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- The history of campers
- Essential accessories
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# Welcome!

There's no denying that here in the UK, we've witnessed an incredible increase in the popularity of campervans over the past few years. These days, it's impossible to visit any show or campsite without spotting a plethora of vehicles in all shapes and sizes – it's absolutely fantastic to see.

We at *Practical Motorhome* love them, too, which is why we decided to put together this special magazine celebrating everything campervan related. In these 90–odd pages you'll find articles from our expert writers, and a special selection of our favourite campervan articles hand-picked from *Practical Motorhome*, giving you everything you need to know about buying and owning one of these popular vehicles.



What can you expect to find inside? We've everything from a guide to campervan layouts and base-vehicle manufacturers, to inspiration on where to travel and stay, road trips to take, converting your own campervan and much more. We've even got a guide on what (and what not) to pack in your campervan.

So what are you waiting for? Simply turn the page and get stuck in. See you on the road!

**Sarah Wakely**

Editor-in-chief

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# FROM COMMERCIAL VAN TO CAMPERVAN

The story behind one of the UK's most popular leisure vehicles

It's hard to imagine the motorhome market without its thriving campervan sector, but it wasn't always so, says **Andrew Jenkinson**

Back in the early 1900s, the idea of a motorised caravan was first mooted, along with some bizarre designs. Using the principle of coachbuilt bodies, by 1919, the Eccles Motorised Transport Company had begun to produce these on a commercial scale.

By the end of the 1920s, however, the car-pulled caravan took the lead and the motorhome rather faded away. Only a few examples were built and after WWII, the idea seemed finished.

But fast-forward to the early 1950s and the birth of the commercial pressed steel van – especially the VW Microbus – gave a kickstart to the campervan market.

Then in 1952, German caravan maker Westfalia spotted the potential. Using the VW, the company started selling a kit conversion for Microbus owners.

Known as the Camping Box, the side-windowed VW Transporter could be converted for basic camping, but the kit could be easily removed if the vehicle was sold. The VW was seen as ideal to convert for accommodation.

Soon, new companies were converting it, with a higher spec. But it was costly, and VW expected certain standards of quality, too.

## Enter the Dormobile

In 1956, one of the most famous names in campervans, Dormobile, made its debut. Using what was basically an estate car/van, the Standard Ten base was designed for sleeping only.

This was seen as a new, free and easy way of getting about and exploring off the

beaten track. The VW Microbus was also still being used by many UK manufacturers in the early 1960s.

However, the launch of Bedford's CA van in 1952 gave the opportunity for a converter such as Dormobile to add accommodation, with a kitchen and seating that converted into beds.

This was also the start of the famous Dormobile extending roof, where two extra berths could be added.

The Bedford CA was taken up by other new converters, such as Kenex, based in Kent not far from Dormobile, and these campervans were smartly finished and well designed. Dormobile eventually bought out the company, dropping the Kenex name by 1962.

Other makers sprang up, such as Pitt Conversions and Calthorpe. Different



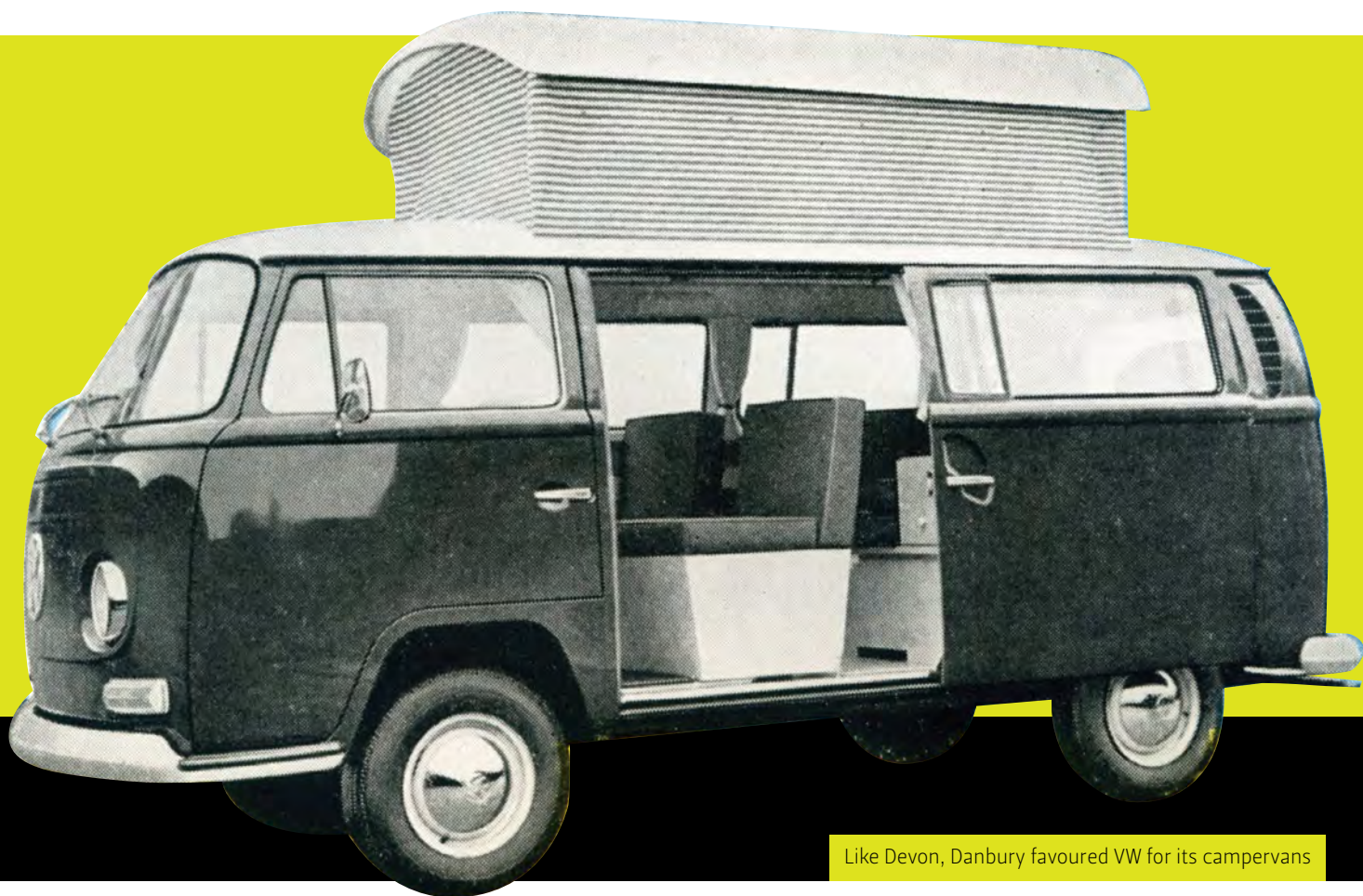
In 1956 Dormobile began converting the Standard Ten car for camping holidays



Campervans really took off with the advent of lightweight commercial vans



# History CAMPERVAN ORIGINS



Like Devon, Danbury favoured VW for its campervans

extending roofs were designed, with straight lift-ups made from glass fibre or aluminium with canvas side fillers.

Next came the high-top, with a glass fibre moulded roof section added onto the van after removing the old roof.

Nomad Converters, in Bolton, Lancashire, patented a crank wind-up raising-roof – which didn't always work very well!

## Into the 1960s

Later in 1957, the Ford Thames 400E commercial van was released, ushering in a new era in campervan design.

The Thames was the answer to the CA and converters were particularly attracted to the 1.5-litre petrol engine.

Morris brought out the J4, which became the first choice for many van converters. The 1960s heralded the

arrival of many more converters, such as Devon, Auto-Sleepers, Richard Holdsworth, Airborne, Leisuredrive and Canterbury, among others.

By now, the campervan idea had really begun to take hold and with other commercial vans, such as the Austin and the Commer, and uprated versions, it spread even further.

During the late 1950s, if you owned a campervan, it was still considered a commercial van, so restrictions were imposed, including speed limits.

Peter Pitt of Pitt Conversions decided to protest about this, arguing that the camper was in keeping with private cars.

Pitt's campaign was so persistent that a law was eventually passed to exclude campers from the category of commercial vans. So legally, the camper was now on

a par with the private car. This new status gave the campervan broader appeal, and companies such as Dormobile had to move to a larger factory.

Using VW's Kombi and Microbus, the Dormobile name became well known throughout the industry.

The expanding market produced better designs, and all types of vehicle were now looked at by converters.

## Wild camping

One of the many more unusual vehicles to be seen then was the Land Rover long-wheelbase. Known as the Carawagon, this conversion could sleep up to four people, yet was compact inside.

Its design meant that owners could tour even further off the beaten track, and wild camping began to grow in popularity.

Dormobile jumped on the Land Rover bandwagon, bringing its version onto the market not long after. Later on, Carawagon also built on the Range Rover, but sales of both were limited.

The campervan industry had mainly developed as small concerns, with most selling directly to the public and some offering bespoke layouts.

The flip side of this coin was the reappearance of DIY kits. UK makers were offering to kit out older vehicles for buyers on a more limited budget. ➔



VW's Kombi/Microbus proved a success for converters like Devon and Dormobile



Campervan life in the 1950s was cramped, but did get you into the great outdoors



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# History **CAMPERVAN ORIGINS**



The Bedford was a firm favourite with converters such as Kenex, based in Kent

In 1969, the Manchester Motor Caravan Company began converting vans into campervans. By the 1980s, this father-and-son business had expanded and was now known as Leisuredrive. Using the VW T3, it gained a reputation for design and quality.

Small firms were making elevating and lift-up roofs for converters and DIY.

Side tents that didn't need the support of the camper were available from £28.

Whale hand-pumped water pumps were being fitted in campervan kitchen units and in some models, a drinks cabinet was also being added.

## New dealerships

Campervans were now participating in endurance races, such as a Dormobile that made the 1821-mile round trip from Keighley, West Yorkshire, to Land's End, then John o'Groats, and back to Keighley, in 1969.

By now, campervan dealerships were being established, although a few car showrooms also took on campers.

With the advent of more vans being launched, converters were becoming spoilt for choice.

Then the Ford Thames 400E was dropped, and within weeks of the new Ford Transit being launched, firms such as Dormobile began converting the Transit, with great success.

With more space and a modern cab, the Transit was ideal for conversion.

Canterbury Campervans saw the Transit's potential, with a raising-roof design that sold well, while Dormobile also found a good design, making the Transit one of their top-sellers.

By 1963, Sprite Caravans had merged with Bluebird Caravans, which also made campervans. Known as Caravan International Motorhomes (CIM), the new firm used the Transit for Sprite motorhomes and campervans.

The larger Transit Custom offered more load capacity, so converters such as CIM soon added this to their ranges.

At the other end of the market, micro-campervans appeared, such as the Bedford-based Dormobile and Canterbury, built on the Ford Escort estate car.



The introduction of the Ford Thames 400E in the late 1950s proved another step-change for many campervan converters, including the likes of Bluebird, Airborne and Kenex



By the early 1960s, campervan design had improved out of all recognition, with a choice of layouts now being offered



Carawagon introduced its Land Rover 'go anywhere' campervan, joined later by a version based on the Range Rover



Torcars made micro-campers using cars such as this Austin; by the mid-1970s, they added the Morris Marina to the range



Dormobile's Bedford-based micro-camper from 1967 had an excellent sales record

Sun-Tor used several such vehicles to make campers for couples and solo users.

The 1970s saw manufacturers such as Holdsworth and Auto-Sleepers expand, and Bedford's new CF van proved to be another popular choice for converters.

## Converters come and go

Over the years, many converters have ventured into this successful market, for example with the arrival of the Toyota Hiace. Dormobile was one of the first companies to use the Toyota vehicle, although other van converters soon followed.

The British Leyland Sherpa van was another 1970s vehicle that became very popular among many converters.

Auto-Sleepers and Motorhomes International were the first companies to convert this to a campervan.

Throughout the 1970s, campervans proved as popular as ever, and a new van from Fiat, powered by an 850 engine, meant that Motor Caravan Conversions, among other companies, found itself with a success on its hands. ➔



# History **CAMPERVAN ORIGINS**



By 1965, the Ford Transit had established itself as a major player in the campervan story

Even though it was small, the Fiat had a kitchen and so on, and was also available with extending side tents.

## A dip in sales

Campervans were a good alternative to the coachbuilt, especially for ease of use and parking up. But in 1973, with the introduction of VAT and the advent of the oil crisis, camper sales took a hit. Some firms went bust, although the market eventually recovered.

One positive factor was that the Caravan Club had added motorhomes to its remit in 1967, broadening its membership and helping to popularise 'van ownership and boost sales.

CIM changed its name to Autohomes, which folded in 1982 when parent company Ci went out of business.

The late 1970s and early 1980s proved tough for the whole sector as the UK economy faltered – even Dormobile became a casualty.

Many of the old names disappeared, but others, such as Holdsworth and Auto-Sleepers, survived, providing reasonably priced campers with quality build. Auto-Sleepers prided itself on quality build and finish.

By the mid-1980s, sales had begun to improve across the market, and the VW T3 proved a popular base vehicle.

Autohomes reappeared, introducing new models such as the Komet.

Campervan spec also improved, with hot-water systems and mains power. Fitted fridges and full cookers also became the norm.



Renault was another brand gaining ground in the 1980s, making an ideal conversion such as this Holdsworth with GRP high-top



Swift Group made its first appearance in this market sector with the Mondial



These days, modern campervans, such as this model by Auto-Sleeper, are bigger, better and more luxurious than ever



In Devon campervans, you could remove the furniture easily, allowing you to use the VW as normal day-to-day transport



In the 1980s, Cavalier Caravans went into camper conversions on the Bedford CF, although the US styling proved unpopular

With new, longer-wheelbase vans appearing on the market – such as the Renault Trafic, Talbot Express and Peugeot – washrooms could be placed at the rear of the campervan, allowing for more space in the lounge area.

Mercedes vans have been used by many converters since the 1970s. There was plenty of choice across the market, which grew rapidly in the late 1980s as more firms started up and caravan manufacturers, such as Elddis and Swift, joined the fray.

## Luxury brands

Smaller concerns, such as Nu Venture, started converting Fiat and Citroën vans.

Auto-Sleepers focused on the VW Trident and Trooper – these luxury campervans were popular with retired couples who wanted a good spec and quality finish.

The 2000s saw the arrival of Trigano, La Strada and WildAx, among others, as the market continued to grow.

The base vehicles have also become much more car-like in terms of drive and spec, with additional kit such as DAB radio and cruise control now pretty much standard.

The days of the first basic conversions on Bedfords, Fords and Austins may be long gone, but those brands have all played their part in the campervan story, which continues to thrive today.

Campervans enable so many people to take to the road for new adventures, and it should come as no surprise that they are now more popular than ever. ■





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# There's a campervan for everyone from Auto-Sleepers

**More than 60 years of history and the best of British expertise combine in every luxury vehicle – and there's a fantastic range to choose from in 2025**

What matters most to you when it comes to buying a campervan? Layout is crucial, of course – which is why it's important to go for a manufacturer that offers a good amount of choice.

Then there are the facilities on board. You'll want the best you can get for your budget: every bit of kit will help to make your adventures more comfortable, and your tours even more enjoyable.

You'll also want a manufacturer that can offer a great history, and a strong reputation for both brilliant build quality and quality fixtures and fittings.

Fortunately, there's one brand that can offer all this, and so much more.

## **A campervan for every adventure**

Auto-Sleepers is a major and well-loved name in the British campervan market – it has more than 60 years of experience in building leisure vehicles, so it truly is a brand that you can trust. What's more, its 2025 range of campervans is the most exciting yet, with a total of eight fantastic models available for you to select from.

Touring couples are spoiled for choice, with a total of five brilliant Fiat Ducato-based vehicles all coming with two berths. There's the **Symbol**, and its longer sibling, the **Symbol Plus**, both of which offer a tremendous amount of living space inside. The **Warwick Duo** and **Warwick XL** feature the rear lounge that British campervanners love so much, while the fantastic **Kingham** packs a luxurious fixed corner bed into its 6.36m length.



The Auto-Sleeper Kingham is your perfect companion for adventure





**LEFT** You'll be able to relax in style in the Symbol Plus



**RIGHT** The Warwick Duo features a large rear lounge that's perfect for couples

The Kingham's comfortable rear-corner bed



**ABOVE** The Fairford features four berths and a classy interior

**BELOW** Experience the ultimate in luxury in the Auto-Sleeper M-Star



Looking for four berths? There's plenty here for you, too – check out the **Fairford** and **Fairford Plus**, both of which offer a rear lounge and the added practicality of a double dinette up front.

Elsewhere at Auto-Sleepers, don't miss the extraordinarily luxurious Mercedes-based **M-Star**. To find out more about the latter, see *Practical Motorhome's* full test on p58 of this magazine.

### So much more for the year ahead

As well as all the great features and kit that you'd expect as standard, there are a wealth of new additions for the 2025 season. For starters, every Auto-Sleepers campervan that was previously based on the Peugeot Boxer is now on the popular Fiat Ducato, with its fabulous car-like drive.

Other exciting news for the year includes the arrival of Truma's new CombiNeo, on all of Auto-Sleepers' Fiat-based campervans. This clever new system from Truma provides continuous hot water at the touch

of a button – no more waiting for a shower while the water warms up!

That's not all – new exterior graphics, interior fabrics and furnishings make the 2025 Auto-Sleeper Fiat campervan range more attractive than ever before, and a new Heki rooflight with integrated LED lighting brightens up living space. There are new Ultrasonic water tank sensors, too.

So no matter what you're looking for in your next campervan, it's clear that Auto-Sleepers is the brand who can help – and who you can trust.

[www.auto-sleepers.com/campervans/](http://www.auto-sleepers.com/campervans/)





# *insight* CAMPERVAN LAYOUTS EXPLAINED

Campervan floorplans differ from those of their coachbuilt cousins. Here's what you can expect to find, and the pros and cons of each

Owing to their restrictions on interior space, and the kind of touring they tend to be used for – attending music festivals, or activities such as surfing and other watersports – campervans have layouts that are unique to them. We're not just talking about campers with raising-roofs here, but many fixed-roof vehicles, too. Here are the most common layouts you'll see on the forecourts.

## Rear bench, side kitchen



Otherwise known as the Classic or VW style, this is the layout that you will find in pretty much all traditional campervans, in particular those that date back to the 1960s.

In this floorplan, you get a bench slung across the back of the vehicle, sometimes providing two travel seats, sometimes fitted with three.

Often, this bench can also slide forward on rails, so you can make more room for carrying luggage and other kit in the rear of the camper. It also folds out to make a double bed, usually in the rock'n'roll style, where the base folds forward and the back can be lowered flat.

All of the kitchen equipment – sink, water-tanks, hob, and oven if there is one – and storage, barring possibly a locker underneath the seats, is kept to one side of the vehicle's interior.

This is certainly a classic layout, and is often found in classic campervans, which still fetch excellent prices at auction.

### ■ Positives

Ideal for anyone wanting to use their campervan as a day-to-day vehicle as well. This is the most practical layout for that, and if the 'van comes with tinted windows, people passing by outside often don't even notice it is a camper. So you can take it to the office, ready for that Friday getaway!

### ■ Negatives

Less ideal for those who want the comfort of having their own washroom in a 'van. This layout more or less precludes that, and if there is a toilet, it will be a Porta Potti, which needs storing somewhere.

1 The Classic campervan layout has a movable bench seat with the kitchen set to one side



## Side settee

In essence, touring in a campervan is supposed to be all about reconnecting with nature, and this layout, possibly more than any other, is designed to allow you to achieve just that.

It's simple – you can arrive on site, roll back the door, and then sit and look out at the world around you – even if it is drizzling!

Side-settee floorplans are often fitted with one forward-facing seat as well, which adds to the level of sociability and means that you can still use the camper as a day-to-day vehicle if you wish.

