

## 2017 Northern Lite 10-2 EX CD Special Edition Review

By [Gordon White](#)

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Truck Camper Magazine reviews a 2017 Northern Lite 10-2 EX CD Special Edition, a hard side, non-slide, wet bath truck camper. Is this one of the highest quality RVs on the planet? Grab your skepticism hat, and we'll get to work.



After a devastating fire burned the Northern Lite factory to the ground in February of 2014, the Kelowna, British Columbia manufacturer had a new facility, new fiberglass moulds, new tools, new jigs, and had resumed production with the same management and production team by the following December.

As stunning as the 10-month factory rebuild was, the debut of their first all-new model was equally compelling. The Northern Lite 10-2 EX CD Special Edition was proof that Northern Lite was not only back on its feet, but ready to chart a new and exciting future for its popular non-slide two-piece clam shell fiberglass truck campers. If there's a better come back story in the history of truck campers, we haven't heard it.



Above: The 2017 Northern Lite 10-2 EX CD Special Edition we reviewed was inside the covered building at Truck Camper Warehouse in West Chesterfield, New Hampshire.

Keith Donkin, General Manager for [Northern Lite](#), announced the Northern Lite 10-2 EX CD Special Edition in Truck Camper Magazine on March 17, 2015. The all-new and significantly larger 10-2 EX molds opened a world of possibilities for the three 10-2 EX floor plans.

“The 2016 Northern Lite 10-2 EX features an additional 11-inches of interior floor length for all three 10-2 EX floor plans,” explained Keith. “We had a lot of feedback from customers and dealers who wanted the 10-2 to be a little larger.”

When asked about specific changes the new 10-2 EX moulds brought to the Special Edition, Keith answered, “We lowered the side wings on the 10-2 EX by two inches. That change brought the wings closer to the truck box rails, created two inches of increased headroom in the dinette, and increased cabinetry storage in the kitchen.”



He also talked about the new wet bath moulds. “The wet bath in the (previous) 10-2 was already one of the largest in the truck camper industry. For the 10-2 EX, we didn’t change the size of the wet bath, but we did move the sink to the corner. When you’re in the new 10-2 EX bathroom, it feels larger because there’s more space where the sink used to be.”

Keith added, “One of the benefits of leaving the wet bath the same dimensions is the addition of the new pull-out pantry on the driver’s side. We were also able to add three inches to the dinette bed. The dinette bed is now 6’3” in length. The dinette table is the same size, but we added to the seat depths. Where the seat depths were not equally deep before, now they are.”

Keith went on to describe other changes afforded by the larger moulds. “On the passenger’s side, we added an additional cupboard and drawers beside the refrigerator, and have an additional storage area for taller items in the kitchen area.”

“The generator box has been redesigned to fit up to two Honda EU2000i generators. We wanted to make it easier to get the generator into the box,” he stated, describing how the previous design made fitting a portable generator a tight fit. “The patio is now standard on all Special Edition models.”

If you’re unfamiliar with Northern Lite’s two-piece clam shell fiberglass design, or just want to see one of the most impressive truck camper factories on the planet, check out our 2015 Northern Lite factory tour, “[Up and Running at Northern Lite](#)”. It’s a must read to fully appreciate Northern Lite’s come back, and their product philosophy.

