovation we wanted the perfect vehicle drawer system that not only fit our current needs, but would also be ideal for years to come. We considered a number of mass-produced products from all over the world but decided to take a chance on a little-known company called TrekboxX, which handcrafts its products in the USA. I called them up and was immediately talking to owner David Walter who, in addition to founding TrekboxX, is also a police officer. David gave me a complete breakdown on System Alpha, the drawer system already developed for the 100 series Land Cruiser, and shared with me his design philosophy. I was quickly sold, and I worked with David to develop another drawer module, the "Zulu Drawer," which mounts to the existing platform of System Alpha. The Zulu Drawer module is now available through TrekboxX; it features a top hinge at the front of the drawers so you can access items in the top drawer from the second row without getting out of the car. Now we can access snacks without stopping!

Thanks to the easy instructions and color coded screws, the drawers were soon loaded up in the back of the Land Cruiser. The next day I worked toward installation and got to know the new centerpiece to our rolling home. The final installation was very easy because it showed up 90% assembled. It bolts to the Cruiser with the existing mounting locations left over from the third row seat mounts so no modifications or fabrication are necessary. All the mounting hardware is high grade, and even the hinges for the wings on the right and left are the same soft-close hinges we use in our high-end homes. The drawer slides and latches are smooth and silent and the placement of the latch and handle is very ergonomical.

Everything on the drawers is coated in LineX. I was concerned about this at first, thinking a painted-on coating would inevitably get scratched, but it's now clear those concerns were unfounded. I'm confident this system will look as good for my kid's travels as it does for my own. When we were working through the details of the Zulu Drawer, David made it very clear he was not going to remove the cage that separates the drawer system from the front seats. He told me how many times he has seen injury and death not from the car accident but from items in the back making

their way to the front after the impact. This shows just how much thought David puts into everything.

That thought and engineering carries over to the excellent layout of the entire system. The back of a vehicle is very limiting but TrekboxX maximizes every last inch. One of the best features is the dual fridge slide. The fridge is mounted nice and low for easy access; a second slide extends off the fridge slide to provide a food prep surface that flips up for access to another drawer, which serves as a great location for a Partner Steel stove and cooking utensils.

It's pretty clear that my family is a fan of TrekboxX at this point, but it's not without its faults. For starters it is considerably more expensive than mass-produced products. And, this is really nit-picking, but I spent about 15 minutes adjusting the rattle out of one of the slides. It threw me for a loop initially but after a quick phone call to David, he walked me through the steps to correct this and made it easy. Also, TrekboxX uses Baltic Birch wood to manufacture its drawers, and along with the heavy duty hardware and LineX on everything, the system can get a bit heavy.

In a growing market of overland storage solutions TrekboxX stands out as a leader. David's attention to detail puts the System Alpha system in a league of its own. Staying organized on the trail means more time spent around the campfire, more time spent enjoying the views, and less time spent hating the floating garbage pile jostling around in the back of the vehicle. Most people evaluating the TrekboxX against other systems are going to find fault only with the price, and it was a leap of faith for us as well. But we could not be happier with our choice. Not everything in life can be summed up this way but I'm confident that TrekboxX is more expensive than its competition because it's worth it. **X4**

TrekboxX now offers complete storage systems for Toyota Land Cruiser and Jeep JKU including a sleeping platform for the Jeep JKU. Visit www.TrekboxX.com for more information, including pricing and options, or contact David at 923-270-1657 to discuss your vehicle's storage needs including custom projects.

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