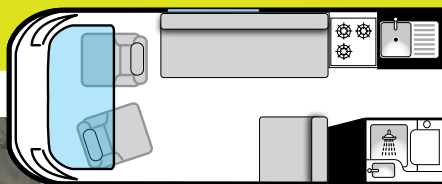
Sleeping arrangements are either two single beds, including one made up by connecting the single rear seat to the passenger cab seat, or a double made up by rolling the settee forward. There is usually plenty of room for luggage in the back, too.

### ■ Positives

Perfect for those who want to be able to arrive, sit back, relax and simply watch the world – or at least the rest of the campsite – go by.

### ■ Negatives

Needing to put the beds together could prove rather frustrating: the arrangements here, as well as the limited amount of space, mean it could be tricky to manoeuvre the cushions into position.



**2** The side-settee floorplan often comes with one forward-facing seat as well

**3** Arrive on site, open the door, then just sit back and watch the world go by

## End kitchen/washroom

Campers fitted with an end kitchen, or even having the luxury of an end washroom, are becoming far more common these days. Here, everything is usually tucked behind two forward-facing travel seats or a large bench.

The end kitchen tends to be L-shaped, and there is often a hatchway out to the rear of the vehicle, so that you can easily serve anyone who is sitting at a table outside the 'van.

With this arrangement, the roof usually raises at the rear to give the chef a bit more headroom – although there is still the top rear of the base vehicle itself to contend with.

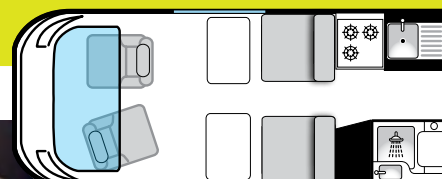
End washrooms can also often be accessed from both inside and outside the 'van. This is particularly useful if you tour with a dog, because when you come back from walkies, your muddy pet can be taken into the washroom to be hosed down, before being allowed inside your pristine living area.

### ■ Positives

This interior feels quite luxurious, mainly because of the amount of space it can provide. There's also usually plenty of room to prepare meals.

### ■ Negatives

You'll need to put the bed together each night, which can sometimes feel like a bit of a chore.



**4** End kitchens tend to be L-shaped, often with a hatch so you can serve anyone sitting outside the 'van



## 1 Kitesurfing

Norfolk's always been celebrated for its sandy beaches, but it is pretty good out on the water, too, especially at Hunstanton Beach, which has low tides and is perfect for a variety of sporting activities.

Hunstanton Watersports offers tuition and kit for paddleboarding, windsurfing and – for those who like a challenge – kitesurfing.

Got what it takes to skim over the waves while flying a very large kite? Now's your chance!

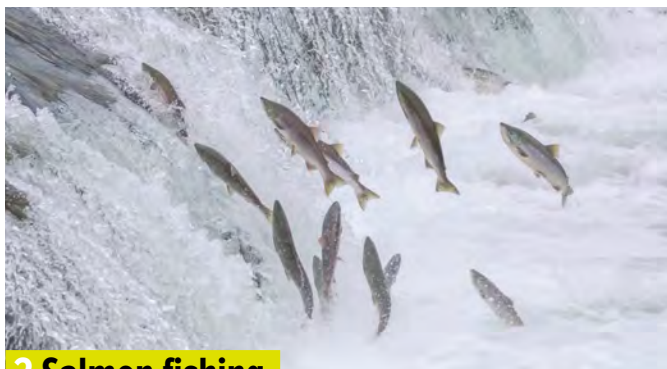
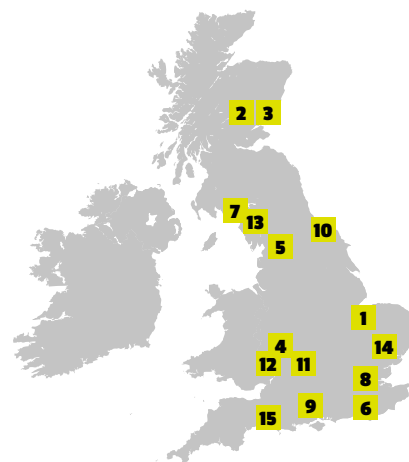
🌐 [www.hunstantonwatersports.com](http://www.hunstantonwatersports.com)

■ **Where to stay** Manor Park Holiday Park is a 10-minute walk away from Hunstanton Beach  
🌐 [parkdeanresorts.co.uk](http://parkdeanresorts.co.uk)



# 15 top sites for... GETTING OUT AND ACTIVE!

Whatever your preferred activity, you'll find there's plenty to enjoy at these 15 brilliant campsites

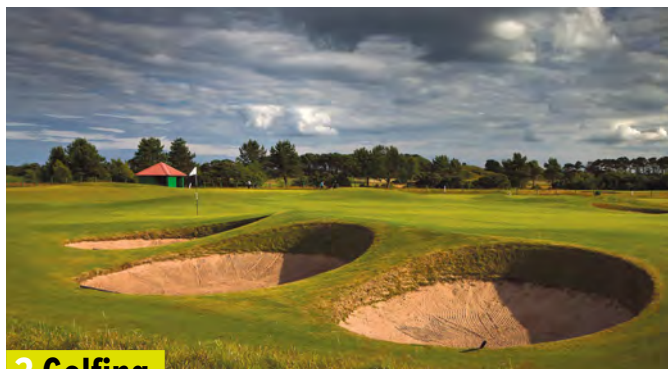


## 2 Salmon fishing

Scotland is famous for fishing and its largest salmon river, running some 117 miles, is the River Tay. Guided fishing is available, offering fly fishing, spinning and traditional boat fishing or harling.

🌐 [salmon-fish-scotland.com](http://salmon-fish-scotland.com)

■ **Where to stay** Milton of Fonab Caravan Park, near Pitlochry, provides fishing on the River Tummel, a tributary of the Tay  
🌐 [fonab.co.uk](http://fonab.co.uk)



## 3 Golfing

Where better to enjoy golf than in Scotland? Carnoustie has hosted eight Open Championships, but if the £222 fee for the Championship Course is a bit beyond your budget, you might prefer to play the Burnside and Buddon Links courses instead.

🌐 [carnoustiegolflinks.com](http://carnoustiegolflinks.com)

■ **Where to stay** Woodlands Caravan Park is just a mile away  
🌐 [woodlandscaravanpark.net](http://woodlandscaravanpark.net)

VisitBritain/Harry Williams



VisitBritain/Andrew Pickett



## 4 Kayaking

The River Wye, on the England–Wales border, has beautiful scenery and is excellent for kayaking (take expert advice on safest spots).

Hire firms offer everything from a try-out to a six-day 100-mile trip.

📍 [wyecanoes.com](http://wyecanoes.com)

■ **Where to stay** Hollymount CAMC CL is near the river

📍 [caravanclub.co.uk](http://caravanclub.co.uk)



## 5 Cycling

You need Yorkshire grit to cycle in the Dales! There are many routes, but the Settle and Malham Cove loop is a good taste of the landscape.

📍 [epicroadrides.com](http://epicroadrides.com)

■ **Where to stay** The family-run Knight Stainforth Hall Caravan and Camping Park is just two miles north of Settle

📍 [knightstainforth.co.uk](http://knightstainforth.co.uk)

VisitBritain/MatCant

VisitBritain/Andrew Pickett



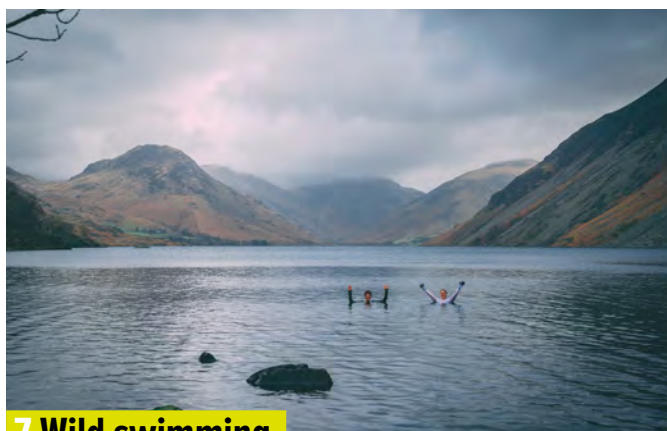
## 6 Walking

The South Downs Way runs 100 miles from Winchester to Eastbourne. High points are the Ditchling and Firle beacons, and Seven Sisters hills.

📍 [southdowns.gov.uk](http://southdowns.gov.uk)

■ **Where to stay** Nearby Buckle Holiday Park provides private access to the beautiful Blue Flag beach at Seaford Bay

📍 [buckleholidaypark.co.uk](http://buckleholidaypark.co.uk)



## 7 Wild swimming

For a real adventure, consider a dip in Wastwater in the Lake District – Britain's deepest lake, below its highest mountain, Scafell Pike.

📍 [wildswimming.co.uk](http://wildswimming.co.uk)

■ **Where to stay** The Old Post Office Campsite is bordered by the beautiful River Irt, where you can enjoy wild swimming or fishing

📍 [theoldpostofficecampsite.uk](http://theoldpostofficecampsite.uk)

VisitBritain/coast2coastuk

## 8 Paddleboarding

You might think Richmond, on the outskirts of London, a curious choice for outdoor adventures, but once you're out on the water, you are removed from all the bustle of the day-trippers and walkers along the banks.

This stretch of the Thames paints a quintessentially English scene, with the river curving elegantly away from Richmond Hill and down to Petersham and Ham House.

📍 [backofbeyonduk.com](http://backofbeyonduk.com)

■ **Where to stay** Walton on Thames is just a short drive away, near Hampton Court

📍 [www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk](http://www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk)



VisitBritain/Matthew Williamson Ellis



# FOR LIFE'S JOURNEYS

CITY



COUNTRY



COAST



7 Seater Option

New for 2025 - Compact and versatile, Panama campervans are multi-functional vehicles designed for optimal use, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Ready for the everyday and every adventure.



SCAN TO DISCOVER THE WORLD OF PANAMA  
**PANAMAUK.CO.UK**



All New Auto Ford Tourneo

EXCLUSIVELY AVAILABLE FROM



THE UK'S LARGEST DEALER NETWORK



## 9 Forest bathing

First established in Japan in the 1980s, *shinrin-yoku*, the practice of 'forest bathing', is now growing in popularity here in the UK.

Based on the concept of spending time in, and being more aware of, nature, this combines mindfulness with the restorative powers of the natural world.

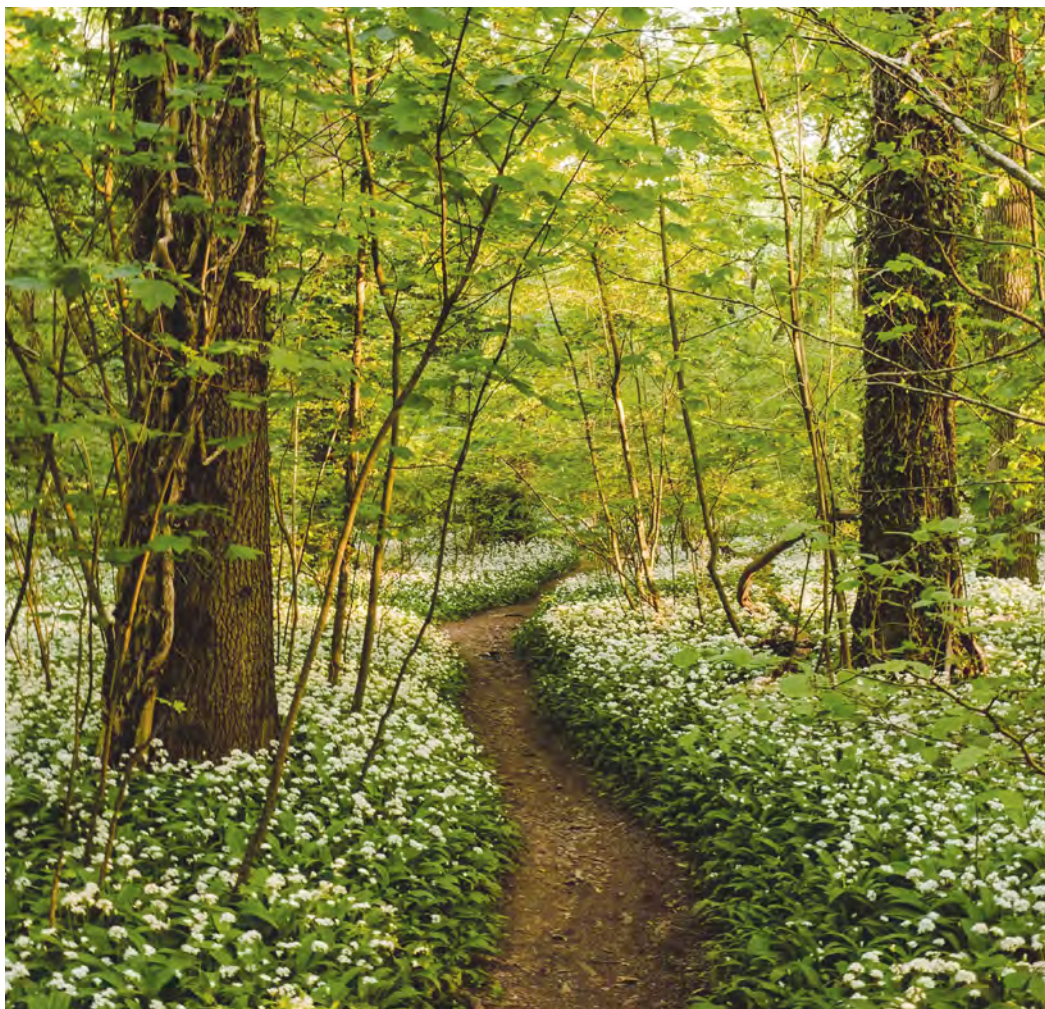
It's amazing what being quiet, carrying out some simple breathing exercises and imbibing a good dose of Mother Nature can do for the soul.

The New Forest National Park has among the highest concentrations of ancient trees in western Europe, making this beautiful part of the world a perfect spot to be at one with nature.

📍 [forestryengland.uk/new-forest](https://forestryengland.uk/new-forest)

■ **Where to stay** Black Knowl CAMC Campsite is located within easy walking distance of Brockenhurst

📍 [caravanclub.co.uk](https://caravanclub.co.uk)



©ForestryEngland

## 10 Surfing

When it comes to catching a wave, England's south-west often grabs the attention, but while Cornwall and Devon are great, they're not the only players in town. Try the bracing waters of Saltburn-by-the-Sea, Redcar & Cleveland – Saltburn Surf School offers lessons.

📍 [saltburn-surf.co.uk](https://saltburn-surf.co.uk)

■ **Where to stay** Margrove Park Holidays is ideally located for Saltburn-by-the-Sea, lying on the outskirts of the spectacular North Yorkshire Moors

📍 [margroveparkholidays.co.uk](https://margroveparkholidays.co.uk)



©VisitBritain/Sabina Trojanova

## 11 Running

The Cotswold Way celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2020. The 102-mile walking trail, which crosses an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and extends all the way from Chipping Campden to Bath, is much loved by runners for the beautiful views of the River Severn and the Malvern Hills, and for some not-too-challenging climbs.

📍 [nationaltrail.co.uk/en\\_GB/trails/cotswold-way](https://nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/cotswold-way)

■ **Where to stay** Severn Valley Touring Park offers great views of the beautiful Forest of Dean and beyond

📍 [severnvalleytouring.co.uk](https://severnvalleytouring.co.uk) ➔





©VisitBritain



## 12 Birdwatching

There are many fantastic birdwatching spots throughout the UK, but some are easier to get to than others, such as the Forest of Dean. This ancient woodland is great for spotting woodpeckers, flycatchers and warblers. On some parts of the river, you might also see the elusive blue and orange flash of a kingfisher.

📍 [wydeantourism.co.uk](http://wydeantourism.co.uk)

■ **Where to stay** Hawthorne Cottage Caravan Site – which is adults-only – is ideally set on the borders of the Forest of Dean

📍 [hawthornecottagecaravansite.co.uk](http://hawthornecottagecaravansite.co.uk)

©VisitBritain/Nadir Khan



## 13 Mountain biking

There are so many cycling trails through Grizedale Forest, in the Lake District, you'll be spoilt for choice. Routes are graded green, blue, red and black, indicating difficulty. There are plenty of gentle rides for beginners, so you can build up to the more challenging descents.

📍 [forestryengland.uk/grizedale/cycling-and-mountain-biking-trails-grizedale](http://forestryengland.uk/grizedale/cycling-and-mountain-biking-trails-grizedale)

■ **Where to stay** Park Cliffe Camping & Caravan Estate is well placed for easy access to both Windermere and Grizedale Forest

📍 [parkcliffe.co.uk](http://parkcliffe.co.uk)

©VisitEssex



## 14 Painting

If you've been brushing up on your artistic technique, now's the time to put some of that activity to the test.

Take one of the greatest painters as your inspiration – John Constable painted *The Hay Wain* in 1821 on the River Stour, near Flatford Mill in Suffolk. Secure your spot, set up your easel, and prepare to paint!

📍 [nationaltrust.org.uk/flatford](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/flatford)

■ **Where to stay** Henny Riverside Camping is a peaceful location in the beautiful valley of the River Stour

📍 [www.freetimeleisure.co.uk](http://www.freetimeleisure.co.uk)

©VisitBritain Jason H



## 15 Fossil hunting

You'll have to start early and leave before the crowds arrive, but you will find Charmouth, in Dorset, a great place to enter the magical world of fossil hunting. This renowned Jurassic coastline, which was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001, provides a fascinating insight into some 185 million years of prehistory.

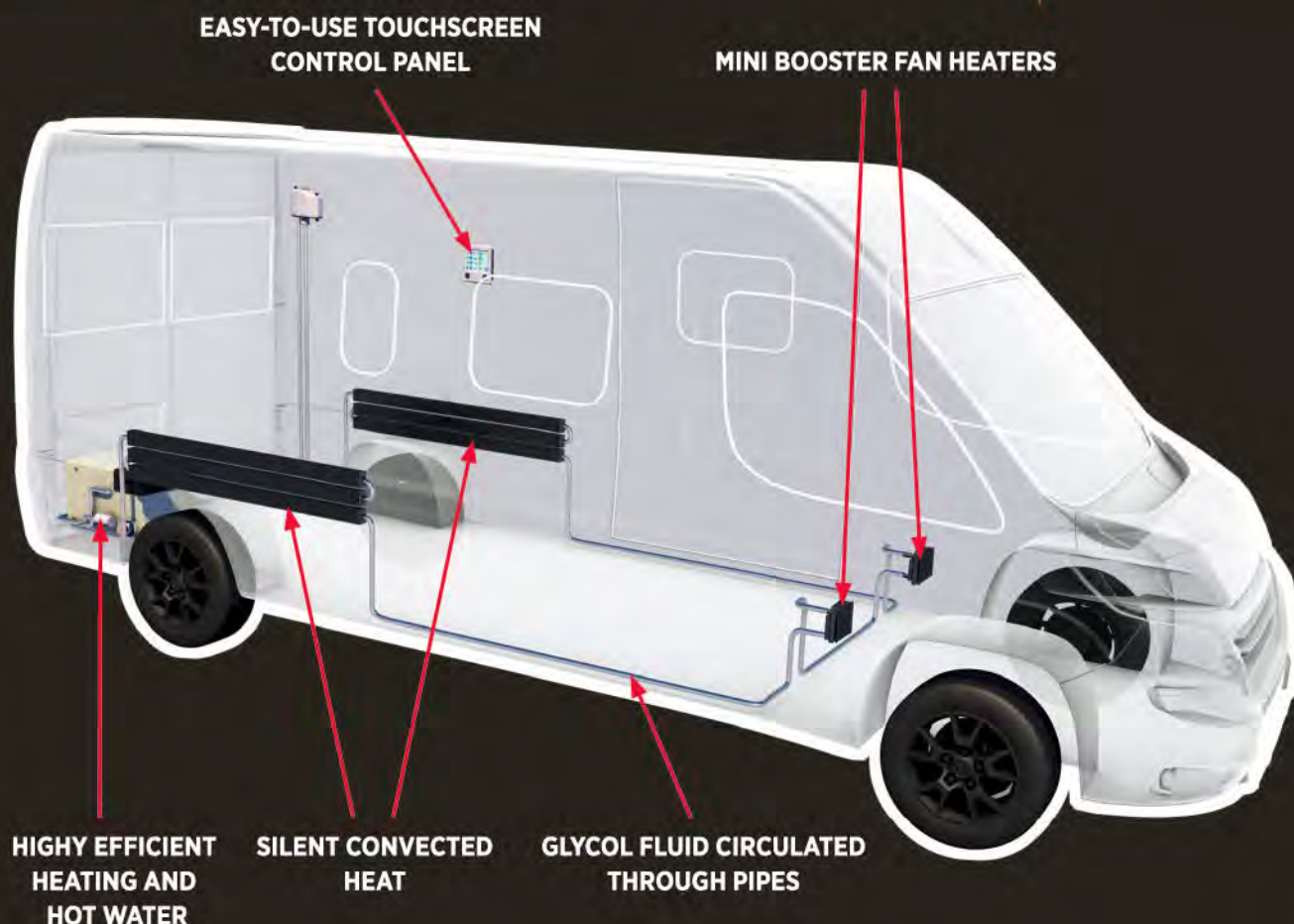
📍 [whc.unesco.org/en/list/1029](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1029)

■ **Where to stay** Wood Farm Holiday Park is perfectly situated for aspiring fossil hunters, lying less than a mile away from Charmouth Beach

📍 [parkholidays.com/our-parks/dorset/wood-farm/caravan-holidays](http://parkholidays.com/our-parks/dorset/wood-farm/caravan-holidays)



**Take a good look, this may be the only time you get to see our heating system!**



Alde's heating systems are designed to be almost imperceptible. Discreetly mounted out of sight and almost silent in operation. They are built to ensure minimum intrusion into your space or your leisure time. What you will notice is the class leading levels of performance enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of customers all over the globe.