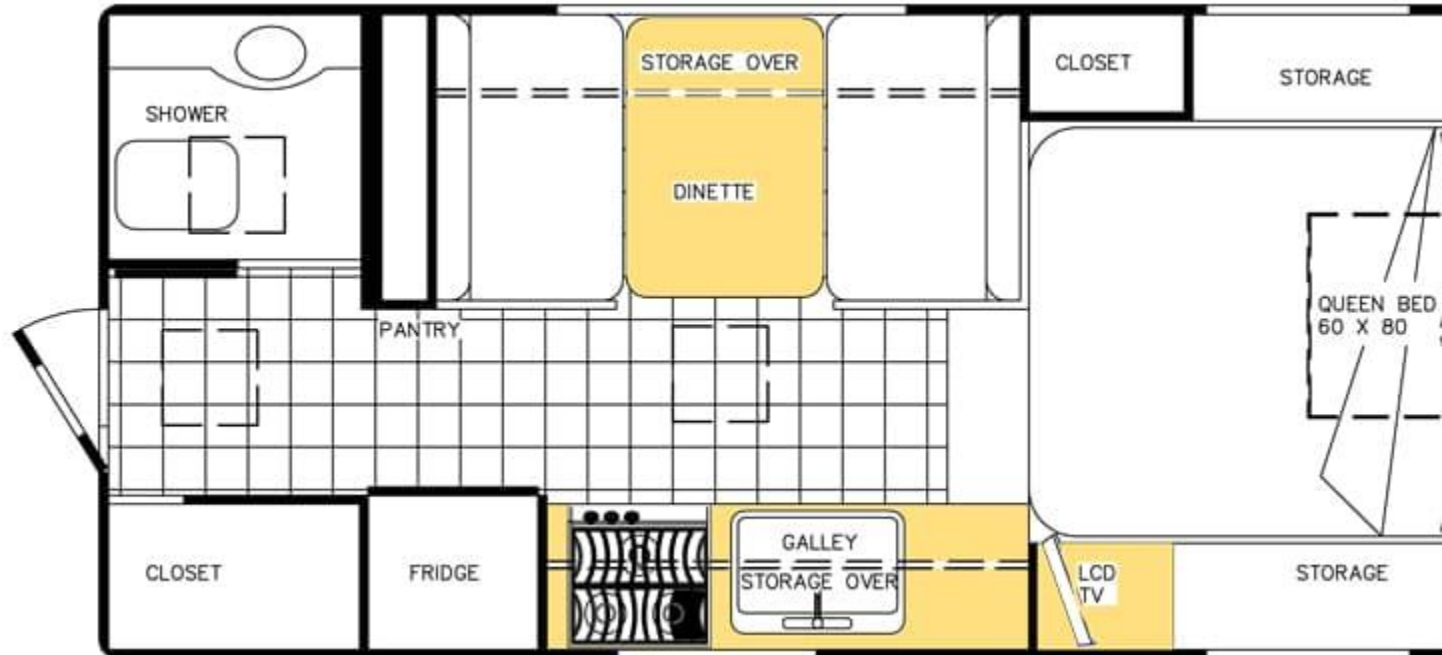
### **A Closer Look**

Before the fire, Northern Lite was a quality standard bearer for not only the truck camper industry, but the RV industry as a whole. The question is, are Northern Lite truck campers built in the new factory of the same or better quality as what they were building pre-fire?

Based on our observations at the new Northern Lite factory last year, along with the fact that they retained their entire production team, our initial answer is a resounding yes. But what happens if we take a closer look at a Northern Lite 10-2 EX CD Special Edition in the field, thousands of miles from where it was shipped?

We evaluated this 2017 Northern Lite 10-2 EX CD Special Edition at Truck Camper Warehouse.

## Floor Plan Evaluation



When Northern Lite first announced they would rebuild, we wondered if they were going to change the floor plans. With nearly all of the old fiberglass moulds destroyed, it was the best opportunity they might ever have to go back to the drawing board, and think big.

Well, they did think big, but not as we were suggesting. For example, rather than design a completely new 10-2 CD Special Edition floor plan, they kept the proven and popular floor plan they already had, and focused on how to make it even better. Keith and the Northern Lite management team followed the same train of thought when they designed the new Northern Lite factory; keep what was working well, but make it better.

Even with all of the updates and improvements to the 10-2 EX under review (and there's quite a list), we're not looking at huge changes. If you showed non-camper folks the Northern Lite 10-2 CD (previous model) and then the 10-2 EX CD (new model) it's unlikely that they would be able to tell the two units apart. With nearly the same exterior



and interior appearance, as well as nearly identical floor plans, the two campers are very similar.



Stepping into the hard side, non-slide, wet bath, long bed truck camper, you're presented with an old school layout with decidedly luxury materials and a high-end finish.





Once you stop ogling at the gorgeous Sapele wood Northern Lite's Special Edition series is renown for, note that the wet bath door slides open allowing immediate use at all times. No slide to slide-out, no swinging bathroom door to hinder access. As a non-slide truck camper fan, this is poetry.

Having worked a fair number of RV shows presenting Northern Lite truck campers, I can affirm that many excited potential customers stop cold at the wet bath. These reactions had absolutely nothing to do with the quality or design of Northern Lite's wet bath, and everything to do with the aversion some folks have for wet baths.



For folks who see wet baths as a smart compromise to gain precious interior living space and a larger shower area, wet baths are a welcome solution. Freshly redesigned, the wet bath in the 10-2 EX CD Special Edition is the same size as the previous 10-2 CD wet bath, but features a better layout.

First and foremost, the sink has moved from the awkward dead center position the original 10-2 CD. The 10-2 EX wet bath now mirrors the design in the Northern Lite 9-6 wet bath with the sink in the forward corner, a more natural position for day-to-day use.





The 10-2 EX wet bath is very well appointed with a ceiling fan, LED-lighting, towel rack, mirrored vanity, shower, toilet paper holder, and flush toilet. As wet baths go, this isn't the biggest wet bath the market, but it's an impressive showing.

As we studied the 10-2 EX wet bath, we did find ourselves wishing for more sink-level counter space. This is a tough challenge for any wet bath, but folks like to bring their toiletries into a bathroom (hair brushes, tooth brushes, razors and shaving cream, etc.) and put them down while using them. On balance, the counter space area around the sink will hold a few of these items, and there's always the option of putting things on the lower "shelf" under the sink.



Another subtle but extremely important advantage of the new and longer 10-2 EX moulds is how the mirrored refrigerator has moved forward. This prevents the rude shock of opening the wet bath door after a shower and seeing yourself – in all of your glory – reflected directly back. This is why you sometimes hear screams early in the morning from owners of Northern Lite 10-2 CD Special Editions. Thankfully, this horror is avoided in the 10-2 EX CD Special Edition.

Now, if you are sitting in the dinette, you can see someone else in all their glory. Still hear screams!!





What you do find across from the wet bath door are two pull-out, steel roller-bearing drawers (there was one before), a new mid-size cabinet, and the same (but very welcome) double-door hanging closet from the previous 10-2.



I can see couples turning the drawers into his and hers for socks, underwear, shirts, and pants. The mid-size cabinet could then be used for toiletries and towels keeping most bathroom and dressing items right where you need them. Right storage, right location! If you've read any of my reviews, you know how that makes me happy.



Under these storage options is where the Atwood furnace, battery disconnect, standard solar controller, light switch, and power awning rocker are located. Having the battery disconnect within reach of the entry door is awesome. Making items like the solar controller (and 95-watt panels), and 7-foot rear power awning standard is equally impressive. That's what the Special Edition is all about. With the exception of a built-in Onan Micro-Lite 2500LP generator and a few other niche options, everything is standard.

Only the furnace and awning controls are located here in the Australian Ultimate Edition. The entire electrical system has been revamped for the Australian models and is detailed later.



The 6.3 cubic-foot Dometic 3-way refrigerator and freezer is ample for a truck camper this size.

The Australian Ultimate Edition has the same sized 3 way Dometic but it is 240 volt of course and it has Automatic Energy Selection (AES) so that the fridge can only run on 12 volts *when the vehicle engine is running*. When the engine is turned off, the fridge will switch to 240 volt or gas if there is no 240 available. It will not switch to gas until 20 minutes after the engine is turned off as a safeguard for when you stop for fuel.





Immediately before the mid-ship driver's side dinette, Northern Lite has once again taken full advantage of the larger 10-2 EX molds and added a huge pull-out food pantry. This is the kind of feature addition that will make owners of older Northern Lite 10-2 models start to twitch. Before discovering this pantry, they were completely at peace with their truck camper. Panty pulled, words like "trade-in value" and "maybe it's time to sell my stuffed hamster collection" start to creep into the subconscious.



The full-booth face-to-face dinette in the 10-2 EX CD Special Edition has a lot of subtle details worthy of comment. First, the now-increased seat depth is very comfortable, as are the seat cushions and table height. Ergonomically, this dinette feels right.





The dinette table utilizes the Dream Dinette mechanism to eliminate the need for a table leg.



The Dream Dinette mechanism also makes it easy to convert the dinette into a bed, and back again. With only four dinette cushions, making the bed and reforming the dinette again could not be easier.



Unfortunately, the Dream Dinette hardware also forces the table top away from the camper side wall leaving about a 1.5-inch gap. When pushed down to form the 6-foot 3-inch dinette bed platform, the Dream Dinette hardware requires this space to avoid contacting the table top. Not everyone will mind this gap, especially when they understand why it's there.



There is one more trick up this dinette table's sleeve; it moves horizontally. Under the inside-facing edge is a stopper that can be unscrewed to release the table top for adjustment, and tightened to keep the table top in the new position.





This adjustability allows the table to be tighter on one side than another, say if one spouse is skinny and the other is – well, not skinny.

The horizontally adjustable dinette table top has been a Northern Lite feature for many years. Having talked to dozens of Northern Lite owners, it's been suggested that the dinette stopper needs to be more robust, and that the stopper-screw is not always easy to adjust by hand.



The forward-facing dinette seats have two pull-out drawers. These drawers are not as deep as we often see in competing dinettes, but they are welcome storage opportunities.



Under the forward facing dinette is a heat duct, fuse box, and a 110-volt outlet. Having a 110-volt outlet in the dinette area is excellent, but its under-the-table location is a bit awkward. The location of the fuse box is also a bit awkward, especially if one is trouble shooting an electrical problem in the unit. While I'm nitpicking, a 12-volt outlet and at least one USB-outlet would be a great addition to the dinette area.

The Australian Ultimate Edition has a double 240 volt power outlet located on the inside of the rear facing seat. This makes it slightly more accessible. Also the fuse box has been replaced with a 12 volt circuit breaker panel and located elsewhere as discussed later. There is a 12 volt outlet standard on the Australian Ultimate Edition.





Lifting the platform on the rear-facing dinette seat reveals why I hold Northern Lite in such high regard. While I may take issue with specific design choices, the material quality, fit, and finish throughout the unit is truly top notch. There is nowhere on this camper – even behind cabinets and inside the basement area – that doesn't reveal this level of attention to detail and quality.

Under the rear facing dinette seat in the Australian Ultimate is a Reverse Osmosis Water Filter System, complete with a 12 litre pressurised holding tank. In Australia people often stay at National Parks and places where clean fresh drinking water is not readily available, however there is usually a supply of water which is not suitable for drinking but OK to wash in, so we fill our 'fresh water tank' with non-potable water for day to day use and use the reverse osmosis for cooking and drinking. The reverse

Osmosis System gives you a constant supply of 99.9% pure water. It even takes out the taste of chlorine etc and is great for tea and coffee (and drinking, so I hear but I have never tried it, it is just an ingredient!).

Also fitted under this seat is a water pressure tank that stops the 12 volt water pump from coming on *every time* a tap is turned on or the Reverse Osmosis is recharging.



The cabinet above the dinette is much smaller than we typically see in non-slide, full-booth dinette truck campers. The reverse transom shape of the upper fiberglass clam shell (a critical element of Northern Lite's structural strength) along with a large thermal pane insulated window beneath it, leaves just enough space for a short upper dinette cabinet.



We find this size handy for two reasons. Many of the taller cupboards have much space above the items stored in them, hence you have to stack things on top to utilise the space and cupboards up high in the camper should have as little weight as possible, keeping the heavy items down as low as possible.