Built in Sweden to the highest standards Alde heating systems offer the reliability and performance to explore whatever destination you choose.

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- ✓ All season capability



**Perfect  
heating system  
for panelvans**





V-65SL



Browse the pages of *Practical Motorhome*, or take a look online, and it can sometimes feel as though the amount of campervan choice out there is overwhelming. There's so much to consider; not only making sure that you go for the right floorplan, but also getting all the kit you need on board, as well as buying from a manufacturer that has a great reputation. You'll need to keep weights and payloads in mind, too, as well as the number of berths and so much more.

That's why the Sun Living 2025 V Series line-up is so attractive. It's simply made up of four brilliant Fiat Ducato-based campervans, all of which are affordable, lightweight and stylish – they really are designed with everyone in mind.

### Perfect for two or four

First up is the two-berth V 55SP. It may be small in stature – it measures just 5.4m in length – but inside you'll find that it's packed with features. Check out the comfortable double bed

across the rear, as well as the spacious washroom, kit-filled kitchen and front dinette – there's everything you'd need here for adventures near and far.

If all that appeals to you, but you'd like another two sleeping berths, Sun Living has the ideal campervan for you, too. It comes in the form of the V 55SP Tent Top – the same great layout as the regular V 55SP, but with the addition of a rising roof. It provides extra sleeping space in a bright and roomy light-filled area; the perfect place to relax and spend time.

### Packed with kit

Alternatively, you might prefer the extra length of the V 60SP. Like its shorter siblings, this two-berth model features a roomy rear bed, with





1 Every Sun Living V Series campervan features a high level of fit and finish, as well as a stylish interior

2 The rear lounge of the V 65SL quickly and easily makes up into a comfortable bed at night...

3 ... and you can even specify an additional bed above, to increase the number of berths

4 The V55 SP may be compact, but it offers masses of space to relax in



# Explore the world with Sun Living by Adria

**Four campervan models offer a range of fantastic floorplans to choose from, all kitted out with more than 60 years of expertise**



masses of storage underneath, as well as a fantastic kitchen and washroom. The additional length means even more room on board for everyone to stretch out in comfort.

Or for something a bit different, take a look at the V 65SL. It has a rear lounge – perfect for escaping to when

the weather's not so good – in addition to the rest of the fantastic living area facilities that you can expect from Sun Living. And as with the rest of the range, it's packed with great kit as standard, including a two-burner hob, an 84-litre compressor fridge, fresh and waste water tanks, and much more.

## Built by experts

No matter which Sun Living model you go for, you'll get a campervan that's plated at 3500kg – so no driving licence concerns to worry about. There are lots of options to choose from, too, to really help make your campervan your own – it'll be easy to use, and easy to enjoy.

What's more, every Sun Living is built by the experts at Adria Mobil,

who have been manufacturing leisure vehicles for more than 60 years – which means that quality is guaranteed. And with prices starting at just £66,690 OTR, Sun Living campervans represent brilliant value, too.

You can find out more about Sun Living and its exciting range of 2025 models by visiting the website or the brand's social media channels.

- **Web** [sun-living.co.uk/campervans/v-series](https://sun-living.co.uk/campervans/v-series)
- **Facebook** [facebook.com/p/Sun-Living-UK-61559877352695/](https://facebook.com/p/Sun-Living-UK-61559877352695/)
- **Instagram** [instagram.com/sunlivinguk/](https://instagram.com/sunlivinguk/)

**SUNLIVING**



# *In depth...* **KNOW YOUR** **BASE VEHICLES**

When you're shopping around for a campervan, there are plenty of key points to take into account. But it all starts with the base vehicle, as Peter Baber reveals

To the uninitiated, the vehicle that your campervan is converted from might seem to be of only very limited importance. That's not perhaps totally surprising: when you first start investigating which vehicle you want to buy, you probably want to know more about things such as whether the beds are the right size for you, whether any washroom is workable, and how much storage you have.

But once you start investigating you will soon realise that the base vehicle is enormously important. After all, the whole point about campervanning is being on the move for a fair part of the time. A good (or not so good) base vehicle can make a huge difference between that movement being a pleasant experience or just a chore.

A good base vehicle can make a huge difference to the resale value of your campervan, too.

And, of course, the base vehicle that you choose can make a huge difference if you ever decide to convert your own campervan.

Some vehicles may look quite similar on the outside, but you soon discover how one has perhaps just a tiny bit more width at the top, which means you can get away with some extra storage. Another might have a body construction that is much easier to drill into, so you have more options for where to site important piping and wiring.

Base vehicles are continually being updated, however, particularly now when there is so much more emphasis on sustainability and reducing emissions. Here follows our guide to which brands to look out for when doing research.



For many years the Ducato had been the undisputed market leader in the motorhome conversion market – clever distribution negotiations that Fiat made with several motorhome manufacturers (including Swift) at the end of the previous century helped it to build a big lead.

That hegemony looked like being challenged in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic, when issues in Fiat's supply chain led many converters to start looking elsewhere. Not just to the Peugeot Boxer and Citroën Relay – two brands that are part of the same Stellantis Group as Fiat, are made in the same factory, and are largely the same (except for the gearbox). More motorhomes started appearing based on the Ford Transit, the Volkswagen Crafter, and even the latter's sister vehicle, the MAN TGE.

But recently the pendulum has started to swing back in Fiat's favour, with more converters returning to the Italian brand. Auto-Sleepers, for example, has switched all of its Peugeot Boxer-based vehicles to the Fiat Ducato, after years of relying on Peugeot.

And Pilote's entry-level brand Joa Camp, which initially ran on a Citroën Relay, has already switched to Fiat.

Some in the industry think that such a return is not entirely surprising, for the simple reason that over the years the Ducato has proved itself to be the easiest base vehicle to convert. Its square shape makes it easier to work inside, while its relatively clear fuselage (in comparison with other vehicles) makes drilling holes to put in things such as water tanks that much easier.

Steering older models of the Ducato used to feel a bit like stirring a witch's cauldron, but that improved with a new more car-like design to the cab in 2014. And since then the automatic gearbox (something Fiat's sister brands at Italian automotive company Sevel do not offer) has also improved. In 2019 Fiat replaced its old robotised seven-speed Comfortmatic gearbox with a new fully automatic nine-speed box – more recently changed again to eight-speed.

Further improvements in 2022 mean the vehicle comes with a host of new safety and autonomous driving features.



Known as the Citroën Jumper in Europe, the Relay isn't as popular an option as a base vehicle in this country, even though motorhomes based on it frequently come out cheaper. Hobby uses the Citroën as a base vehicle for its cheaper ranges, but Pilote's budget brand Joa has dropped it in favour of the Fiat Ducato. If anything, the Citroën vehicle likely to be getting the most attention this year is its SpaceTourer. That's the model Citroën has chosen to use as the base for the Holidays, its first-ever entry into the campervan market, built for it by Brava Mobil in Slovenia.

## CITROËN RELAY

**Length** 5.41/5.99/6.36m  
**MTPLM** 3300/3500/4005kg  
**Engine sizes** 2.2-litre 100/120bhp  
 and 3.0-litre 160bhp



## VW TRANSPORTER T7

**Length** 5.05/5.45m  
**MTPLM** 2800/3025/3225/3350kg  
**Engine sizes** 2.0-litre, 110/150/170PS

In the latter half of last year, including during the Motorhome & Caravan Show at the NEC, there was a notable hiatus in all discussions about the VW Transporter. Why? Because the new Transporter T7, the seventh generation of perhaps the most famous campervan vehicle of them all, had

just been launched at a commercial vehicle show in Hanover, so all orders based on the old T6.1 had, in effect, ceased.

In January this year, the company said the first panel van versions of the new vehicle will go on sale in the UK in April.

It's no surprise that there should be such anticipation. Over the years the Transporter has worked wonders as a day-to-day vehicle as well as an easy-to-drive campervan, usually with the layout that came to be

known as 'classic VW' – a rear bench with seatbelts that flattens out into a bed, with all the furniture and the kitchen down the side, and (usually) a pop-top roof.

The Transporter was usually low enough to fit under most car park barriers, too, and the new one continues this tradition, being just 1.99m high. It is longer than before, however – even the short-wheelbase version is 5.05m (the long wheelbase is 5.45m long).

This seventh generation completes a range of three new 'Bulli' vehicles that VW is launching in this field. This includes the all-electric ID. Buzz, which some small converters have started to experiment with, and the Multivan, which VW is using to create an updated version of its California.

But for other converters, attention is still likely to be on the Transporter, which for the first time now comes not just with three different turbodiesel engine options, but also with a plug-in drive option and with three all-electric drives.

There's more excitement in the cab, too, with more USB sockets, and the option of at least one 230V socket – going up to three in the hybrid and all-electric models.

## PEUGEOT BOXER

**Length** 5.41/5.99/6.36m  
**MTPLM** 3300/3500/4005kg  
**Engine sizes** 2.2-litre,  
 120/140/165bhp

The Boxer is the second most popular base vehicle among the Sevel group for UK van converters. It may have been dropped this year by Auto-Sleepers, but it still forms the basis for all Elddis models (except campervans). On the Continent it is less popular, although not unknown.

The main difference over the Fiat is that an automatic gearbox isn't really an option. Auto transmission still really has to catch on in Peugeot's home market of France, so it isn't offered. As a result, if you choose a motorhome that is usually based on a Peugeot but want it automatic, you may well find you have to pay extra for a souped-up Fiat engine instead.







## VW CRAFTER

**Length** 5.98/6.84/7.39m

**MTPLM** 3000/3500/5000kg

**Engine sizes** 2.0-litre, 140/163/177PS turbodiesel

VW's larger alternative to the Transporter has been gaining in popularity. It is of course the base vehicle for VW's very own Grand California model, but more recently Adria has extended its Compact range to run on Crafters as well, while Hillside Leisure has also been making more Crafter-based models.

The vehicle was updated in the middle of 2024, too, with a widened range of driver assist and safety features including autonomous emergency braking, lane assist, and acoustic park distance control for the rear area.

There's also a new 10.4-inch infotainment screen, as well as wireless smartphone charging, and a USB-C connection. The steering wheel has been revised, as have the electronic handbrake switch and optional automatic gearbox controls.

This is the second-generation Crafter to be built by Volkswagen itself. Although the vehicle was launched in 2006, for its first 10 years it was, in effect, a rebadged Mercedes Sprinter. Then in 2017 Volkswagen redesigned the vehicle and brought production of it in-house.

## FORD TRANSIT CUSTOM

**Length** 4.97/5.34m **MTPLM** 3400kg

**Engine sizes** 2.0-litre, 130/150PS



Converters like this model because its slightly more boxy style means you potentially have more room for items such as lockers near the ceiling – especially in a high-top. Most people also love the Custom's cab, with its very car-like setting, particularly when compared with older Ducatos.

Many people looking to buy a campervan in this market segment will also be wanting to use it as a day-to-day vehicle; that's also why the Transit Custom's people-mover sister vehicle, the slightly higher-spec Tourneo Custom, has proved popular. It offers buyers the option of adding a second row of seats in the rear, taking the total number of passengers up to seven.

The new Tourneo first rolled off the production line in Ford's factory at Craiova in October 2023 and more recently has been chosen as the base vehicle for the Panama, the Trigano Group's campervan brand. Wellhouse Leisure has also produced models based on a Tourneo.

Around the same time the new Tourneo was launched, the Ford plant in Turkey started production of the new all-electric E-Transit Custom, with an output of either 135PS or 217PS and a range of 236 miles. There already is a PHEV version of the Custom.

Ford also produces its own campervan based on a Transit Custom. The Nugget, built for Ford by Westfalia, now also comes with a PHEV option.

Some motorhome manufacturers may now be returning to the Fiat Ducato as a base vehicle of choice, but the supply problems coming out of the Sevel factory in recent years have only been good for the Ford Transit. It has gone from being almost an also-ran in the base vehicle popularity stakes to a popular contender.

Swift, for example, which started this decade being an all-Fiat converter, now builds its flagship low-profile Voyager on a Ford Transit. And Bailey, having discontinued its Peugeot Boxer-based Autograph range, is relying entirely on the Transit for both of its low-profile ranges, the Adamo and the Alora. Both companies have also worked with Ford and used the full Transit as the base vehicle for their latest van conversion ranges, the Trekker for Swift and the Endeavour for Bailey.

As with the more compact Transit Custom, it's not difficult to see why the Transit has been such a go-to vehicle.



## FORD TRANSIT

**Length** TBC

**MTPLM** TBC

**Engine sizes** TBC

First, it (usually) works out cheaper than the Ducato. It has a more car-like driving position, too; although opinions on the snout-like front profile are more divided.

Last year both the Ford Transit and its all-electric cousin, the E-Transit,

were upgraded with an optional eight-speed automatic gearbox powered by a dial on the dashboard; a lighter chassis with an updated front end and larger, 16-inch wheels; and a 12-inch touchscreen in the cab.





## MERCEDES SPRINTER

**Length** 5.93/6.97/7.37m

**MTPLM** 3500/3880/3000kg

**Engine sizes** 2.0-litre, 150/170/190bhp

The Sprinter is still proving a very popular base vehicle – and not just at the very top of the market.

This season, for example, Malibu built its first 'van on a Mercedes Sprinter, albeit with an extension that Malibu itself designed to make the 'van just that little bit longer to fit in with Malibu's Comfort spec level. The Malibu Genius 641 LE, as it is called, is now also available as a 4x4 model.

At the same time, Coachman – the last major UK caravan manufacturer to move into making motorhomes – is relying entirely on the Sprinter to spearhead its move into the market, with its Travelmaster and

Travelmaster Sportivo low-profiles, and its Travelmaster Imperial A-class.

It's not just the cachet behind the Mercedes name, however. The Sprinter has an enviable reputation for reliability. And, like Fiat and Ford, Mercedes is known for working directly with motorhome manufacturers to make a chassis that suits their needs. Hymer's SLC chassis was the result of a two-year collaboration between the two companies.

That said, some feel that the taller than average body shape of the Sprinter makes for a less satisfactory driving experience. Some also didn't rate the road-handling of older versions of the Sprinter.

The third-generation Sprinter, which launched in 2018 and for the first time included a front-wheel-drive model, has proved more of a hit, particularly the minimalist cab.



## MAN TGE

**Length** 5.99/6.84/7.39m

**MTPLM** 3000/3500/5000/5500kg

**Engine sizes** 2.0-litre, 75/103/120/130kW

MAN is primarily known for building trucks and lorries, but the TGE – which is the sister model to Volkswagen's Crafter – has started to be used more frequently by some larger manufacturers looking to find alternatives to the Fiat.

In particular, it appeals to those whose customers are more likely to be looking for a higher gross weight and possibly also four-wheel drive.

Some campervan converters have also launched models based on the vehicle. These include WildAx, with its Altair model, and more recently Hillside Leisure, which has produced a version of its Hopton model on MAN TGE.



## RENAULT TRAFIC

**Length** 5.08/5.48m

**MTPLM** 3010/3070kg

**Engine sizes** 2.0-litre, 150bhp

The Renault Trafic has never really been a top contender in the van conversion stakes. CMC Reimo still has a Trafic-based model in its line-up, and Hillside Leisure used to produce some. But when Adria finally made its

Renault-based Active Duo model available in this country last year, several years after it had been launched in Europe, it impressed our judges – but it never really caught on, and has since been discontinued.

Last year also saw the launch of the Renault Trafic E-Tech, an all-electric vehicle with a range of 186 miles.

## Reliability: our readers have their say

The results of *Practical Motorhome's* Owner Satisfaction Awards 2024 saw our readers name Volkswagen as

the most reliable new van for camper conversion in their experience, achieving an impressive score of 91.3% to take the top spot in the Best New Base Vehicle category. This was closely followed by Ford, which scored a highly respectable 90.2% to finish in second place. Mercedes took third place thanks to a total of 89.5%.

However, for those looking for a used van for a camper conversion, Mercedes came out on top in the Best Pre-owned Base Vehicle category, achieving a score of 87.1%. Volkswagen took second spot, with a total of 85.8%, while Ford rounded up the top three, scoring 85%.

You can see the full results of the latest Owner Satisfaction Awards at [www.practicalmotorhome.com](http://www.practicalmotorhome.com).





# Experience EVER CHANGING NEEDS

After 15 years of ownership, campervan enthusiast James Pearson takes a look back at his journey

We woke up one sunny morning on Inch Beach, on the west coast of Ireland, slid back the curtains and marvelled at the sun shimmering on the waves, just metres away from our campervan.

No hotel room could have offered us this view, nor the feeling of being at one with the environment. We were smitten.

My wife and I had always wanted a camper and that moment cemented our full commitment to campervan ownership forever.

## Volkswagen T5

Our entry point into the campervan market, some 15 years ago, was the ubiquitous small camper – the VW T5. A lot has changed in the past 15 years, but back then, there were very few small firms converting vans.

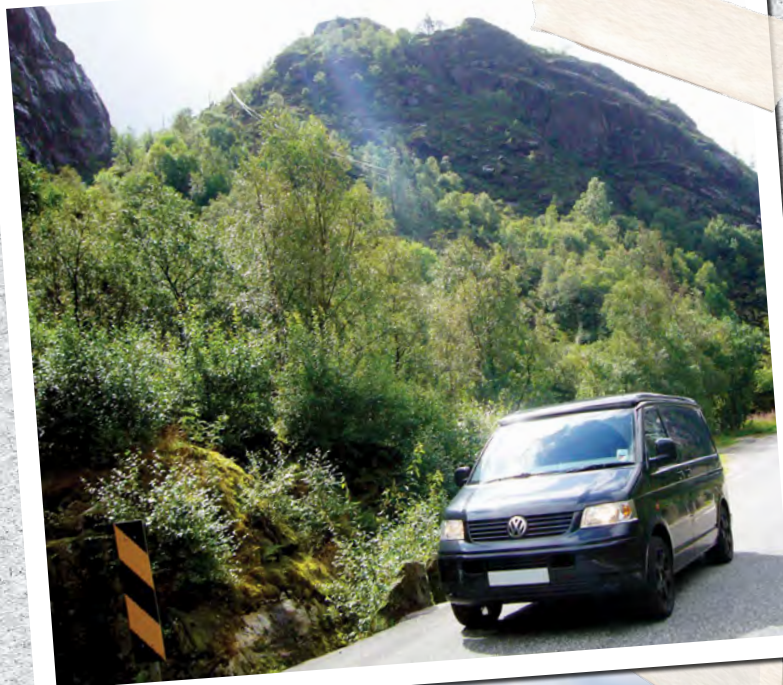
We found one such company in its infancy and they sourced a low-mileage van for us. With our teenage youngest son still at home, we needed a second vehicle that my wife could drive, so we plumped for the standard rear seat, rock and roll bed, side kitchen and pop-up roof set-up.

Unfortunately for him, our son would have to travel with us. With this very much in mind, the van was resprayed in Mercedes black and fitted with Lamborghini wheels, making it cool enough for him to be seen in!

We loved the 'van – it was ideal for short trips and before long, we were also planning a longer journey, to Scandinavia.

We thoroughly enjoyed exploring Sweden and Denmark, but the bed was becoming a bit of an issue. Rather inconveniently, my wife and I had to get up at the same time and fold the bed away before being able to wash and dress. (Youngest son remained undisturbed, in the excellent Khyam awning.)

The turning point came one morning, while we were touring in Norway, when I woke up in agony. The rock and roll bed had finally done my back in. We absolutely loved the van life, but I really couldn't go on like this. I simply had to have a fixed bed.





## Trigano Tribute

Our next purchase was a Trigano Tribute, based on a long-wheelbase, high-top Fiat Ducato and factory-built in Italy. It had a host of luxury features, including hot water, diesel heating, fitted window blinds (even in the cab area), a toilet, a washroom and most importantly, a transverse fixed bed.

I really didn't think it could get better than this. The 'van was small enough to navigate around country lanes. It was also supremely comfortable, had a six-speed gearbox and would cruise easily at motorway speeds.

We made two trips to Spain in the Tribute – one to the Picos de Europa, which, for our money, has the cleanest campsites in Spain, and the other to El Cid country, inland from Valencia.

The highlights of that holiday included speeding along the amazingly smooth EU-funded new roads in the Maestrazgo National Park, with vultures hovering above, and visiting the wonderful city of Morella, with its castle, medieval walls and picturesque streets.

One of the best campsites we've ever stayed at was Camping La Fresneda ([campinglafresneda.com](http://campinglafresneda.com)). Owned by a Dutch couple, it offers 24 spacious pitches (all with electricity) to welcome guests who are looking for an idyllic place to enjoy peace and tranquility.

It was only the need to release funds for a building project that forced the eventual sale of the Trigano Tribute.

We were sad to see it go, but this did push us into thinking about what we really wanted in a 'van. With less cash to spend, the challenge was going to be choosing the right low-budget model to suit our ever-changing needs.

I had come to the conclusion that all campervans were a compromise to some degree and we could do better by designing our own, fit for purpose at this particular stage of our lives.

Our sons were now all at university or old enough to be left to their own devices, so my wife and I could resume peaceful trips on our own.

We didn't need rear seats anymore, but we still liked many features of the Tribute – the high-top, storage space under the fixed bed, and the ability to pitch up on site, take our chairs out of the rear and grab a beer from the fridge.

The downsides of the Tribute were those things that took up space and either didn't really work for us or were unnecessary, specifically the toilet/shower cubicle and the rear seating. Apart from barbecuing, we rarely cook anything when travelling in our camper, so we didn't need a cooker or a grill – just a simple gas ring.



## Fiat Ducato conversion

This time, we plumped for the same base vehicle – a Fiat Ducato, which had spent its formative years as a carpenter's van. We found three very helpful individuals to help us with the conversion.

One put the windows in the side panels and installed a roof light, while the next one insulated, carpeted, and then added the interior lighting.

The third fitted it out. In went the fixed bed with a custom-made 10-inch pocket-sprung mattress – meaning we slept as well in the 'van as we did at home – a simple side kitchen and some storage. We left the bulkhead in to save money on captain's seats.

I had reached an age where I needed to get up in the night if I'd had a few beers, so a Porta Potti was accommodated in a purpose-made buddy box. Not just any Porta Potti, either, but the Thetford Excellence, which is as close to the real thing as you'll get in a chemical toilet.

The 'carpenter's van' served us well. We toured the UK, and also enjoyed plenty of trips further afield. On one memorable occasion, we took the ferry to Santander, on the north coast of Spain, explored the spectacular Rioja region and its world-renowned wine, then drove back through France, picking up a whole 'van-load of fabulous antique furniture en route.

The amount of room we had inside this motorhome was absolutely fantastic. Instead of having the space-sucking bench seat, we had a brilliant chill-out zone, devised by my wife covering the double bed with cosy sheepskin rugs and plentiful velvet cushions. ➡





## Experience ALL MY CAMPERVANS

### Fiat Ducato conversion (continued)

Just the place to relax and enjoy a lazy morning watching the waves roll in while reading the Sunday papers!

Compared to the other campervans that we had owned, there really was enough space in here to swing a very large cat – but in a way, that also helped to ensure its eventual downfall.

Our sons were moving out and I was roped into using the Ducato as a removal van on many occasions. It was starting to look a bit tired, I wanted out of the removals business, and we had our first grandchild on the way. It was definitely time for another change.

With the Ducato sold (to a stuntman who used the ample space to store his collection of prop swords!), we mulled over which model would best replace our trusty campervan.

In the end, we went full circle and reverted to a smaller 'van with a pop-top, rock and roll bed, and (newly important) belted seating in the rear.



### Nissan Elgrand

Prices for VW Transporters have just skyrocketed in recent years and Ford Customs are not very far behind, so we researched an alternative and bought an imported Nissan Elgrand.

A luxury people-carrier very popular in Japan, these vehicles have something of a cult following in the UK.

With a 3.5-litre V6 up front, it is an absolute delight to drive, if a little thirsty.



The rear conversion was carried out by New Dawn Conversions, in Birmingham – they specialise in converting such vehicles and did an excellent job.

And I'm pleased to say the rock and roll bed is much more comfortable than the one we had in our first camper!

The Nissan is also far more practical as a second vehicle than our previous, larger models, because it's easier to park and fits beneath the height restriction bars at many of the car parks found at holiday destinations around the UK.

My wife and I have not long returned from a wonderful overnight stay at Tucker's Grave Inn & Campsite ([tuckersgraveinn.co.uk](http://tuckersgraveinn.co.uk)), near Frome, in Somerset. This 200-year-old cider house is on the National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors and has hardly changed since World War I. It's one of only six in the country with no bar.

We spent an enjoyable evening there, chatting to other campervan owners about their experiences of long-term vehicle ownership. My conclusion? There is no single campervan that can cope with the ever-changing demands life throws at you. You know what? I do love the new 'van, but I'm missing that pocket-sprung mattress already! ■



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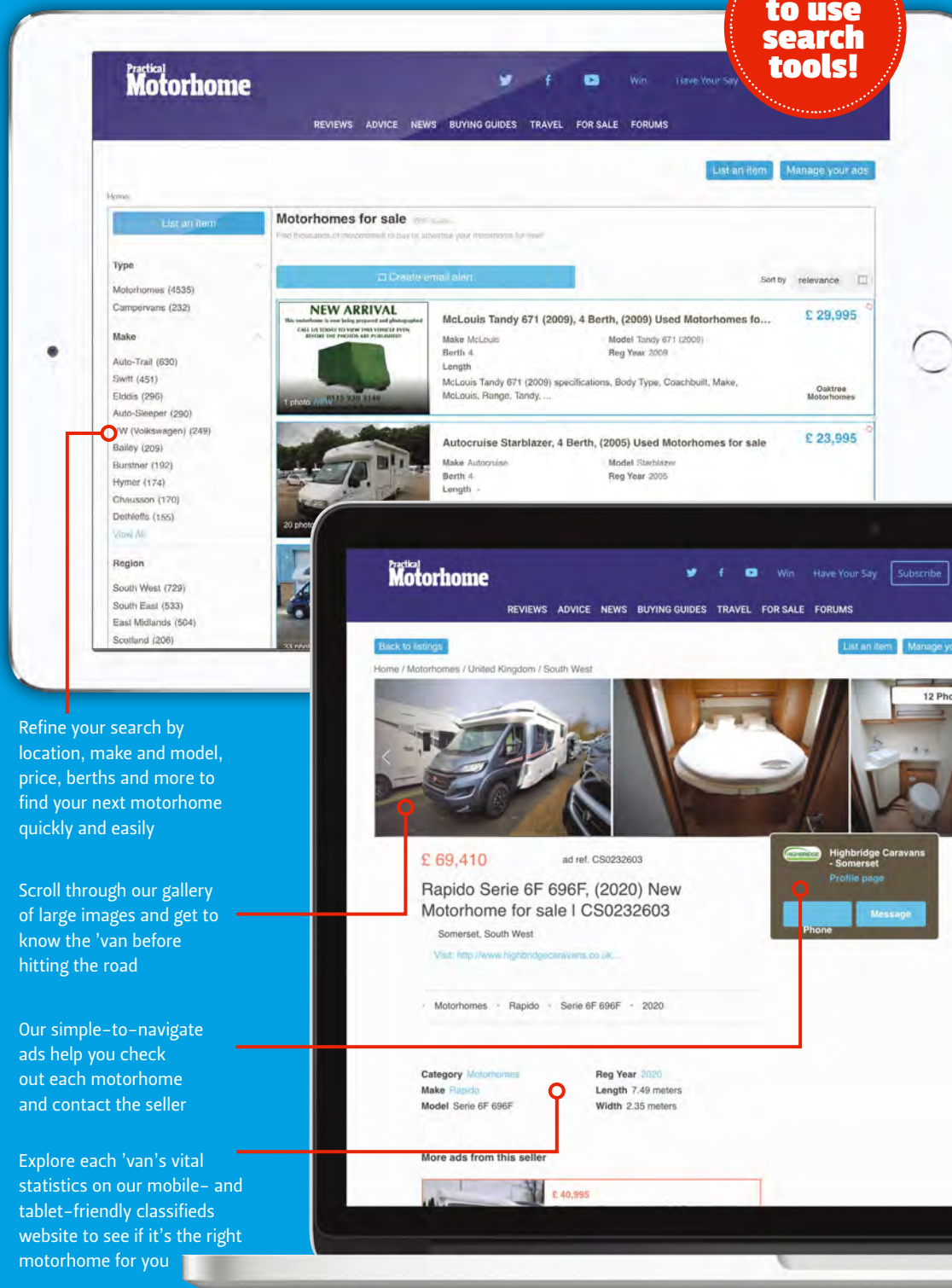
We've worked hard to make these classifieds as easy to use as possible, with filters to help you narrow your search by location, price, brand, year, weight and number of berths. Plus there are plenty of big, high-quality pictures to help you check out the 'van you are buying.

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# Quality conversions

The experts at Autohaus have more than 30 years of experience



**Spartan GT**



**Camelot C-600**

The campervan market has grown hugely over the past few years, which is no surprise – more and more people are recognising how much campervans offer when it comes to fun, adventure and sheer practicality.

That means there are plenty to choose from out there – but some brands certainly stand out from the others for their quality, safety, style and innovation.

One that does just that is Autohaus, which is based in beautiful Somerset, right here in the UK. It began as a small business repairing motorhomes and caravans, and since then has grown and grown; now, it's been manufacturing

luxury campervan conversions for more than three decades.

## **Six superb Autohaus models**

What has kept customers happy over all those years is partly the amount of flexibility that Autohaus offers when it comes to layouts. They convert Volkswagen, Fiat, Ford and Renault base vehicles, so if you have a particular preference, there's something here for you.

There are six models of conversion available, too, each of which brings the campervan owner something different.

For example, take a look at the Renault Trafic-based **Creston** – it's packed with high-spec features as

standard. That means you can look forward to leather upholstery, diesel heating, a 30-litre water tank and much more, all on board.

Or the VW T6.1-based **Ashton** – the first Autohaus camper – might appeal. It's a true classic, with LED lighting, a 50-litre fridge freezer, removable carpets and the chance to add a host of additional options.

## **Experience luxury on board**

Then there's the VW T6.1-based **Camelot**. It's perfect if you want twin rear seats and the luxury of a toilet on board – ideal if you're travelling with children!

And that's not all. Want something bigger? The **Kingston** is the one for



# right here in the UK

building campervans from the company's premises in Minehead



**Creston**

you – inside its Fiat Ducato body shell you'll find four sleeping berths with a matching number of seat belts. It has both fresh and waste water tanks, LPG space and water heating, an awning, a solar panel... the list goes on.

#### Award-winning campervans

If you're a fan of the VW Crafter/ MAN, consider the **Camelot C600** – it's perfect if you want a high-spec and spacious campervan with the most luxurious kit on board. In fact, *Practical Motorhome's* judges loved this model so much that they awarded it Highly Commended in two categories in their most recent awards.

The **Spartan GT**, meanwhile, went one step further, taking the overall trophy in the Best Small Campervan category. This Ford Tourneo Custom-based model features beautifully crafted and eye-catching upholstery, as well as mains hook-up, diesel heating and much more – all as standard.

#### Get peace of mind

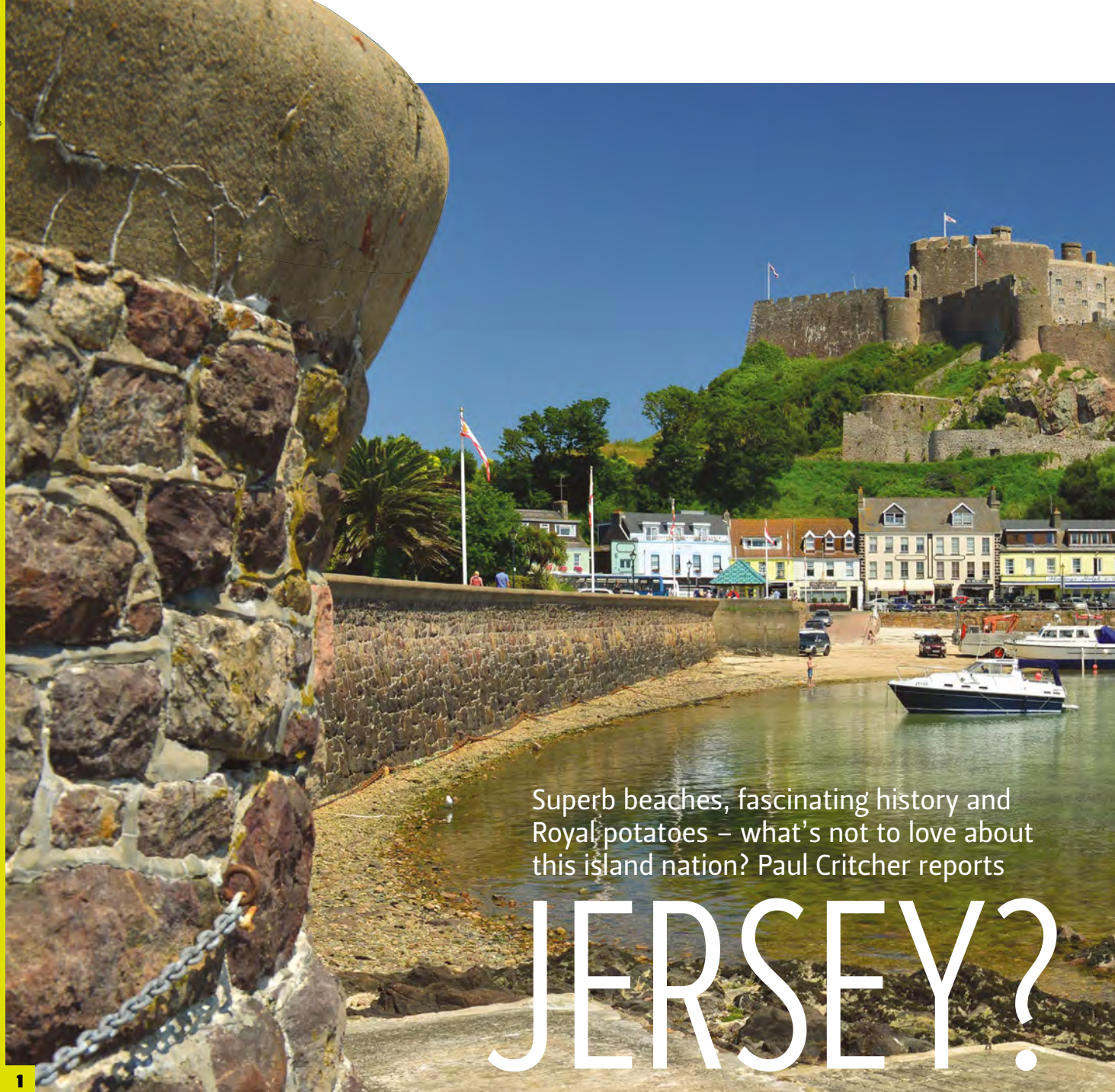
No matter which model you go for, you can rest safe in the knowledge that Autohaus is a fully NCC-approved workshop, with trained technicians. Its models also have Type Approval from the VCA, meaning that it maintains the highest safety standards.

It also offers annual habitation services, as well as water-ingress, chassis and brake checks, and engine servicing and MoTs. If you need new wheels, a bike rack or roof rail, or a custom paint job for your camper, Autohaus can help with that, too.

To find out more about Autohaus, visit its website or the factory in Minehead (call to book in advance).







Superb beaches, fascinating history and Royal potatoes – what's not to love about this island nation? Paul Critcher reports

# JERSEY?



**Duration**  
Seven days

**When**  
May 2024

**Why?**  
To soak up some sun and enjoy the glorious scenery of the island

**B**om, bom, bom... duh, duh, duh, duuuh... I guess it's a generational thing, but every time someone mentions Jersey, I can't help but hear the opening bars of the *Bergerac* theme tune. Such was the huge popularity of the 1980s detective series and its strong association with the Channel Islands.

*Bergerac* was a showcase for the archipelago, which lies just off the Normandy coast and is made up of the islands of Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, Sark and Herm, along with a number of smaller islands.

The self-governing bailiwicks of Jersey and Guernsey are not part of the UK, but are Crown Dependencies, and although they are largely influenced by Britain, they have their own distinct character and laws.

Jersey even has its own language, Jèrriais, a dialect related to Norman French, although it's somewhat in decline today.

Driving around the island feels like stepping back into the England of the 1950s and 1960s (or at least how I would imagine it), a rural idyll of traditional cottages and villages.

They have now been remaking *Bergerac*, with filming taking place last summer, and

actor Damien Molony in the lead role. Which reminds me of an Alan Partridge sketch, in which Alan confuses Jim Bergerac with Cyrano de Bergerac and utters the immortal line: "I don't like what they did with the idea, they set it in the 17th century, gave him a long nose, maybe it made it a bit funnier... but for the British, Bergerac is John Nettles..."

Aside from the famous detective, my knowledge of Jersey was pretty much limited to: 'Island off France, has funny money, was occupied during the war and grows tasty potatoes.' However, I don't think Visit Jersey will be using that as a strapline anytime in the near future!

## Poolle resources

Travelling in an extremely comfortable cherry-red Bilbo's Celex campervan, our first stop was Poolle, in Dorset, where we were meeting up with my sister and brother-in-law, who were joining us on the ferry crossing the following day. Condor Ferries runs two routes to Jersey, the faster Poolle crossing (four hours) and the longer Portsmouth (just over 10 hours),







# SURE!

along with other regular sailings to Guernsey and the port of St Malo, in north-western France.

We were staying overnight with friends, and we had a wander around the Old Town and harbour, stopping for a bite to eat at the smart Custom House Bistro – pork schnitzel highly recommended. There's a relaxing vibe here and we enjoyed watching some scuba divers struggling into their drysuits as we chilled with a beer.