Speaking of the dinette window, some folks might wonder why it's not centered in the dinette area. The reason is the location of the seam between the upper and lower fiberglass clam shells. The seam runs in a diagonal-Z mid-ship on the unit.



If you look at the outside of the camper, you will see that the window is located as far forward as possible without interfering with the seam.

The steel struts that support the cabinets when open, along with the cabinet hinges and latches, give the Northern Lite cabinets a remarkably strong and secure feel in use. These Sapele wood cabinets are not only gorgeous, but built to last.



Inside the upper dinette cabinet is the television antenna rotator. This seems like an uncomfortable location for tuning the antenna. Furthermore, items stored in this upper dinette cabinet may need to be moved to fully access the antenna rotator.

On the underside of the upper dinette are two LED reading lights, a dual-side LED dome light, and stereo speakers. The reading lights are an excellent addition for reading and adding more light to the dinette area. In general, we have always been impressed with Northern Lite's interior lighting. They really understand the importance of proper interior lighting location and quality.

The Australian Ultimate Edition also has a set of speakers in the bedroom and another set of marine speakers located outside under the awning. No Wolves in Australia so we have "Dances with Dingoes".



Across from the dinette is a straight kitchen with a large stainless steel single-basin sink, tall faucet, a three-burner stainless steel range top with glass top, oven, audio-video system, water pump switch, spice rack, paper tower holder, a good variety of upper and lower storage cabinets, and another large window.





The counter top area is relatively limited, but there's plenty of space for washing dishes and meal preparation – as long as you don't attempt both at the same time.





The counter top insert for the kitchen sink and the fold-down glass top range cover offer a clean look to the kitchen area when not in use, and more counter space.



When held in the up-position, the glass range cover also protects the European-style acrylic thermal pane windows from potential food splatters and heat. Speaking of splatters, a functional back splash might be a good idea on the side wall facing the range top.





Under the counter top is the propane water heater switch, two pull-out drawers, one single door cabinet, and double-door cabinet area under the sink.



The space under the sink is somewhat compromised by the exterior battery compartments, but a small trash container should still fit.

In the Australian Ultimate Edition the entire under sink area is used for the electrical components, as listed later. This does however free up space elsewhere for storage.



Above the counter top are three pull-up cabinets featuring the same struts, hinges, and latches we admired in the dinette area. Also like the dinette upper cabinets, this storage space is limited by the reverse transom design of the upper clam shell.





This limitation is extremely forgivable given the unparalleled advantages of the dual clam shell fiberglass construction, and owners would quickly adapt by utilizing the new pull-out pantry and additional storage afforded by the larger 10-2 EX moulds. There are always trade-offs in truck camper design.



Behind door number three we discovered a small stainless steel Contoure brand microwave. Not only does this microwave look high quality, but it's also perfectly sized for a truck camper. It's like Countoure made the perfect microwave just for Northern Lite. We also appreciated how the microwave was securely anchored into the cabinetry.

[In Australia we use a Sharp or Panasonic 240 volt microwave. Still well secured.](#)





The rich wood-framed cabover entrance to the bedroom makes it look more like a residential loft than a traditional camper cabover.



Both sides of the cabover bedroom feature dual hampers, windows, LED reading lights, and dual-side LED dome lights.



Both sides also get a third storage area; a full-height cabinet on the driver's side, and a half-height cabinet on the passenger's side.





The passenger's side also features the HDTV with swing-arm bracket, and a night stand.

Again in Australia we use a HDTV that runs off 12 volt or 240 volt with a built in DVD player. This allows one person to lie in bed watching a love story while the other sits with the outside speakers, loving a not so quiet beer!

Above the bed is a Heki skylight which, along with the two windows and multiple LED lights, makes the cabover in the Northern Lite 10-2 EX Special Edition feel bright, open, and spacious.



Having relatively equal storage opportunities on both sides of the bed is also appreciated.





The reverse transom of the upper shell can be clearly seen in the cabover and we did note a few instances where the lining did not fully adhere to the shape of the ceiling. Having been to the Northern Lite factory and observed the fiberglass shell production three times, we are confident that this is entirely a cosmetic issue. [We have not found this a problem with campers received in Australia, but it would be fairly easily fixed before sale.](#)

Our only real gripe with the cabover might be an oversight on our part. The cabover appears to only have an 110-volt outlet where the television is located. For folks with CPAP machines or just in need of charging devices overnight, a second 110-volt outlet on the driver's side and a set of 12-volt and USB outlets would be helpful. If we missed these features, we hope Northern Lite corrects us with a Manufacturer's Response.

The Australian Ultimate Edition has a double 240 volt outlet plus a 12 volt double USB.



### **The Australian Ultimate Electrical System.**

The whole electrical system in the Ultimate is located in the cupboard underneath the kitchen sink and takes in one of the 2 battery boxes.

### **The 12 Volt system.**

This consists of a 12 volt, 300 amp hour Lithium Iron Phosphate or LiFePo4 battery that has its own cell balancing and management system built in. These batteries typically can discharge down to 10% capacity while still maintaining 12 volts as against AGM batteries which are virtually flat when down to 50% or 10.5 volts. These Lithium Batteries

can be recharged faster and to a higher level. The LiFePo4 battery runs in conjunction with a **Redarc Battery Management System (BMS1230S2)** which is the heart of the Australian Ultimate electrics. This Redarc BMS is a multi-function Unit that maintains the battery to its highest possible level utilising whatever power source is available.

Firstly, it is a solar regulator that takes up to 30 amps from the solar panels and charges the house battery via a multistage DC to DC battery charger which ensures the battery receives the optimum charge. If the house battery is fully charged then the available power is redirected to the vehicle battery if it detects a need. This Unit also takes up to 30 amps from the vehicle when the engine is running, again running through a multistage DC to DC battery charger to maximise battery life. The Redarc is also a vehicle battery isolator that ensures it can't draw power from the vehicle battery when the engine is not running.

If there is 240 volt available - mains or shore power or a generator plugged in - it acts as a multistage AC to DC battery charger. It has a 'green' function as well, using whatever solar power is available and then using the mains power to supplement that supply. ie. If the Redarc requires a full 30 amps to charge the battery and solar is putting out 15 amps, it will only draw 15 amps from your generator, leaving the rest to run the air conditioner and fridge.

The Redarc BMS also has a complete monitor system, usually located outside the stereo unit, that tells you exactly what you need to know about the state of your battery, like how much power you are drawing at any given time or with a particular item plugged in, and how long till your battery is fully charged or flat, plus a whole lot more information.

12 volt power from the battery runs to the adjacent Redarc Unit via a 12 volt battery disconnect and then to the 12 volt circuit breaker panel to power all 12 volt components and lighting. It's better than fuses.

### **The 240 Volt system.**

This state of the art system has the 240 volt power inlet connected to a circuit breaker and from that to the refrigerator and Redarc 240 volt inlet. This allows the fridge to run



on 240 volt when mains power is plugged in and also the Redarc to charge the battery using mains power. A separate line from the breaker runs to the Redarc/Cotek 2500 watt pure sine wave inverter. This high end inverter then redirects the mains power to the 240 volt outlets and appliances in the camper. Disconnect the mains power and the inverter automatically switches to battery power. This inverter when coupled with the LiFePo4 battery and other components installed allows you to run everything, even an electric toaster or electric kettle from the battery power. We have even run the Air Command Air Conditioner fitted for 6 hours off the battery and only depleted the battery to 50%. *Now you must agree, that is impressive!*

Overall, we were knocked out with the build quality and materials in the Northern Lite 10-2 EX CD Special Edition. It's every inch as high quality as Northern Lite truck campers were pre-fire, probably better.

The items we picked on above were almost purely feature locations and minor design choices. Some of these feature locations and design choices are probably forced by the unique way Northern Lite truck campers are built. Other nitpicks are subjective; simply our opinion as experienced truck campers. And nothing comes close to outweighing the stunning build and material quality of the Northern Lite 10-2 EX CD Special Edition. This camper is a stunner.

### Specifications

SPECIFICATIONS	
Dry Weight	3,265 pounds or 1,480 kilograms
Wet Weight*	4,285 pounds or 1,941 kilograms
Floor Length	131" or 333 centimetres
Overall Length	218" or 553 centimetres
Width	98" or 249 centimetres
Interior Height	6'8" or 203 centimetres
Exterior Height	106" or 269 centimetres
Center of Gravity	48" or 122 centimetres
Truck Type	Long Bed

Back in 2010 and again in 2015, I challenged the Northern Lite to weigh a unit in front of us at the factory to prove their remarkable dry weight claims. In both instances, they immediately took me up on the challenge and proved that their campers truly are what they report.

# DO NOT REMOVE/NE PAS ENLEVER

## RECREATIONAL VEHICLE SPECIFICATION NAMEPLATE PLAQUE SIGNALÉTIQUE POUR VÉHICULE RÉCRÉATIF

MANUFACTURER/FABRICANT Northern Lite Mfg Ltd DATE OF MANUFACTURE June 2016  
 FACTORY ADDRESS/ADRESSE DE L'USINE 322 Totom Court, Kelowna, B.C. DATE DU FABRICANT V1X 5W6  
 TRADE NAME Northern Lite MODEL NO. 10'2 EXCD 'SE' SERIAL NO. NL10-2EXCD63417SE  
 MARQUE DE COMMERCE \_\_\_\_\_ NO DE MODÈLE \_\_\_\_\_ NO DE SÉRIE \_\_\_\_\_  
 CSA CERTIFICATION LABEL No. \_\_\_\_\_ ÉTIQUETTE DE CERTIFICATION ACNOR NO \_\_\_\_\_

- NOTE: (1) This specification plate and the exterior CSA Label provides the only evidence of CSA Certification.  
 Cette plaque signalétique ainsi que l'étiquette extérieure ACNOR constituent les seules preuves de la certification ACNOR.
- (2) CSA Certification covers the systems noted below only when installed by the vehicle manufacturer.  
 La certification ACNOR englobe les installations indiquées ci-dessous uniquement si leur placement est effectué par le fabricant du véhicule.
- (3) Any additions or modifications to factory installed systems must be authorized by the appropriate provincial or municipal authorities having jurisdiction.  
 Toute adjonction ou modification aux installations dont le placement est effectué à l'usine doit être approuvée par les autorités provinciales ou municipales compétentes.
- (4) (NA) Under the heading "FACTORY INSTALLED APPLIANCES" indicates appliances not factory installed.  
 "NA" sous l'en-tête "Appareils installés à l'usine" indique des appareils non installés à l'usine.