Later, we went for a leisurely walk along The Quay and took a couple of photos of the statue of Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Scout movement. He is depicted sitting on the harbourside, looking out towards Brownsea Island, the location of his first scout camp.

### Channel energy

We woke to good sailing weather and were up for the first ferry at 9.30am. Embarkation was super-efficient, with plenty of ferry operatives on hand to direct us to the right queue, before we drove on board and locked up – making sure we had disabled the alarm.

Nevertheless, the ferry left to a chorus of car alarms sounding (didn't those drivers get the memo?), and we slowly journeyed through the harbour, past Brownsea Island and Old Harry Rocks, then out into the Channel. ➔



**1** Magnificent Mont Orgueil Castle above Gorey harbour

**2** Robert Baden-Powell's statue looks out towards Brownsea Island

**3** You can relax in the lounge on board the Condor Ferries vessel

**4** Staff help to guide drivers off the ferry on arrival at the port



5



5 Jersey ferry calls in at Guernsey's charming capital, St Peter Port

6 There's a good outdoor swimming pool at The Palms, but it's unheated

7 Our super Bilbo's Celex pitched up in the peace and quiet of The Palms

## Stress-free sailing

I'm lucky with ferries. Touch wood, I always tend to have good sailings with calm waters, and so it was on our trip to Jersey – we even had a pod of bottlenose dolphins leaping off the bow wave. It's a great way to travel further afield, less stressful than flying.

We booked into the Horizon Lounge (you can also go Club Class for yet more luxury), which has private seating with fantastic sea views.

It offers that bit more space to enjoy the trip, with tables, reclining seats, Wi-Fi and power supply, private bar... Nice! Around the ferry, there was also a good selection of bars and cafés, all serving a variety of sandwiches, pies and pizzas.

As the ferry moved into dock in Guernsey for a brief drop-off and pick-up, we made our way out on deck to see the traffic come and go.

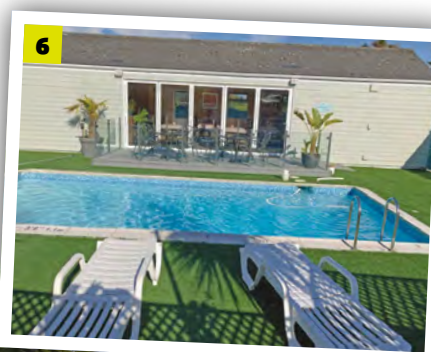
It was interesting to watch some of the caravanners boarding – those towing have to reverse onto the car deck. I'm sure it was a bit daunting for the tow car drivers (especially with an audience on deck!), but there were plenty of staff on hand to guide them on their way and everyone seemed to be coping admirably with it all.

You can find out more about travelling on Condor Ferries with a larger vehicle or when you're towing at [tinyurl.com/27p3eebr](http://tinyurl.com/27p3eebr).

7



6



It was blue skies all the way as we were leaving Guernsey's pretty capital, St Peter Port. The attractive architecture of the town framed the boats in the foreground, which glittered in the sunlight, and for a while, we wished that we had time to stay there for a couple of days.

Any regrets were soon put aside, though, as we pushed on to Jersey, where the pristine white of La Corbière lighthouse marked the way.

## Beneath the palm trees

After dropping off my non-camping sister and her husband at their fancy hotel not far from the ferry port in St Helier, we drove north to our base for the next few nights – The Palms Campsite.

This well-kept park is only a 20-minute walk from the beach at Grève de Lecq, and has a variety of pitch sizes, all with electric hook-up.

It's an attractive, quiet site, with a licensed café serving breakfast, lunch and dinner six days a week, and there's an excellent shower block and an outdoor (unheated) swimming pool.

We had the choice of a number of pitches and having finally chosen one (indecision is my middle name), we had a quick coffee before taking the lovely walk down to the beach.

Bathed in the golden light of late afternoon, we passed playful rabbits as we wound down the path to the near-deserted sandy beach, which I'm told is popular with families, but was quiet on our visit.

We wandered around the bay before stopping at Colleens Café for a Hot Fish Plate of calamari, cod, scampi and king prawns, all served up with a truly wonderful sea view – what a find!

## Tunnel vision

Next day, our plan was to meet up with my sister and her husband at the Jersey War Tunnels, but first, we headed to St Ouen's Bay, to see the vast beach that runs along the whole length of the west coast.

We paused briefly at Lewis's Tower, a Martello tower built in 1835 to defend Jersey's coast against French attack, before stopping at the Channel Islands Military Museum, which is housed in a bunker that once formed part of Hitler's Atlantic Wall defences. We enjoyed a brief chat with the curator outside, but time was against us, so after a quick walk on the sands, we were back in the 'van and making our way to the War Tunnels. The 15-minute

drive there gave us a real flavour of this beautiful island, which is quite simply delightful, especially in May when the flowers in bloom are the perfect accompaniment to the many stone-built traditional cottages. The roads are easy to navigate and mostly not too narrow, which is always welcome.

The exhibition at Jersey War Tunnels is well worth a visit – it details a remarkable time in the island's history, when it was occupied by German forces during the Second World War.

More than 1000m of tunnels were dug into the hillside by some 5000 forced and slave workers from nations across Europe. This vast network of tunnels





was designed to allow the German occupying infantry to withstand Allied air raids and bombardment in the event of an invasion. In 1943, it was converted into an emergency hospital.

The exhibition gives a fascinating insight into the history and experience of the islanders and the slave workers during the period, and does a great job of showing individual stories set against the wider background of the occupation.

Each visitor to the Tunnels receives an identity card detailing the particulars of a wartime island resident and you can find out more about their life throughout the exhibition (I got a card about Albert Gustave Bedane, who was recognised for his heroism in saving the life of a Jewish woman and several fugitives during the occupation).

### Feeling beachy

Beaches are a Jersey highlight and a sunny weather forecast gave us the perfect reason to spend a day in beautiful St Brelade's Bay, notable for its soft sand and safe swimming.

This is another exquisite spot, great for walking and with plenty of places to enjoy a bite to eat. So after a quick paddle, we grabbed a table on the terrace overlooking the water at the Jersey Crab Shack, where fabulous oysters and fish tacos were the perfect accompaniment to great views and lots of laughs – heavenly!

We spent the afternoon on the beach before taking a stroll to the interesting churchyard at St Brelade's parish church. Bright-eyed and slightly pink from a day in the sun, we headed to the site for a quiet evening by the Bilbo's.

Next morning we awoke well rested, and plumped for a full day on the east coast with a visit to Mont

Orgueil Castle. But first, we could not resist a quick trip to Plemont Beach on the north coast, which had been recommended to us.

Plemont is famed for its caves, rockpools and waterfall, and is only a short drive away from The Palms. It's a fantastic spectacle – you park at the top and are rewarded with wonderful views.

Walk down the many steps to discover the beautiful rockpools and caves, but beware the tides, because the caves, and the beach itself, become submerged at certain times of the day.

For a refuelling stop, there's a café overlooking the beach near the lower car park.

Another word of warning – the roads here are very tight. There are passing spots, and we were okay in our campervan, but it's not really suited to larger motorhomes. Instead, consider taking bus number 8, which stops near the top car park. Bear in mind that it's then a trek down to the beach and even more tiring on the way back up.

The drive across the island to Mont Orgueil Castle gave us another opportunity to take in the beautiful villages and countryside along the way.

We liked seeing signs at farms and private addresses advertising Jersey Royal potatoes for sale, with simple honesty boxes placed outside for payment, and we spotted other island highlights, such as Jersey Zoo, which was established in the 1950s by world-famous naturalist Gerald Durrell.

### Medieval fortifications

The impressive castle of Mont Orgueil (also known as Gorey Castle, after the harbour it overlooks) was built in 1212 to protect Jersey from French invasion.

In 1600, it was nearly torn down for materials to be used for building the Elizabeth Castle in St Helier, but ➔

**8** The beautiful beach at Grève de Lecq is not far from The Palms Campsite

**9** Learn about life in the occupation at the Jersey War Tunnels...

**10** ... where the military exhibits include this US Army Jeep

**11** Paul tackles the steps (there are said to be 300!) at Plemont Beach

**12** Fish tacos at the Jersey Crab Shack

**13** Fine views from Mont Orgueil



was saved by the intervention of Sir Walter Raleigh, who was the Governor of Jersey at the time.

With its magnificent views and hugely impressive architecture, it's easy to see why Raleigh was so keen to retain the original structure.

The views from amid the turrets are breathtaking, and the Wheel of Urine, used by medieval doctors to diagnose a patient's illness based on the colour of their urine, was a fascinating curiosity.

The resident falconer, complete with a Harris's hawk named Sovereign, brought the castle's history to life and was full of engaging stories.

## Drinks at sundown

We thought St Helier lacked the charm of other parts of Jersey, although we took a walk around the Lido at Havre des Pas, and there's lots to see, including the Marina, Jersey Museum, Art Gallery and Victorian House, and the Maritime Museum & Occupation Tapestry Gallery. There's also a cute tourist train between St Helier and St Aubin.

For our final evening, we returned to St Ouen's Bay for sunset drinks at Le Braye Café, right near the beach. With a can of craft beer and the sun setting behind the silhouette of La Rocco Tower, it was a joyful way to end our island stay. ■

**14** Mont Orgueil Castle was built in the 13th century

**15** The Wheel of Urine was used as a diagnostic tool in medieval times

**16** The Hot Fish Plate at Colleens



## TOUR ESSENTIALS

### WHEN TO GO

We visited in May and enjoyed beautiful sunshine all week. The best times for good weather and fewer crowds are May, June and September, but even during the busier summer months, the island is not too packed with tourists.

### WAY TO GO

We travelled via ferry from Poole, Dorset, with Condor Ferries. The Poole to Jersey sailing cost us £200 each way for a 7m campervan with two passengers (booked as a medium-sized motorhome).

An upgrade to the Horizon Lounge costs £13.45 per person each way.

We toured back in May 2024, so you should check the website (details below) for the latest deals and prices for motorhome crossings.

The current schedule is for Poole-Jersey services to operate via Guernsey and the total travel time is 4.5 hours (including the stop in Guernsey).

The *Liberation* high-speed trimaran from Poole travels at 34 knots, as opposed to the *Commodore Clipper* and *Condor Islander* conventional ferries from Portsmouth, which sail at 18 knots and take 10 hours.

condorferries.co.uk

### DRIVING

Driving in Jersey is easy, with good roads that are well signposted. As in the UK, you drive on the left.

You might come across signs indicating 'Filter in turn', which means that as you approach the junction or roundabout, priority is given to traffic on your right and then it's your turn and so on. It keeps traffic flowing and you'll soon get used to it – just take your time.

There's a good bus service throughout the island and you'll find more information on timings and routes at libertybus.je. The Jersey Buses app is also useful.

We found plenty of parking, with some bays for larger vehicles, at the prominent tourist sites. It can get busy in St Helier, but it is relatively easy to park.

Please note that visitors are allowed to bring a motorhome to Jersey (maximum length 9.3 metres), but you must stay on a registered campsite and return to the site each night.

For more details and a list of registered campsites, go to gov.je/Travel/InformationAdvice/Travellers/pages/caravan.aspx.

### WHERE WE STAYED

■ **The Palms Campsite and Oasis Café**

La Route de Vinchelez,  
St Ouen, Jersey JE3 2DB

Tel +44 1534 481 700 thepalms.je  
what3words ///handrail.sacrificed.item

Opens at Easter, closes the first week in October. Medium-sized pitch for two, £32 per night with electric hook-up ('vans up to 6.2m long) and £42 per night (vehicles over 6.2m long).

This is a quiet, well-maintained park on the north of the island, with outdoor pool open from mid-May until the end of the season and a short drive or 20-minute walk to the beach.

### FOOD AND DRINK

■ **Custom House Poole**

customhousepoole.co.uk

■ **Colleens Café**

Tel 01534 481 420

■ **Jersey Crab Shack**

jerseycrabshack.com

■ **Le Braye Café**

lebraye.com

■ **Plemont Beach Café**

Tel 01534 482 005

### FIND OUT MORE

■ **Visit Jersey**

jersey.com

■ **Jersey War Tunnels**

jerseywartunnels.com

■ **Mont Orgueil Castle**

jerseyheritage.org





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Campervans are brilliant, but by their very nature they can be a little limited in size. That's ideal when you're driving down a country lane or boarding a ferry, but sometimes you might wish your campervan had just a little more living space inside.

You could upgrade to a large motorhome – but a better solution is a dedicated campervan awning. Choose the right one and you're guaranteed a handy accessory that will serve you well for years to come.

### Quality comes as standard

There are lots of awning brands to choose from, though, so how do you go about picking the perfect one?

You should ideally go for a manufacturer that has a great reputation, a long history in the industry, a fantastic range of campervan products and more – which is exactly what you'll find at Isabella.

Every Isabella product features the expertise that it has garnered over almost seven decades – and that's a lot of experience.

You'll also find that each Isabella awning is made of the finest materials; there's no cost-cutting here, meaning you can buy in complete confidence. Isabella is renowned for its aftercare, too: you'll receive a three-year guarantee on your awning, and the dedicated service centre is ready and waiting to help with any repairs, reductions or enlargements that you might need.

### More space means more fun

Campervan owners are spoiled for choice at Isabella: for starters, take a look at the **X-Tension Driveaway Air** awning. It's ideal for those with a small 'van, because it increases living space by a whopping 8.25 m<sup>2</sup>, giving you more room to relax on site. Its 'tunnel' design



- 1 Isabella's X-Tension Driveaway Air awning will increase both your living space and your fun
- 2 The X-Tension Driveaway Air awning features a tunnel design to fit a variety of campervans
- 3 The Isabella Levo is a lightweight, freestanding windbreak that can be erected anywhere
- 4 Comfort is guaranteed with the Directors Chair; the Sidetable attachment can also be added
- 5 Increase your awning's ambience with the Solar Lamp, which can shine for up to seven hours



means the perfect fit, no matter what your vehicle. And your adventures won't be held back by having an awning: when it's time to drive somewhere for the day, the X-Tension can be unzipped from your campervan and closed shut, ready and waiting for you on your return.

What's more, it's easy to get set up on your pitch when you arrive, thanks to the fast-inflation air tubes. That means less time spent getting your awning set up, and more time having fun.

### The perfect accessories

While Isabella may specialise in awnings, that's not all it offers the campervan owner: its comprehensive range of fantastic accessories will make your tours that much more comfortable. The **Shade** sun canopy is perfect for those who travel light – set up using a trio of lightweight poles and a canvas, it's simple and quick to erect.

**Windbreaks** are a brilliant addition to any campervan tour, and Isabella has a

large range across a variety of sizes to fit every lifestyle. Isabella's **camping furniture**, meanwhile – including quality chairs, tables and even electronic products – will help make your travels more relaxing, and less stressful than you ever thought possible.

To take a look at the full Isabella range of campervan awnings and accessories, simply visit its website. You can also find Isabella on Facebook and Instagram.

**[www.isabella.net/uk/](http://www.isabella.net/uk/)**

■ [www.facebook.com/isabella.camping.unitedkingdom/](https://www.facebook.com/isabella.camping.unitedkingdom/)

■ [www.instagram.com/isabellacamping\\_uk/](https://www.instagram.com/isabellacamping_uk/)





*Experience*

# THE BEST ROUTES FOR SCENIC TOURING

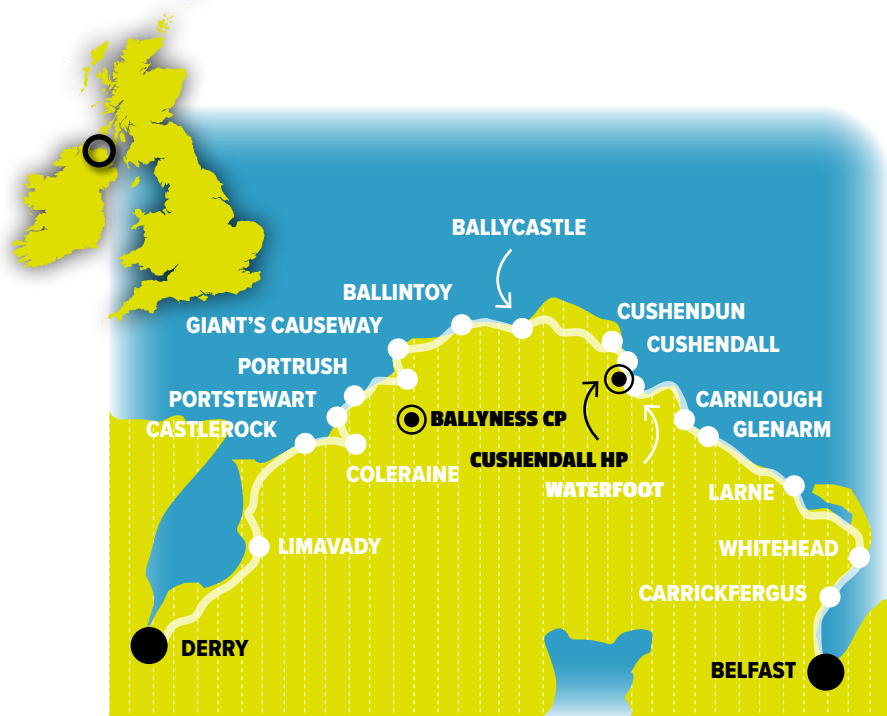
These six superb road trips are a brilliant way to discover the UK, says Jo Davies







Getty Images



## Causeway Coastal Route

**Distance** 130 miles **Duration** Three to five days  
**Start – finish** Belfast – Derry **Best time to visit** Summer  
[www.causewaycoastalroute.com](http://www.causewaycoastalroute.com)

Rising and falling into splendid peaks and glens, carved out by rivers and ocean, the Causeway Coastal Route is as romantic as it is historic.

The route is made up of attractions, heritage sites and beaches, with nine 'scenic loop' detours along the way.

### Belfast to Cushendun

Kick off in the capital: buzzing Belfast is home to the fascinating Titanic Belfast and the Ulster Museum, as well as great creative centres such as the Cathedral Quarter. As you drive north, be sure to stop off to admire the coastal gems, including The Gobbins Cliff Path, Glenarm Castle and the Cushendun Caves.

### Cushendun to Bushmills

Soak up the otherworldly views as the Antrim Coast and Glens Area

of Outstanding Natural Beauty gives way to Causeway Coast AONB, and you reach the many splendours of the north Antrim coast. Along with the stunning scenery, natural wonders and historical sites, the route passes through traditional seaside towns and charming villages, including Ballycastle and Ballintoy.

### Bushmills to Derry

As well as making the world-renowned whiskey, Bushmills is ideal for exploring the Giant's Causeway. Further along the coast, beautiful stretches of beach can be found at Portstewart and Castlerock.