### FACTORY INSTALLED APPLIANCES APPAREILS INSTALLÉS À L'USINE

	MAKE MARQUE	MODEL MODÈLE	FUEL (Gas or Electric) COMBUSTIBLE (gaz ou électricité)	
1. FURNACE	Atwood	AFSD20121	LPG/12V	FOURNAISE À AIR CHAUD
2. WATER HEATER	Atwood	GC6AA-10E	LPG	CHAUFFE-EAU
3. RANGE	Wedgewood	RV1734SSPS	LPG	CUISINIÈRE
4. REFRIGERATOR	Dometic	DM2663	LPG/12V/110	RÉFRIGÉRATEUR
5. GENERATOR				GÉNÉRATRICE
6. AIR CONDITIONER	Coleman	Mach 8	110	CLIMATISEUR
7. MICROWAVE OVEN	Franklin Chef	FR780B	110	MICRO-ONDE
8. _____				
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	INSTALLATION ÉLECTRIQUE:		12 Volts	110 Hertz 30 Ampères

PLUMBING SYSTEM: Pressure system tested at 690 kPa (100 psi). INSTALLATION DE PLOMBERIE: Installation sous pression éprouvée à 690 kPa (100 psi).

### WARNING AVERTISSEMENT

#### GAS SYSTEM: INSTALLATION DE GAZ:

TO ENSURE A SUPPLY OF FRESH AIR TO OCCUPANTS, OPEN VENTILATORS WHEN FUEL-BURNING RANGE AND/OR LIGHTS ARE IN OPERATION.  
 POUR ASSURER AUX OCCUPANTS UNE CIRCULATION D'AIR FRAIS, OUVRIR LES VENTILATEURS TANT QUE FONCTIONNEMENT LA CUISINIÈRE OU DES LAMPES À GAZ.

THIS SYSTEM IS DESIGNED FOR USE WITH PROPANE ONLY. DO NOT CONNECT NATURAL GAS TO THIS SYSTEM.  
 CETTE INSTALLATION EST CONÇUE POUR LE PROPANE SEULEMENT. NE PAS L'ALIMENTER EN GAZ NATUREL.

#### BEFORE TURNING ON PROPANE AVANT LA MISE EN SERVICE

- (a) BE CERTAIN APPLIANCES ARE CERTIFIED FOR PROPANE AND ARE EQUIPPED WITH CORRECT BURNER ORIFICES.  
 S'ASSURER QUE LES APPAREILS SONT CERTIFIÉS POUR LE PROPANE ET MUNIS D'ORIFICES DE BRÔLEUR APPROPRIÉS.
- (b) MAKE CERTAIN ALL PROPANE CONNECTIONS ARE TIGHT BY TESTING WITH SOAPY WATER, ALL APPLIANCE VALVES ARE TURNED OFF, AND ANY UNCONNECTED OUTLETS ARE CAPPED.  
 VÉRIFIER L'ÉTANCHÉITÉ DE TOUS LES RACCORDEMENTS AU PROPANE, LA FERMETURE DE TOUS LES ROBINETS D'APPAREILS ET L'OBTURATION DE TOUTES LES SORTIES NON RACCORDEES.

#### AFTER TURNING ON PROPANE APRÈS LA MISE EN SERVICE

- (a) LIGHT ALL PILOTS  
 ALLUMER TOUTES LES VEILLEUSES.
- (b) ALL CONNECTIONS INCLUDING THOSE AT THE APPLIANCES, REGULATORS, AND CYLINDERS SHOULD BE LEAK-TESTED PERIODICALLY WITH SOAPY WATER BY THE OCCUPANT. NEVER USE A LIGHTED MATCH OR OTHER FLAME WHEN CHECKING FOR LEAKS.  
 L'OCCUPANT DOIT ÉPROUVER PÉRIODIQUEMENT L'ÉTANCHÉITÉ DE TOUS LES RACCORDEMENTS, Y COMPRIS CEUX AUX APPAREILS, AUX DÉTENDEURS ET AUX BOUTERILLES, EN Y APPLIQUANT DE L'EAU SAVONNEUSE. NE JAMAIS DE SERVIR D'UNE ALLUMETTE OU AUTRE FLAMME POUR LA DÉTECTION DES FUITES.
- (c) DO NOT LEAVE SYSTEM TURNED ON OR CONTAINERS CONNECTED UNTIL THE SYSTEM HAS BEEN PROVEN TO BE FREE OF ANY LEAKS.  
 NE PAS LAISSER L'ALIMENTATION OUVERTE, NI LES RÉCIPIENTS RACCORDEES, AVANT D'AVOIR COMPLÉTÉ L'ÉPREUVE D'ÉTANCHÉITÉ AU PROPANE DE L'INSTALLATION.
- (d) COOKING APPLIANCES SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR SPACE HEATING.  
 LES APPAREILS DE CUISSON NE DOIVENT PAS ÊTRE UTILISÉS POUR LE CHAUFFAGE DES LOCAUX.
- (e) WHEN THE CONTAINERS ARE DISCONNECTED THE PROPANE SUPPLY LINE SHOULD BE CAPPED OR PLUGGED.  
 QUAND LES RÉCIPIENTS SONT DÉCONNECTÉS, L'ALIMENTATION DE PROPANE DOIT ÊTRE OBTURÉE OU SCELLÉE.

MODEL NO. 1111280  
 NO. DE SÉRIE



Northern Lite reports the dry weight of the 2017 Northern Lite 10-2 EX Special Edition at 3,265 pounds. The weight posted on the inside sticker on the unit under review is 3,284 pounds, well within a reasonable margin of error.



That's an extremely impressive weight for an essentially 11-foot fully-loaded non-slide wet bath truck camper. Remember, Northern Lite truck campers come equipped with a 10-foot side awning, Fantastic Fan, rear aluminum patio bumper step system, remote control electric jacks, 95-watt solar panel system, audio-video system with HDTV and antenna, Heki skylight, microwave, 7-foot rear power awning with LED light, 9200 BTU Coleman Mach air conditioner, and a 6.3 cubic foot (180 litre) refrigerator.



Our Australian Ultimate Camper come standard with 3 x 100 watt solar panels that weigh less in total than the one 95 watt panel normally supplied, and our air conditioners are close to half the weight of the Coleman Units but with a slightly reduced capacity. These Air Command reverse cycle air conditioners will actually start and run using a Honda 1 generator, so a Honda 2 will run the fridge and charge the battery.



Unless you add a generator, swing-out brackets, or a remote control Fantastic Fan (really?)\*, the weight posted on this unit is the actual dry weight of the unit. I love that about Northern Lite Special Editions because it makes them so easy to match to a truck. With this camper, there's zero guesswork about the dry weight with options. And the Chief of the Weight Police breaks out into his embarrassing happy dance.

\*\* Yes really, we do make the remote fantastic fan standard on Australian Ultimate Editions. On hot and balmy nights in Australia there is nothing to compare to a comfortable Northern Lite queen bed with the skylight open (screen shut for bugs) and all the windows shut with the fantastic vent drawing a gentle breeze across you to help you get to sleep. With the fantastic vent set to a temperature you know it will slow or even stop as the night cools down, and shut if it rains.

But you need the remote control handy in bed. In the event that any happy hour predigested and now toxic beer gas escapes through the night, you need to switch that fan on high before you suffocate or die from head trauma inflicted by a loved one. Sleeping without a remote fan is way too dangerous.



10-2EXCD SE  
KELOWNA BC

www.northern-lite.com



The way Northern Lite is able to achieve this industry-leading low weight is through their dual clam shell fiberglass design.



Once brought together, these clam shells are the structure of the camper. There's no need for a frame. There's no need for lamination and the associated adhesives. And you can forget the literally hundreds of screws other manufacturers require to hold their floors, sidewalls, and roofs together.



For Northern Lite, it's all about the fiberglass clam shell.



The more I learn about truck camper construction and long-term maintenance, the more beautiful this approach becomes.

### Capacities

CAPACITIES	
Fresh	36 gallons or 136 litres
Grey	40 gallons or 151 litres
Black	18 gallons or 68 litres
Water Heater	6 gallons or 23 litres
Propane Tanks	2 x 20 pounds or 9 kilo
Batteries	Two Batteries



If you fill the 136 litre (36 gallon) fresh tank, and don't refill it or connect to city water, it will be next to impossible to fill the 151 litre (40 gallon) grey tank. Unless you pour a lot of liquid into the kitchen sink (skunky beer maybe?), Northern Lite has made the very unusual choice of making the grey tank larger in capacity than the fresh tank.

Having experienced way too many truck campers with holding tank capacities that don't allow a full fresh tank to completely empty into the grey tank, we actually really like Northern Lite's approach.



Above: Holding tank pulls on the left, sewer hose container built into the rear bumper on the right

Together with the 68 litre (18-gallon) black tank, the holding tanks in the Northern Lite 10-2 EX should last a couple for 5-6 days of dry camping. That could stretch to as many as 8-9 days (possibly more) if you travel alone or practice extreme water and holding tank conservation. Sponge bath anyone?



Two 9 kilo (20-pound) vertical propane tanks is the industry standard for full-size truck campers, and for good reason. Not only are 9 kilo (20-pound) propane tanks available for purchase or exchange from coast-to-coast, but they're also easier to lift and maneuver than 30-pound tanks ([which aren't available at all in Australia](#)).



For reasons that escape us, Northern Lite has two separate exterior battery boxes. While the size of these boxes fits two industry standard Group 27 batteries, some Northern Lite customers have wished for a single battery compartment so they can connect their battery bank in parallel, or possibly fit larger Group 31 or even 6-volt golf cart batteries. Again, we invite Northern Lite to explain this design choice in a Manufacturer's Response.

[Our Australian Ultimate Edition has the rear battery box removed and in it's place we have the LiFePo4 battery built inside. The second battery box is now free for storage.](#)

### **Wet Weight Calculation**



Even with the low weight virtues of Northern Lite's "everything is included" approach, there's still no getting around the requirement of running the numbers to make a safe and proper truck and camper match. I know some of us hate math more than stubbing our toe, but no truck and camper match should be made without an honest and conservative wet weight calculation.