### Stay at...

#### Ballyness Caravan Park

[www.ballynesscaravanpark.com](http://www.ballynesscaravanpark.com)

#### Cushendall Holiday Park

[www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk](http://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk) ➔



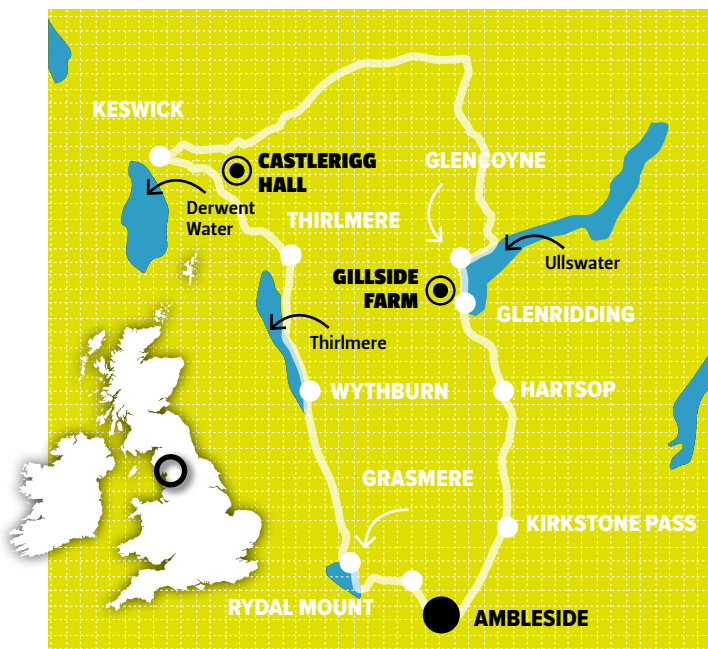
Giant's Causeway



Castlerock

**DID YOU KNOW?** Fantasy behemoth *Game of Thrones* was filmed in 25 locations in and around the Causeway Coast, while the main studio was based in Belfast





## Lake District: Ambleside

**Distance** 46 miles **Duration** Three to four days  
**Start – finish** Ambleside **Best time to visit** March to June, September to October 📍 [lakedistrictdrives.com](http://lakedistrictdrives.com)

As a fine testament to the Lake District's very special magic, local resident Martin Wilson was inspired by the region's outstanding beauty to create the phenomenal catalogue that covers Lake District Drives.

This is just one of the 16 routes that Martin has researched and compiled, which also include the truly epic 126-mile Ultimate Lake District Drive.

This rather shorter route traverses some of the finest rural scenery likely to be encountered in the central Lake District.

Although Martin's route begins and ends in Ambleside, it could actually be started from anywhere along the drive.

### Keswick to Grasmere

A stone's throw from Derwent Water is the pretty town of Keswick, where you can enjoy local delicacies and wander along cobbled streets.

Nearby is Castlerigg Neolithic Stone Circle, while a short drive south passes Thirlmere and brings you to Grasmere, once the home of William Wordsworth.

### Grasmere to Glenridding

Following gorgeous scenery along the delightful River Rothay, the route then dips south through Ambleside, a picture-postcard pretty town located at the top end of Windermere.

This stretch of the route will be of particular interest to keen hikers, who might like to take the opportunity to tackle some nearby peaks, including Red Screes, Stony Cove Pike or St Sunday Crag.

### Glenridding to Keswick

Nestled in the heart of charming woodland, the pretty village of Glenridding overlooks Ullswater and is one of the locations visited by the Lakes Steamers, so you could also explore the lake vehicle-free to enjoy a rather different viewpoint. And if you're feeling adventurous, you could even scale Helvellyn!

### Stay at...

#### ■ Gillside Farm

📍 [www.gillsidecaravanandcampingsite.co.uk](http://www.gillsidecaravanandcampingsite.co.uk)

#### ■ Castlerigg Hall

📍 [www.castlerigg.co.uk](http://www.castlerigg.co.uk)

**DID YOU KNOW?** In 1904, the National Trust purchased its first land, near Derwent Water; it's now the much-loved Brandlehow Park



## North Coast 500

**Distance** 516 miles **Duration** Five to seven days  
**Start – finish** Circular **Best time to visit** May to October  
📍 [northcoast500.com](http://northcoast500.com)

Truly awe-inspiring landscapes, mysterious history and rich local life are in great abundance on the famous NC500. This epic road trip can be joined anywhere, but is loosely divided into six.

### Inverness-shire

Vibrant Inverness makes a fine gateway and finish line, offering a wealth of culture, cuisine and nightlife. Loch Ness lies to the south-west.

### The Black Isle

Just north of Inverness, the Black Isle peninsula is teeming with wildlife in glens, waterfalls and woodland. Spot dolphins from the cliffs and beaches, then wander through pretty villages and explore Pictish history.

### Caithness

Once a hub of prehistoric life in Scotland, the area is replete with memories of the Pictish and Norse civilisations.

Dominating the skyline, ancient ruined castles, such as Keiss and Sinclair Girnogie, seem to spring out from the cliffs.

### Easter Ross

Pausing to explore charming towns such as Dingwall, Tain and Invergordon, and the villages of Contin and Evanton, you'll find ample opportunities to sample the superb local food and drink.

Along with glorious beaches and nature reserves, you can discover the Pictish Trail.

### Sutherland

Serene roads wind their way into heathland, coast and remote wilderness. Beaches at Durness and Sangomore offer crystal waters, while villages such as Lochinver and Kinlochbervie lie beside mountains and open water.

### Wester Ross

Scotland's past can really be appreciated here, from ancient woodland in the Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve to fine mountains, villages and beaches.

### Stay at...

#### ■ John O'Groats Caravan Site

📍 [johnogroatscampsite.co.uk](http://johnogroatscampsite.co.uk)

#### ■ Shore Caravan Site

📍 [shorecaravansite.co.uk](http://shorecaravansite.co.uk)

**DID YOU KNOW?** Loch Ness contains more fresh water than all of the lakes in England and Wales (and a monster, allegedly!)





## Northumberland 250

**Distance** 250 miles **Duration** Four to seven days  
**Start – finish** Circular **Best time to visit** May to September  
[www.northumberland250.com](http://www.northumberland250.com)

This unique driving route has been split into sections, each with their own very special appeal.

### COUNTRY

#### Corbridge to Alnwick

Between peaceful stretches of road that are surrounded by splendid countryside, some of Northumberland's most spectacular heritage sites can be found on this leg of the route.

Visitors can discover the famed Roman ruins of Hadrian's Wall in Corbridge, or perhaps do a little ghost hunting on the medieval Chillingham Estate.

### COAST

#### Alnwick to Berwick-upon-Tweed

Following along the region's uniquely captivating shores, this section meanders its way through the beauties of the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

While you're here, make sure that you sample the delicious local seafood specialities in Craster, and explore the long history of the castles at Alnwick and Dunstanburgh.

### BORDERLANDS

#### Berwick-upon-Tweed to Carter Bar

Time to make the most of the county's neighbour to the north – the Scottish Borders!

Winding through dramatically remote areas of wilderness, this beautiful route is simply littered with fascinating historical sites, such as the Bronze Age stone circle of Duddo.

This section culminates in splendid scenery on the edge of Northumberland National Park.

### DARK SKIES

#### Carter Bar to Derwent Reservoir

The longest leg, at 102 miles, this stretch is famous for having some of the darkest skies in Europe.

It rambles through the heart of the National Park and into the North Pennines AONB, among rolling hills, ancient woods and picturesque villages.

### Stay at...

#### ■ Bellingham C&CC Site

[www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk](http://www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk)

#### ■ Beadnell Bay Caravan Park

[beadnellbaycaravanpark.co.uk](http://beadnellbaycaravanpark.co.uk) ➔



**DID YOU KNOW?** If you're seeking solitude, you'll find it in Northumberland – it has the lowest population of any English county





## Pembrokeshire Coast 200

**Distance** 200 miles **Duration** Three to seven days

**Start – finish** Amroth – St Dogmaels

**Best time to visit** June to September

📍 [caravancloud.com/pembrokeshirecoastroadtrip](http://caravancloud.com/pembrokeshirecoastroadtrip)

Devised by the team of experts at CaravanCloud, this uniquely community-centred road trip was launched in 2021 to highlight the best of one of the most beautiful stretches of Welsh coast.

With this route, they've created a three-day itinerary that you can download from their website.

For ease of use, the route has been divided into three sections.

### Day 1 Amroth to Dale

The first and longest section of the Pembrokeshire Coast 200 is packed with gorgeous beaches and vibrant seaside resorts, on coastal roads that offer the most breathtaking views.

Along the way, you can really immerse yourself in the culture of Tenby, or explore the gems, such as Stackpole or Freshwater West.

### Day 2 Marloes to St Davids

A paradise for walkers and surfers, this stretch reveals the glorious

beaches and hiking trails on the Pembrokeshire Coast Path. Birdwatchers will love the famous islands of Skomer and Skokholm.

### Day 3 Abereddy to St Dogmaels

After the bustle of popular spots such as St Davids and Broadhaven, it's time for a change of pace in peaceful North Pembrokeshire.

This whole area is rich in fine heritage, including the famous Blue Lagoon in Abereddy and prehistoric sites at Carreg Coetan and Gorsedd Stone Circle.

As the route winds its way up the spectacular coast, take the time to pause and explore some of the many beautiful beaches tucked away along the Pembrokeshire Coast Path.

#### Stay at...

- **Trevayne Farm**  
📍 [trevaynefarm.co.uk](http://trevaynefarm.co.uk)
- **Gwaun Vale Caravan Park**  
📍 [gwaunvale.co.uk](http://gwaunvale.co.uk)

**DID YOU KNOW?** If you're heading for a beach break, nowhere in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is over 10 miles from the sea



## South West 660

**Distance** 660 miles **Duration** 14 days

**Start – finish** Poole, Dorset – Watchet, Somerset

**Best time to visit** September to June 📍 [southwest660.com](http://southwest660.com)

In terms of distance, this trip is longer than a drive from London to Denmark – it's no wonder the route has been divided into four. You can begin in Cornwall and North or South Devon.

Following a similar line to the South West Coast Path, it's ideal for walkers and nature-lovers.

### Dorset

**Best for...** Bustling towns, unique beaches, wildlife

- Sandbanks to Weymouth
- Weymouth to Lyme Regis

**Highlights...** Lulworth Cove, Portland, Brownsea Island

**If you like...** Sandbanks, try the Isle of Portland

### South Devon

**Best for...** Fossil hunting, traditional seaside resorts

- Lyme Regis to Exeter
- Exeter to Dartmouth
- Dartmouth to Plymouth
- Plymouth to St Austell

**Highlights...** The Jurassic Coast, Slapton Sands

**If you like...** Plymouth, try Looe

### Cornwall

**Best for...** Beaches, heritage sites, eating and drinking

- St Austell to Penzance
- Penzance to St Ives
- St Ives to Padstow
- Padstow to Clovelly

**Highlights...** Porthcurno, St Just, Tintagel Castle

**If you like...** Land's End, try Lizard Point

### North Devon & Somerset

**Best for...** Watersports, the buzz of fashionable beach towns

- Clovelly to Lynton
- Lynton to Watchet

**Highlights...** The Hangman Hills (Great Hangman and Little Hangman), the Atlantic Highway, Lundy Island

**If you like...** Croyde, try Morteheo

### Stay at...

- **Bagwell Farm Touring Park**  
📍 [bagwellfarm.co.uk](http://bagwellfarm.co.uk)
- **Trewethett Farm CAMC Site**  
📍 [caravanclub.co.uk](http://caravanclub.co.uk)

Portland Bill, Dorset



**DID YOU KNOW?** In Devon and Cornwall, 'grockle' is an unkind term for visitors – make sure your local pronunciations are right, so you blend in!



# VW enthusiasts everywhere, it's time to say goodbye!

The VW Transporter chassis is being replaced by a shared Volkswagen and Ford Transit platform. If you're a bona fide member of the 'V-Dub Club' get your last of the line while you can.



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# The Swift Monza: brilliant every day

**Fun, adventures and exploration far and wide await in this stunning campervan from Swift, which is sure to fit effortlessly into your life**

We all live such busy lives these days – even after working all week, there are chores to complete, children to ferry to various activities and grocery shopping to buy. Sometimes it feels as though there's no time to stop, let alone have adventures and fun in the great outdoors – but what if there was a single vehicle that could allow you to do all this, and so much more?

That's where the new Swift Monza comes in. Not only is this a brilliantly designed and built campervan for holidays away, it can act as your daily drive, too.

## Cook up a storm

So what is it that makes the Monza just so special? When it comes to getting away from it all, it simply has everything you need. Step inside and you'll notice the smart kitchen, which features a two-burner hob as well as a sink with a glass lid. There's a 42-litre compressor fridge for all of the family's provisions, and the freestanding dining table – which can be tucked away when not in use – provides a comfortable place to eat. There's even an external BBQ point for when you fancy an al fresco feast.

## Ready for bed

When you're done with dinner, it's time to relax on the sumptuous seats, with their Leather Panther soft furnishing scheme. The ambient lighting will set the mood for the evening, before you turn in for the night in one of the two spacious double beds. And you don't need to worry about needing to rely on campsite washrooms: there's a portable toilet on board, as well as an external shower.

Not only is the Monza a comfortable place to spend time, it's packed with other features to make your touring experience that much more enjoyable. The 200W solar panel and 95 amp leisure battery will give you freedom to really get off the beaten track, as will the onboard fresh- and waste-water tanks. The 2.2kw Eberspacher diesel heating makes all-year travel a pleasure, too.

## Brilliant every day

And when you're not away on an adventure, the Monza will be ready and waiting for whatever you want to throw at it. Rear belted seats will keep the kids happy and safe on the road, while front and rear parking sensors, as well as a reversing camera, make manoeuvring in car parks a doddle.

There's all the tech in the cab that you'd expect in the fantastic Ford Custom base vehicle, too, including an electric parking brake, a heated windscreen, hill start assist, keyless stop/start, and much more. You can even download the Ford Pass app, to allow you to stay in touch with your vehicle, no matter where you are.

## Experience Monza yourself

The best news of all is that the stunning Swift Monza can be yours from just £73,495 – and if you place an order before 31 March 2025, you'll receive an incredible £2,500 discount, making it even better value.

To find out more about the Swift Monza, and take a closer look for yourself, simply contact one of the expert Swift dealerships that you'll find listed on the Monza web page.

You can also discover further information about Swift on its social media channels.

- [www.swiftgroup.co.uk/monza](http://www.swiftgroup.co.uk/monza)
- [www.facebook.com/swiftleisuregroup](https://www.facebook.com/swiftleisuregroup)
- [www.instagram.com/swiftgroup/](https://www.instagram.com/swiftgroup/)
- [twitter.com/swiftgroup](https://twitter.com/swiftgroup)







**1** The Monza's kitchen is packed with facilities, including a Dometic combination two-burner hob, a sink with glass lid and a 42-litre fridge (inset)

**2** At night, it's a quick and easy process to create the spacious and comfortable lower double bed

**3** There's room up top for two more berths. This area also features dual zipped windows with midge screens

**4** The Monza's stylish interior features high-gloss white doors combined with dark woodgrain worksurfaces, for a classy yet practical look



**SWIFT**



# Experience LESS IS MORE LIVING IN A CAMPERVAN

Life in a camper is all about making clever use of the space and rationalising your kit. Peter Rosenthal outlines the art of living it small



**1** Laying out your kit beside your camper shows you just how much you carry

**2** Folding tables and chairs could prove to be essential

**3** The junk you find when clearing out!

**4** Most cabs have plenty of clever storage areas, so pick your kit to fit

There comes a time in every motorcaravanner's life when packing your vehicle for a weekend away becomes a chore, making you wonder why you do it. This happened to me with my previous five-berth coachbuilt. It was huge, with a vast garage that could be (safely) crammed full of all sorts of kit to cover every possible eventuality.

Years of visiting motorhome shows and filling it with the latest gadgets and 'must-have' devices meant that despite sticking to the payload, it was simply bulging at the seams. The trouble was that after a couple of years of carting everything including the kitchen sink (and a spare one, just in case), I had begun to question why I needed so much stuff.

Keeping up with the packing and unpacking, and maintenance of the many items in the 'van, became a major task. Time for a rethink.

Swapping to a much smaller campervan was the turning point, and thinning down my touring kit to the bare necessities proved positively cathartic.

Now, only the absolutely essential touring items are carried. Many are prepacked and always remain in the vehicle, making setting off for an impromptu weekend away a fast and stress-free affair. Quite simply, it transformed my touring life, making it so much easier and even more enjoyable. So what are the top tips for successful living in a small camper?

## Unpack and repack

The first task is to take stock of everything you have. Pick a dry, sunny day, then remove all of your kit and place it in bundles on the ground. This is something you want to do every year as part of your general

campervan spring clean. Although at first glance, it might seem rather a lot of faffing about, it really is a worthwhile task to see all of your camping gear laid out in front of you.

You'll immediately spot duplicates, out-of-date foodstuffs and obscure kitchen gadgets that you don't even remember buying, let alone using.

A great rule of thumb is that if you haven't used an item for more than a year, you should donate it to a charity shop or leave it at home. It really has no business being in your campervan.

Seeing all of your kit laid out in one go also gives you a good sense of volume and allows you to think about which items are essential and which are merely nice to have. But if something isn't going to add to your holiday experience, why is it there?







### Organised containers

If you're a fan of spreadsheets and geometry, you'll love getting your touring kit organised in containers. A selection of boxes is essential to keep your stuff together in one place and stop it sliding around while you're in transit. It also prevents smaller items from falling into crevices or jamming up tambour doors.

There are lots of containers on the market – The Range ([www.therange.co.uk](http://www.therange.co.uk)) is one of many good sources – and you can find them sized to fit every compartment in your vehicle.

You don't need to buy new, though: you could just upcycle plastic food storage containers, washing pod boxes, takeaway packaging or any other plastic boxes. Clear containers work best, however, because you can see their contents at a glance.

For frequently accessed items, it's better to go for trays, or simply leave the lid off the box – it can be a bit annoying to have to remove the whole box and lid to reach into it. It also means you'll need two hands to get your stuff, which isn't always convenient.

Another tip is to use non-slip matting on all shelves to keep your kit in place and reduce rattles – you can buy a roll large enough for all of a small side-kitchen campervan for under a tenner online.

### Things that fold up

If you're just starting out in a small camper, it's worth considering the bulk of every item you pack. While there are lots of space-saving devices out there, not all are worth carrying and some can be irritating.

For me, the latter includes compact folding barbecues – having to spend ages building a device before you can cook on it when you're hungry is a pain, and then you have to get rid of the coals, clean it and pack it away



each time you use it. A rigid barbecue will be so much easier to clean and is well worth the space sacrifice.

However, fold-up kitchen pots and pans are brilliant in campervans. I've had a folding kettle for years and this has been joined by a similar pan and washing-up bowl. I also prefer them to all-metal pans because you're less likely to burn yourself.

It's a very good idea to choose items to fit specific cupboards, too, so in the case of my mug cupboard, it holds four mugs, each of which houses a glass for maximum space saving. The mugs themselves are all sized to fit neatly under the coffee machine. Anything that doesn't fit into a cupboard needs to be swapped for a different-sized item, or replaced.

One of the best tips for space saving is to switch to microfibre towels, rather than the oversized fluffy things you use at home. Massive bath towels steal lots of cupboard space and when damp, take an age to dry out properly. Microfibre towels take up a fraction of ➔



- 5 This Thule pocket storage system, sold as a shoe rack, hangs off the seat headrest and is really handy
- 6 Every cupboard was overflowing before the clearout
- 7 Storage trays are a good way to keep your gear together
- 8 Check the dates on all foodstuffs you keep in the camper
- 9 An easy-to-clean diesel hob/heater, such as this Wallas XC Duo, means no need for a gas locker



# Experience **LIVING IN A CAMPERVAN**

**10** Dedicated cupboards for frequently used items like mugs and glasses make good use of space



**11** As well as a Ring RAC900 compressor and a 1/2-inch socket set, smaller tool sets are ideal for fixing habitation kit



**12** Collapsible items, such as this Outwell kettle, are ideal for lockers



**13** Trial sachets and miniatures are great for small storage spaces



**14** After clearing out clutter, there's loads more room and it's easier to find things, too

the space and dry rapidly – drape them over a door wing mirror on a sunny day and they'll be dry in under an hour. You do have to adopt a slightly different drying technique in the shower – they're more like a chamois leather for wet skin – but once you get used to them, they really do work brilliantly.

## Doubling up

Certain items, such as towels and toiletry bags, and some clothing, such as hats, gloves and coats, are worth duplicating and keeping permanently in your campervan. Shampoo, shower gel and toothpaste are not expensive and having two sets saves time when you are packing and unpacking.

Travel-size toiletries work really well in compact campervans. You can adopt the same plan for clothes cleaning, too, with sample and trial sizes of laundry soap and softener taking up minimal space.