### **Base Dry Weight – option-loaded as standard**

Northern Lite 10-2 EX Special Edition: dry weight, 1490 kg (3,284 pounds - as reviewed) + 136 litre (36 gallons) fresh, 136 kg (300.2 pounds) + 23 litres (6 gallon) full hot water heater, 23 kg (50 pounds) + 2 x 9 kg (20-pound) full propane tanks, 18 kg (40 pounds) + 1 x (2x) battery, 42 kg (130 pounds) + stuff, 225 kg (500 pounds) = 1936 kg (4,304.2 pounds).

### **Truck Recommendations**

Man does that wet weight get me excited. 1936 kg (4,304.2) pounds for a fully-loaded long bed luxury truck camper! Are you kidding me? Unless you're planning to tow, or enjoy traveling with your extensive anvil collection, we can seriously talk about a single rear wheel truck under this puppy.

So let's talk about that, seriously.

Our previous 2013 Chevy 3500 crew cab, short bed, four-wheel drive, single rear wheel truck had 1820 kg (4,013 pounds) of payload. When we spec'd out the same truck as a long bed, it gained another 136 kg (300-plus pounds), and that was four years ago.

Since then the truck payload capacities have increased, in Ram's case dramatically. That means you can spec out a single rear wheel long bed one-ton truck from GM, Ford, or Ram and get the payload you need for the Northern Lite 10-2. Just be careful if you load up on heavy options like diesel engines, upgraded transmissions, and luxury packages and still expect the payload you need.

### **The Verdict**

From 50,000 feet, there's really nothing to complain about here. I have pointed out a list of minor design issues that could be better, and a few features that should be added,

but the Northern Lite 10-2 EX CD Special Edition remains one of the best built and highest quality RVs on the market.



That statement may shock some folks, but it's impossible to deny what fiberglass clam shell construction brings to the table. Nothing framed can touch clam shell construction for durability and light weight. Nothing laminated can compete with the long-term durability of gel coat, chopped fiberglass, and plastic resin hand-sprayed into custom moulds.

This is even more relevant in Australia. As a matter of fact, it is one of the most important issues to consider. Our roads are not good and the more out of the way places you go, the worse the roads (read as goat tracks). I have seen 5th wheelers,

caravans and motorhomes suffer terminal damage travelling in these areas. Truck Campers are not exempt and I saw one where the air conditioner and fridge fallen out, one with the vinyl cupboard overlay (the fake wood cabinets) had peeled in one trip to the humid north and one where the toilet had fallen off the wall. Most of these were US made and designed for a much softer trip. I am still road testing my 5 year old Northern Lite 8-11 Australian Ultimate and it has been to places you would not believe. And I still use it as a demonstrator. It cleans up like new.

Unless you need slide-outs. Unless you require more storage capacity. Unless you absolutely have to have a rear sofa, lounge chairs, a kitchen island, a huge dry bath, or a King size cabover bed. If you don't see the floor plan or features you must have in a Northern Lite, than all the quality in the world can't make a Northern Lite the right camper for you. That's the Northern Lite catch; they build the best camper they possibly can, take it or leave it.

Other extremely important considerations in Australia are weather and temperature extremes and dust. Lots of dust. Red dust. Keeping this dust and heat and weather out is hard and that becomes near impossible with pop tops and slide outs. Clam shell is ridiculously good.





Tightening up our reviewer's hat, I was surprised at some of the design quibbles we discovered during the course of this report. My sincere hope is that Northern Lite reads this review and gets excited at the opportunity to make their world-class products even better.

This is what the Japanese call Kaizen; the philosophy of continuous improvement in all aspects of business. After their remarkable come back story in 2014, and our in-person factory experiences with the Northern Lite team in 2007, 2010, and 2015, I have no doubt.

### **Pros**

Industry-leading two-piece clam shell fiberglass structure

Exceptional material quality, finish, and 6-year structural warranty  
Low weight, especially considering floor length and standard features  
Bigger moulds created more storage opportunities – huge pull-out pantry!  
Holding tank, propane, and battery capacities are all excellent  
Bigger generator box fits built-in generator, or two Honda EU2000i

### **Cons**

At \$43,201 US MSRP, this is a luxury-priced non-slide truck camper [That equates to \\$58,500 Australian dollars. Add \\$15,000 freight and associated costs, additional costs of manufacture for Northern Lite to fit Australian gas and other fitting\(including add-a-room\) then the many electrical components and other components fitted in Australia and the cost of this Truck Camper is close to \\$90,000 Australian.](#)

Dinette-area fuse box, 110-outlet, and antenna rotator are in awkward locations [Fuse box and 240 volt outlet moved in Australian Ultimate. There is nowhere else for the antenna rotator.](#)

Two individual battery boxes limit battery bank sizes and wiring options [Modified on Australian Ultimate.](#)

A few cosmetic instances where ceiling liner did not fully adhere

Upper storage is limited by the reverse transom fiberglass shell design

More 110-volt, 12-volt, and USB outlets are needed in dinette and cabover [Fitted in Australian](#)

### **Model Information:**

2017 Northern Lite 10-2 EX Special Edition

MSRP: \$43,201 US

Warranty: 6-year structural warranty

Northern Lite Manufacturing

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