Some people will pack an entire duplicate wardrobe in their vehicle and this can be a good idea, especially if you work during the week and want to make the most of your precious weekend. It's one less thing to think about and saves time.

## Tools to pack

The same goes for toolkits. It's well worth packing either a small set of essential tools (Lidl and Aldi do some cracking compact sets that are ideal), together with a selection of common consumables, such as fuses, electrical tape, self-amalgamating tape (for sealing leaks in plumbing or coolant hoses), gaffer tape and a range of cable ties.

Modern campervans are pretty reliable and it's rare that you need to fix the base vehicle (and that's what breakdown cover is for), so I tend to focus the toolkit



on fixing the habitation equipment. Things like loose hinges, blown fuses and misbehaving water pumps are the most common things you'll have to tackle.

For larger tasks, borrow tools from your campsite neighbours – there is always someone on the site with far more tools than you!

## Reassess your kit annually

With everything laid out on the ground, it's very easy to identify the less-used items in your campervan (typically, it's the stuff at the back...).

In our case, three inflatable settees were the least used things. These are quite difficult to inflate because you have to run around like a loon trying to get them to billow with air and then rapidly fold up the ends. They also blow away when it's windy.

For these reasons, they've only been used a handful of times. But on the plus side, they don't take up a lot of room, so they have a stay of execution – for now.





Removing all of your kit is also a good time to spring clean the vehicle and create more space, by binning accumulated rubbish, checking foodstuff sell-by dates and then repacking in a more organised way.

Tony Robinson and his Time Team would have had a field day excavating the strata of parking tickets that had built up in our driver's side door pocket!

### Bulk versus luxury

Some of the items that are taken away on tour come down to personal preferences. For example, the two luxuries in our campervan are our Duvalay mattress/bedding sets, and the Nespresso coffee machine.

The Duvalays are easily the two largest things in our 'van and they do take up lots of boot space. Although a sleeping bag is more space-efficient, we much prefer the Duvalays, because they are more like a domestic bedding set and are really comfortable to sleep on. So for us, they are an essential luxury.

Equally, we're caffeine addicts and having a proper fresh coffee from the Nespresso machine is a treat. Although the pods and the machine itself only take up minimal space, the NDS 1500W inverter needed to run it is rather bulky. But being able to enjoy freshly brewed coffee at any location is just brilliant.

### Summary

Buying yet more stuff is not the answer to kitting out your campervan. Packing the minimum amount of carefully selected items really is the key.

There was an advert on TV a while back, featuring Ewan McGregor, which ended with the line: "Do you think any of us will look back on life and regret the things we didn't buy? Or the places we didn't go?"

This is the whole point of campervan living. Don't worry if you don't have the 'correct' kit right now – you can always refine it as you go along – just get out there and start enjoying the world!

**15** This shower and bucket system from Colapz has a rinse-off head – perfect for cleaning muddy dogs or bikes!

**16** Before the big spring clean, the rear of the camper was looking a little crowded...

**17** ... but with a bit of a reshuffle, far more space has been freed up

**18** Elasticated pouches, perfect for attaching to the rear doors, fit simply with self-tappers

**19** Microfibre towels are a top tip – the one on the left is as large as the domestic towel, but takes up minimal space



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# SOLVE YOUR SANITATION RESERVATIONS

with Thetford's next level  
toilet separation systems





Every motorhome knows that the right toilet makes a world of difference to your touring experience. Whether you want to explore off-gridding or have that extra bit of comfort in your leisure vehicle, sorting your sanitation allows you to fully embrace the joy of being on the road.

Although the ever-popular cassette toilets use a fraction of the water and cleaning agents that domestic toilets do, new research has found that there is a dedicated user group seeking even more sustainable solutions. Emerging as the most appealing alternative are separation toilets, designed to divert liquids and solids for more efficient and environmentally friendly disposal, with no need for water or toilet chemicals.

**New Thetford innovations flush out the competition**

The outdoor enthusiasts at Thetford, the market leader of RV sanitation solutions, took inspiration from these findings and saw an opportunity to innovate. Already a trusted brand in the leisure industry, the pioneering company is striving to offer consumers a separation toilet that resolves the dissatisfaction with current opinions while bringing hygiene, convenience and sustainability to the forefront.

Data from MiiOS, an RV-specialised research agency, found that motorhome users ranked hygiene and convenience as the most important considerations for a commode, with sustainability following closely in third place. With 85% of leisure vehicle users actively using their toilets, it's not surprising that avid travellers think carefully about the best system for them.

**SK and S-Series: the smart, sustainable sanitation solution**

Never one to sit on their laurels, Thetford has responded to this gap in the market by introducing the **SK-series** and **S-series**, a separation kit and a separation toilet designed to be significantly more appealing than existing options on the market - at highly competitive prices.

The **SK-series** and **S-series** are based on Thetford's popular C220 and C260 S-versions and CS-versions. These models, without integrated water tanks, have over 2.5 million units installed in Europe. The **SK-series** offers an easy conversion from a traditional cassette toilet to a separation toilet, while the **S-series** is a complete separation toilet system that requires installation by Original Equipment Manufacturers or self-builders.



Thetford's Separation Kit with inner bowl, waste container and urine tank

**Key innovations of these new models include:**

- **Improved hygiene** There will be no visual contact with waste thanks to a blade cover, and bad odors can be eliminated using an optional active ventilator. Designed with patented leak-free connection to discharge the urine tank.
- **Enhanced convenience** The toilets do not use water or additives to function. They feature a level indicator for liquids, an ergonomically larger bowl, and an integrated manual valve that separates solids from liquids.
- **Flexibility** The toilets can be positioned in any 180° angle and the SK-series allows for adaptation.
- **Easy discharge experience** The SK-series comes with a 9L liquid tank, making the discharge process more convenient.

**A fresh take on toilets – easy to install, hard to beat!**

Thetford's SK-series is further distinguished by its complete replacement of the bowl, offering straightforward and hassle-free installation.

After listening to customer concerns of hygiene, convenience, and environmental impact, Thetford's new innovations address an evolving market and set a new standard for separation toilets.

Both models will be available in stores from October 2025, and there is more technical information to come. The units are priced extremely competitively, with the SK-series coming in at £725 for the conversion kit, while the S-series toilet system is priced at £1025.



Cross section of the Thetford separation toilet



Thetford's separation toilet based on the C220 and C260 cassette toilets

**THETFORD**



# Experience CASTLES, PALACES & STATELY HOMES

Embark on a journey through great British buildings, from the charm of Chatsworth House to the historic halls of Kensington Palace

Great Britain has a rich history and culture, which can be seen in the many iconic estates spread throughout its countries. These places offer a glimpse into the past, from towering castles to grand stately homes, and each one is an architectural marvel with a unique story to tell.

Whether you are a keen history buff or an architecture fan, or you simply love exploring new places, our curated list of the best examples will help you discover a wealth of treasures – and for each location, we reveal a fantastic campsite to stay at!

## Buckingham Palace

London, England

Arguably the most famous royal residence in the world, Buckingham Palace is a must-visit destination for anyone exploring London. Visitors can also watch the iconic Changing of the Guard ceremony – the formal handover between the soldiers on duty at the palace, known as the Old Guard, and the New Guard who relieve them.

Visit during the summer and you will be able to explore the State Rooms, including the Throne Room and the Ballroom, and feast your eyes on the exquisite art and furnishings.

Finally, step outside and admire the delights of Buckingham Palace Garden – the largest private garden in London – which is home to more than 1000 trees and the spectacular setting for various important royal events.

■ **Where to stay** Abbey Wood Club Campsite 📍 [caravanclub.co.uk](http://caravanclub.co.uk)  
Note this site is inside the London Ultra Low Emission Zone

Buckingham Palace is an iconic symbol of royalty



Shutterstock

Dating back to the 14th century, Glamis was largely restored during the 1600s



Getty

## Glamis Castle

Angus, Scotland

This glorious 14th-century castle, in the heart of Angus, was the childhood home of the Queen Mother and the birthplace of Princess Margaret. Known for its distinctive turrets, towers and sprawling gardens, Glamis Castle has been the ancestral seat of the Earls of Strathmore and Kinghorne since 1372.

Mary Queen of Scots visited in 1562 on her way north to quell a rebellion started by disenchanted Scottish Catholics.

To learn about the role of Glamis during more than 650 years of Scottish history, take a guided tour around its magnificent rooms, explore the superb family collections and check out the seasonal exhibitions.

When you step outside, you will be amazed by the vibrant flowers in the stunning Walled Garden, and colourful blooms in the tranquil Italian Garden.

If you're looking for adventure, take a walk on the Nature Trail and explore the woodlands surrounding the castle, or follow the Macbeth Trail, which showcases seven wooden sculptures inspired by Shakespeare's iconic play.

■ **Where to stay** Drumshademuir Caravan Park  
📍 [drumshademuir.com](http://drumshademuir.com)



Glorious Chatsworth is home to major collections of books, sculptures, paintings and more



Alamy

## Chatsworth House

Derbyshire, England

Chatsworth House, situated in Derbyshire's Peak District, is one of the most popular stately homes throughout Great Britain. The Grade I listed house has been owned by the Cavendish family for generations, and contains more than 30 rooms for visitors to explore. Among these are the opulent State Rooms, the Chapel, the Sculpture Gallery and the iconic Painted Hall, which greets guests at the beginning of their visit.

The gardens of Chatsworth, which cover an astonishing 105 acres, offer visitors more than five miles of walks, with numerous highlights such as the Cottage and Kitchen Gardens, the Maze and the Cascade – the latter being a spectacular water feature that is more than 300 years old. The house has also been used in several films and TV shows, including *Pride and Prejudice*.

■ **Where to stay** Chatsworth Park CAMC Site 📍 [caravanclub.co.uk](https://www.caravanclub.co.uk)

## Warwick Castle

Warwickshire, England

Standing proudly on the banks of the lovely River Avon, Warwick Castle boasts a rich heritage dating back to the reign of William the Conqueror, offering visitors more than 1000 years of history to explore.

The castle also has a variety of brilliant attractions to discover, making it the perfect destination for a family-friendly day out.

You can check out the Great Hall and State Rooms, the Time Tower, and the Horrible Histories Maze and playgrounds, and enjoy daily entertainment and live shows. These include the Castle Dungeon, Falconer's Quest (the largest bird of prey display in the UK), and free talks by expert historians.

■ **Where to stay** Warwick Racecourse CAMC Site 📍 [caravanclub.co.uk](https://www.caravanclub.co.uk)



Alamy

Warwick Castle was used as a stronghold until the 17th century

Magnificent Blenheim Palace was constructed between 1705 and 1722



Getty

## Blenheim Palace

Oxfordshire, England

Blenheim Palace is a superb example of English Baroque architecture, constructed in the early 18th century as a gift from Queen Anne and the nation for John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough, following his famous victory at the Battle of Blenheim in 1704.

Today, Blenheim Palace is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, offering numerous attractions where visitors can learn about its extraordinary history, as well as cultural events taking place throughout the year.

You can take a guided tour and explore the magnificent Long Library, which houses more than 10,000 books, or the State Rooms, which showcase an impressive collection of art.

Additionally, immerse yourself in the breathtaking landscaped park, designed by the renowned Capability Brown. Blenheim Palace is also the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill, and it has a Churchill Exhibition for visitors to learn more about the great man's life.

■ **Where to stay** Greenhill Leisure Park 📍 [greenhill-leisure-park.co.uk](https://www.greenhill-leisure-park.co.uk) ➔





Powis Castle is a fine Grade I listed building

Shutterstock

## Powis Castle

Welshpool, Wales

Powis Castle is a medieval fortress built in the 13th century and set in picturesque Welsh countryside. For more than 400 years, the castle was the seat of the Herbert family, who remodelled the property into a grand home. Visitors can explore the history of the castle by wandering through the State Rooms, which house a truly extraordinary collection of sculptures, paintings, furniture and more. The castle also features an Edwardian Formal Garden, perfect for a tranquil stroll. Additionally, Powis Castle is home to the Clive Museum, which comprises a vast collection of South and East Asian artefacts dating from around 1600 to the 1830s. These objects were amassed during the British colonisation of India.

**Where to stay** Rhyd-y-Groes Touring Park (over 25s)

**W** rhyd-y-groes.co.uk

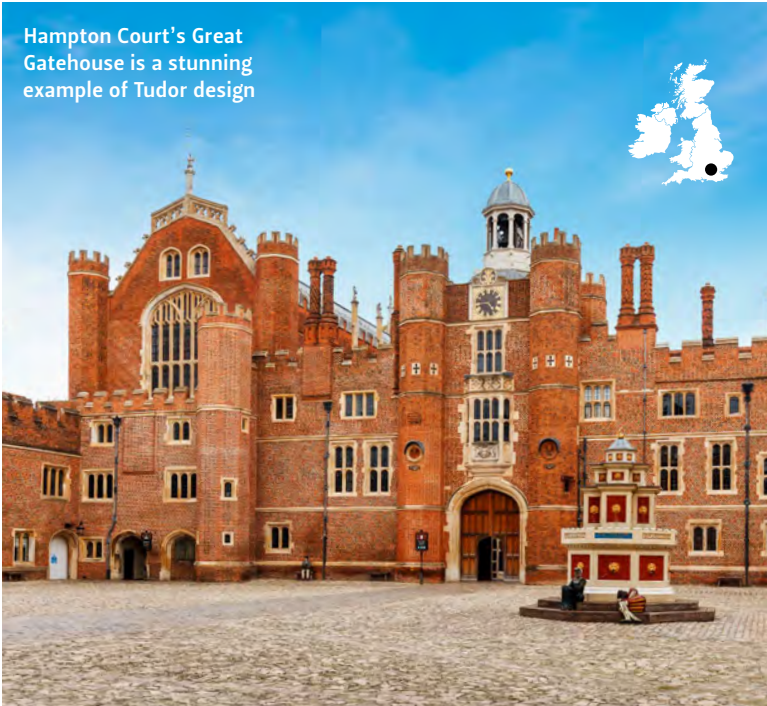
## Hampton Court Palace

Surrey, England

One of the most iconic historic houses in Britain, Hampton Court Palace is home to more than 500 years of British royal history. Originally built during the reign of Henry VIII, it was significantly rebuilt and expanded in the reign of William and Mary, so it encompasses Tudor and Baroque architecture. Step back in time and explore the history of the Tudor court with a visit to Henry VIII's kitchens, the Chapel Royal and the Great Hall, where you'll be able to catch a glimpse of Anne Boleyn's initials and coat of arms. Fancy learning more about the Stuart and Georgian royals who resided here? Take a walk by the Long Water, the fabulous garden canal that was commissioned by Charles II, and explore the beautiful Baroque gardens, as well as William III's splendid state apartments.

**Where to stay** Walton on Thames C&CC Site

**W** campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk



Hampton Court's Great Gatehouse is a stunning example of Tudor design

Shutterstock



Castle Howard's splendid grounds are Grade I listed

Getty

## Castle Howard

North Yorkshire, England

This magnificent 18th-century mansion is considered one of the finest in Britain, yet is not as well known in comparison to other places on this list. You might recognise it as a popular film location, featured in series such as *Death Comes to Pemberley*, *Victoria* and *Bridgerton*. Castle Howard offers guided tours for visitors who want to learn more about the house and its history, and has a regular programme of specialist tours, exhibitions and events. History aside, Castle Howard is arguably best known for its fine gardens, which cover 1000 acres and offer the chance to explore temples, woodland, statues and more. One of the many highlights is the breathtaking Atlas Fountain and pond, which was constructed in 1853 and is designated as a Grade I listed building in its own right. You can also take a trip along the estate's North Lake on the Castle Howard boat, *The Dame*, and spot some of the abundant local wildlife.

**Where to stay** Sheriff Hutton C&CC Site

**W** campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk



## Arundel Castle

West Sussex, England

Arundel Castle stands on a hill in West Sussex, with sweeping views of the surrounding countryside.

It is considered one of the most stunning castles in Great Britain and serves as the seat of the Duke of Norfolk. Built in the 11th century, the castle underwent major restoration in the 18th and 19th centuries, after sustaining damage during the English Civil War.

Despite the refurbishment work, visitors can still view some of the castle's original features, such as the medieval Gatehouse and the Norman Keep.

Venture up the stone steps and navigate the narrow passages, and you'll be rewarded with magnificent views of the land around the castle. Visitors can also explore the State Rooms, the Fitzalan Chapel and the Gardens.

■ **Where to stay** Littlehampton CAMC Site

📍 [caravanclub.co.uk](http://caravanclub.co.uk)

Shutterstock



Arundel Castle began life as a motte-and-bailey structure

The Palace of Holyroodhouse is used by the monarchy for engagements in Scotland



Getty

## Palace of Holyroodhouse

Edinburgh, Scotland

The Palace of Holyroodhouse lies at the end of Edinburgh's historic Royal Mile. It is the official residence of the British monarch in Scotland and is steeped in centuries of history. Visitors can explore the magnificent State Apartments, including the Throne Room, the Privy Chamber, and Mary Queen of Scots' Chambers. In the latter, you can see the intricately decorated Darnley Jewel, an opulent heart-shaped locket, on display.

In these chambers you will also be able to view the supper room where Mary was dining in March 1566, when she witnessed the brutal murder of her private secretary, David Rizzio, at the hands of her husband, Lord Darnley, and his band of supporters.

If the weather permits, go for a walk around the ruins of Holyrood Abbey and take in the remains of the Gothic windows and Romanesque arcading. Visitors can also roam around the beautiful landscaped gardens.

■ **Where to stay** Mortonhall Caravan & Camping Park

📍 [meadowhead.co.uk/parks/mortonhall](http://meadowhead.co.uk/parks/mortonhall)

## Kensington Palace

London, England

Kensington Palace, the birthplace and childhood home of Queen Victoria, is perhaps best known today as the official London residence of the Prince and Princess of Wales, as well as the former home of the late Diana, Princess of Wales.

Visitors to this splendid building can now explore the thoughtfully reimagined childhood rooms of Queen Victoria, as well as her jewellery in the Jewel Room, the palace's elegant State Apartments, the King's Staircase and the King's Gallery.

Kensington Palace also hosts various important exhibitions throughout the year, many of which offer a glimpse into the fascinating history of the palace and its former residents, all definitely worth a visit.

■ **Where to stay** Lee Valley Camping and Caravan Park

📍 [visitleevalley.org.uk/lee-valley-camping-and-caravan](http://visitleevalley.org.uk/lee-valley-camping-and-caravan)

Kensington Palace has been a royal residence since the 17th century



Alamy



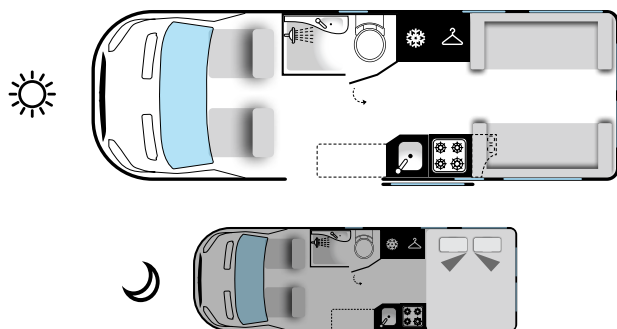
# Big test

## AUTO-SLEEPER M-STAR

This extraordinarily luxurious British-made two-berth campervan simply exudes class



- > **Price** From £125,250 > **Sleeps** 2 > **Belts** 2
- > **Base vehicle** Mercedes Sprinter > **Engine** 2.0-litre, 163bhp
- > **Length/width/height** 7.10/2.02/2.90m (23'3"/6'6"/9'5")
- > **MTPLM** 3880kg > **Payload** 455kg > **Water (fresh/waste)** 70/77 litres
- > **Leisure battery** 100Ah lithium > **Gas** 30-litre underslung tank



**Contact** Auto-Sleepers **Address** Orchard Works, Willersey, Nr Broadway, Worcestershire WR12 7QF **Tel** 01386 853 338 **Web** auto-sleepers.com

Auto-Sleepers has built a very strong reputation over the years for making luxurious, well-made motorhomes. But for the 2024 season the brand took a major step, releasing its most luxurious campervan ever – in fact, the most luxurious ever produced by a volume UK manufacturer. And it comes with a high-end price tag, too, at £125,250.

We took a prototype of the all-new M-Star away prior to the models hitting the production line.

How would we find the Mercedes Sprinter-based camper – would it live up to that substantial price tag?

### Exterior and cab

This is certainly a striking-looking motorhome – it cuts quite the stylish figure onsite with its dark-blue metallic paintwork (other colours are available). The Mercedes alloys look smart, too.

A Whale gas barbecue point is located on the nearside, towards the back.

Also on the nearside is the roll-out Thule Omnistor awning.

On the offside you'll find the toilet cassette locker – this location means you won't need to retrieve it through any awning. The electric hook-up point is also on this side of the 'van.

All the accommodation windows are flush-fit automotive-style, and tinted for additional privacy.

The accommodation door is on the UK nearside and there's a large electric step that slides out to help you enter.

Inside, the Mercedes cab looks fairly commercial vehicle, mainly owing to its grey colouring (1); but the smart Auto-Sleeper branding helps make the area feel more motorhome-like, and everything looks and feels high-quality.

The heated, swivelling leather seats are very comfortable, and the large touchscreen in the centre helps control the audio systems and is easy to use.

As you'd expect with a Mercedes base vehicle, there's a wealth of high-tech driving features, including Lane-keeping Assist, Active Brake Assist, Cruise Control and more. The production models also get an automatic gearbox.





## Lounging and dining



Lockers are cleverly shaped to allow for more headroom in the lounge

This two-berth motorhome has the very popular rear-lounge layout: it features two sofas in smart buttoned leather, although you can choose to have fabric furnishings if you'd prefer.

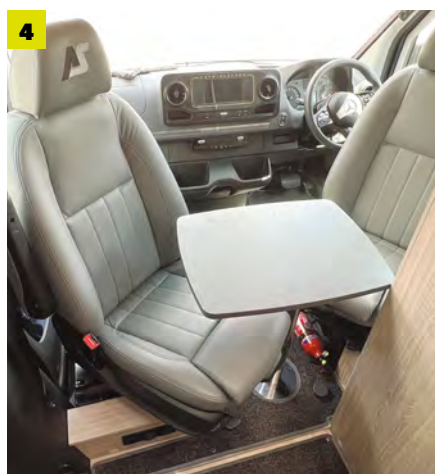
The sofas are very comfortable, with wide base cushions, and although the backrests are fairly thin, they are still supportive. The sofas also get a quartet of scatter cushions to make the lounge feel more stylish and homely (2).

The Mercedes Sprinter base vehicle is on the narrow side, at just 2.02m wide, and the large rear sofas feel fairly close together.

There's certainly enough room to squeeze through when one of you wants to leave the lounge, although you might end up bumping knees.

Our prototype model featured a fixing point for a small dining table, the top and leg for which are stowed in the wardrobe. It's not a huge table, but it should be large enough for two to dine.

The grey upholstery colour scheme and the fixed tinted windows do make it feel a touch dark inside here, but there's good illumination in the form of the Heki rooflight located up above, and this can also be opened.



LED spotlights feature in the ceiling, and attractive mood lighting runs across the top of the six overhead lockers in the lounge for evening ambience.

There are also four LED lights set on runners which, cleverly, can be moved along the rail to your ideal position (3).

Pleasingly, there are proper curtains on each of the windows – they look great and feature smart tie-backs.

There's a big window on either side, both with concertina blinds. There are also two windows in the rear doors, with concertina blinds.

By those rear doors are USB-A and USB-C sockets, ideal for charging up your phone; you could then store the phone in the smart pockets on the rear doors. There are further USB sockets at the front end of the sofas.

Want some fresh air? The side windows don't open, but it's easy to throw open the rear doors from inside, allowing in the great outdoors.

If you'd prefer, you can swivel the cab seats (the driver's seat will only partly turn) and add the second small, single-leg table (4), which will come in very handy if you want to keep the rear lounge seating made up as a bed. ➔



## Kitchen



At first glance, the kitchen looks fairly small, with not much in the way of work surface – but then you notice the pair of flaps (one at either end of the galley) that simply lift up to create a substantial working area (5).

When the door is open, the flap that's nearest to it does take up around half of the doorway space, but there's still plenty of room to get about, and the worktop is accessible from outside if you want to put down a drink.

The design of the rear flap includes a pair of circular cut-outs, so if you're working in the kitchen, you can pop a drink here with less chance of it being spilled onto the leather sofa.

When the flap is folded back up, the cut-outs fit perfectly around a USB socket, so you still have access to charge your phone, whether the flap is up or down.



Cooking-wise, it's really great to see a Thetford dual-fuel hob with three gas rings and an electric plate in a van conversion. Above that is a smart Dometic extractor fan with useful built-in lighting.

A full oven and separate grill – again, great to see in a camper – sits below.

The black-enamel sink is deep, with a slot-in draining board to save space. Both the hob and the sink are fitted with an elegant glass cover.

Just opposite the main kitchen is a 157-litre Dometic Series-10 two-way opening fridge with separate freezer unit (6), and located above that is a Dometic plate-free microwave – that means no more rattling glass plate to worry about when you're on the move.

Finally, there's a tinted window behind the galley unit that is also fitted with a concertina blind.



## Sleeping



This is a two-berth motorhome, so you can either have two single beds (they are 6'1" in length), or make up the sofas into a spacious double (7).

For the former, you simply need to remove the end bolster cushions, and the back rests too, if you want. This leaves a passageway down the centre of the beds for occupants to access the toilet at night if needed.

To make up the double bed, you just remove the backrests and bolster cushions, before flipping the base cushions around so the knee-roll sections are on the outer edges of the bed – you could also flip them over if you'd prefer.

Then simply pull across the slats and insert the backrest cushions in the middle; the result is a really good-sized and flat double bed.

## Washroom



The washroom is located on the offside, opposite the habitation door, with a small step up into it. It's not that big (8) and you might struggle to get dressed in here, but it's very well appointed.

A Thetford swivelling cassette toilet is on the right as you enter, and an Alde wet-central heating radiator is on the rear wall, to help keep the area warm.

Above that is a towel rail, and there's a transparent window by the toilet.

This large window is tinted, so you can't see in from outside, and it has a blind. Like other windows in this 'van, it doesn't open, so you'll need to be sure you're happy with that.

There's a toilet-roll holder to the left of the toilet, and handily, a built-in toilet brush just below that. Above the toilet is a small cupboard (9) with a pair of double

doors fitted with positive catches – it's not particularly large, but there should be room here for a few toiletries.

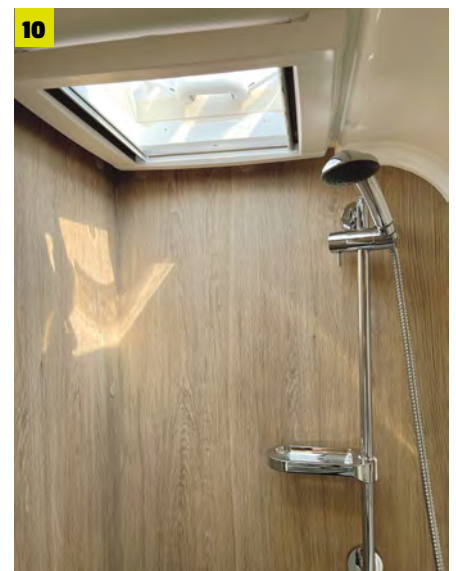
There's a small step down into the separate shower cubicle, which has one plughole and a bifold door, a good use of space in a fairly restricted area.

The oval handbasin is built into the shower cubicle – again, a clever use of space – but this does mean you'll need to step into the cubicle when brushing your teeth, risking damp feet.

Up above is a Heki rooflight (10) and pleasingly, because you don't always see this in washrooms, it has a blind.

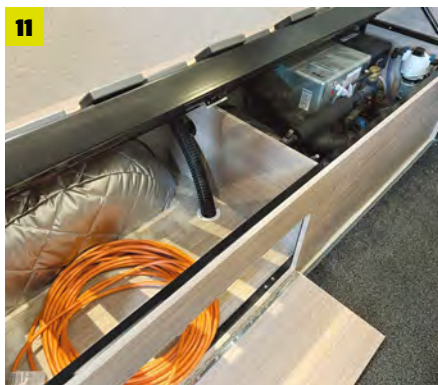
On the washroom roof are a couple of well-placed LED lights to provide useful illumination.

On the rear of the washroom door is a hook to hang a robe or towels. ➔





## Storage



The M-Star has an MTPLM of 3880kg, meaning that you'll need a C1 licence to drive it, but the pay-off for this is the generous 455kg payload.

The 'van has been designed to offer lots of storage space, to help you make the most of that payload, too.

For starters, both seat bases have access flaps to the underseat storage.

The seats on the offside have partial access (11) – the boiler takes up some of the underseat area – but there's more room on the nearside. You can also access the area by lifting the sofa bases, which are on gas struts.

Six lockers have been placed around the roof of the rear lounge (12), all with positive catches. None of them has a shelf, although one has a cutlery rack.

The kitchen, meanwhile, has plenty of storage space beneath the worktop.



Below the hob is what looks like a drawer, but is actually a small locker, and below that is a larger locker with a cutlery tray that slides out. There's also a pan locker underneath the oven.

Up above the kitchen there are two lockers, one of which has some rather smart dedicated storage for glasses and wine bottles. There should be plenty of space to store food for two here, even on a longer tour, but if you get stuck, you could always employ one of the lockers close by in the lounge.

You'll need to go easy on packing toiletries in the washroom, though: aside from the small cabinet, there's not a huge amount of space. You do get a soap dish on the shower-riser, however, and there's a toothbrush mug on the wall.

Located alongside the fridge is a three-quarter-height wardrobe, which



has a hanging rail. It's a good depth, and it's lit, too, so you can easily see right to the back when needed.

The pair of tabletops and their legs are both stored in here.

Above the wardrobe is a double-size overhead locker, which should also prove very useful for stowing away lighter items that you're carrying with you.

On the rear double doors, there's a pair of smart pockets (13), which are perfect for storing your keys, phones or books. Further down, cargo nets on the inside of the rear doors are handy for accommodating lighter items, such as hoses or toilet chemicals.

The M-Star's cab is also absolutely brilliant for storage space, with plenty of sensibly placed cubbyholes and drinks holders available for everything that you could possibly need on the road.

## Equipment

Such is the high level of kit that you'll find in the M-Star, there's simply not enough space to list everything here – this motorhome is just packed with gadgets galore.

For starters, though, there's the Truma roof-mounted air conditioning (14); this works in tandem with the Alde wet heating system (something that you would normally never see in campervans) to provide the luxury of full climate control.

There are also a whopping six radiators, plus two fan-assisted units, dotted around the interior of the vehicle.

Alde's Flow constant-hot-water system will help to make those morning showers even more enjoyable.

The touchscreen control panel is in the lounge; it looks smart and provides information and control for lighting, gas, ambient temperature and more.



Truma roof-mounted air-con comes as standard

Pleasingly, loose-lay carpets have been fitted throughout the interior, including in the washroom.

But have you been wondering where the Avtex Smart HD TV with soundbar is? It's tucked away in a dedicated space at the foot of the offside sofa, ready to drop down whenever you want it (15).



Elsewhere in this cleverly designed vehicle, there's a fixed LPG gas tank, a 110W solar panel, a 100Ah lithium leisure battery, onboard tanks for fresh- and waste-water, Remis blinds on all of the cab windows... and the list goes on.

Overall, this really is a supremely well-specified van conversion.



# The last word



## Highs

- Mercedes base vehicle
- Fantastic level of kit
- Lots of storage space
- Brilliantly clever kitchen design

## Lows

- Space feels limited in some areas, particularly between the two sofas
- Flush-fit windows can't be opened

## Buy if...

You're looking for a luxurious campervan that has the fantastic-to-drive Mercedes Sprinter as a base, and you want the comfort and practicality of a spacious rear lounge. You'll also appreciate this model if you don't want to trawl through endless options lists to find the kit you want, or think you might need – everything simply comes as standard in the Auto-Sleeper M-Star.

## Verdict

Yes, this is a very expensive campervan, and it will be beyond the reach of many. But somehow, it feels like very good value. That's because Auto-Sleepers has clearly thought about what its customers will want and added the highest level of kit as standard – there's nothing here that feels superfluous.

The base vehicle is on the narrower side, but that width really pays dividends on the road. All in all, this is a hugely impressive model and a worthy winner of our 2024 Best Luxury Campervan award.



## TECHNICAL DATA



### BASE VEHICLE

**Chassis** Mercedes Sprinter

**Engine** 2.0-litre, 163bhp

**Power** TBC **Torque** TBC

**Transmission** Nine-speed automatic

**Features include** Reversing camera, Crosswind Assist, electric-closing assist side sliding door, heated driver and passenger seat, Lane-keeping Assist, Hill-Start Assist, Active Brake Assist, Headlight Assistant, cruise control, digital DAB radio multimedia system with touchscreen, multifunction steering wheel, height- and rake-adjustable steering wheel, alloy wheels, heated and electrically adjustable wing mirrors, electric parking brake, cab air conditioning



### CONVERSION

Choice of exterior colours, Truma roof-mounted air-con, Thule awning, 30-litre onboard LPG tank, 110W solar panel, 100Ah lithium battery, three opening rooflights, electrically operated side step, 70-litre fresh-water tank, 77-litre waste-water tank, external barbecue point, fixed windows



### LOUNGING AND DINING

Leather upholstery (fabric option available), two individual tabletops with single legs, swivelling cab seats, LED ceiling lights, two 12V tracks with four adjustable LED spots, Alde central heating, integrated slide-out Avtex Smart HD TV and soundbar, five dual USB-A and USB-C outlets



### KITCHEN

Thetford oven with separate grill, three gas burners and electric plate, Dometic extractor fan with spotlights, Dometic 157-litre 10-series fridge with removable icebox, Dometic inbuilt-plate microwave, work surface extension flaps



### SLEEPING

Rear double: 1.86 x 1.64m, or rear singles: 1.86 x 0.68m



### EQUIPMENT INCLUDES

Alde central heating with six radiators plus two fan-assisted radiators, Alde Flow hot-water system, Sargent EC700 electrical system with integrated DX320 charging and solar panel regulator, Truma roof-mounted air-conditioning unit, 110W solar panel, 100Ah lithium battery

## OR YOU COULD TRY...



### RP REBEL RWD From £125,000

Mercedes-based van conversion with a rear lounge, and a side kitchen and washroom.



### WILDAX ALTAIR RL £99,995

MAN-TGE-based and with a front dinette and rear lounge, the Altair has an all-electric habitation area.



# Meet three of Europe's best ranges exclusively at Marquis this summer

The UK's largest motorhome dealer network has some of the greatest award-winning campervans ready for you to step inside during 2025

**W**here do you dream of going in your new campervan? For many, the allure of taking a thrilling road trip across Europe is simply too much to resist. From the diverse landscapes of France to the mountains of Scandinavia, our Continental cousins certainly know a thing about adventure.

And that applies to their campervans, too. European manufacturers offer that certain something in their models: the spirit of exciting travel with promise of fun far and wide.

But where can you find all this here in the UK? Simple – just take a look at the UK's largest motorhome dealer network, Marquis, for the answer. It's where you'll find three of Europe's most prestigious campervan ranges, all exclusively imported to our shores.



## **BENIVAN**

### **Adventure in style with Benimar**

For starters, take a look at the Benimar range of Benivan campervans. This Spanish brand produces great quality vehicles at a price that's right, and there are four fantastic models to choose from.

First is the **Benivan 144**. Despite having a practical length of less than six metres, it also manages to pack in a spacious fixed bed and a full-sized washroom. There's a dinette up front, too, so four people can travel and eat in comfort.

Or there's the **Benivan 161**. At the rear you'll find a pair of fixed single beds, which can also be turned into a double. Thanks to the Webasto diesel heating and solar panel, you'll be able to enjoy off-grid adventure all year round. Both of these models are available with a pop-up roof, too.





**Meet the amazing Mobilvetta Admiral**

Also at Marquis, you'll find Italian brand Mobilvetta, which is packed with style. Among its line-up is the **Admiral K6.3**, based on the 6.36m-long Fiat Ducato. With a specification including a pair of large single – or one double – beds, Truma Combi 4 heating, a solar panel, an awning and much more, no wonder *Practical Motorhome's* judges awarded it a Highly Commended in their most recent awards. They commented: "Mobilvetta's first ever campervan bears all the hallmarks you might have come to expect from the Italian brand that is well known for designing its A-class motorhomes like luxury yachts."



**Find panache with Spain's Panama**

Or how about the pair of models that feature all the Mediterranean flair of Panama? The **P12** – which has five seats, with the option of increasing to seven – has four berths, diesel-fuelled heating, a two-burner hob and sink, a 42 litre-capacity fridge/freezer and a whole host more features. Despite that, it's just 5.04m in length, so it's perfect to act as your daily drive. No wonder the P12 won *Practical Motorhome's* Best Campervan for Everyday Use trophy in its awards.

And for another award winner, check out the Panama **P57**. Incredibly, despite having a length of just 5.4m, it manages to pack in four berths, a great sized kitchen and even a dedicated washroom - it was a worthy winner of *Practical Motorhome's* Best Campervan for a Family of Four award.

So it's clear that, no matter where you're planning to enjoy your next adventure – whether it's across the Continent or here in the UK – Marquis has the perfect campervan for you.



To find out more about Marquis and the Benimar, Mobilvetta and Panama campervan ranges, simply visit the website.

- [www.marquisleisure.co.uk/benimar/benivan](http://www.marquisleisure.co.uk/benimar/benivan)
- [www.marquisleisure.co.uk/mobilvetta/admiral](http://www.marquisleisure.co.uk/mobilvetta/admiral)
- [www.marquisleisure.co.uk/panama/panama](http://www.marquisleisure.co.uk/panama/panama)



The UK's Largest Dealer Network



# ME AND MY 'VANS

Our expert  
**Nick Harding** has  
campervan genes.  
Here's his story, and  
his buying advice



Unlike Oscar Wilde's advice when asked about marriage ("Don't."), mine couldn't be clearer when it comes to whether to take the plunge and buy yourself a campervan. Do.

I can't really begin to explain the many joys of owning a campervan, even though that was the brief for this article. But here goes, anyway...

## Early days

I blame my parents. One early memory is of a green VW campervan. Later on came a Toyota Hiace conversion from Danbury, which was so basic by today's standards (lots of plywood rear seating, with a two-burner hob and an inset washing-up bowl inside the tailgate).

However, it did have a radio – and my Dad put in an additional speaker for those of us sitting in the back (three brothers, one golden retriever).

This was also the first road-going vehicle that I ever drove (across a field).

By the time I reached my late 20s, living and working in London, I had saved up

enough to buy my first campervan: a 1970 bay-window T2 conversion that was very much a DIY vehicle.

A memory now, and I went through the usual tribulations that ownership of such vehicles brings – replacement engine, rust and so on. But I also had some fantastic holidays, including touring in Ireland.

These days, I've reviewed hundreds, possibly thousands, of motorhomes over a journalism career that's now going into its fourth decade.

Plenty of vehicles have impressed me over that time, but there was really only ever one that was absolutely right for me – the Volkswagen California.

Only thing was, I thought I would never be able to afford one. So, what did I do? I bought a Toyota Granvia, imported from Japan and given a new camper conversion by Wellhouse Leisure.

It was just £16,000, and I could have paid double that price and not got as good a vehicle. The specification included air conditioning, electric door mirrors with retracting function, front and rear parking

sensors, metallic paint, alloy wheels, rear automotive heating, solar panel, DAB stereo, towbar with electrics, underseal, Webasto heater, rear tinted windows, CAT 1 immobiliser and alarm system – you get the picture.

That was back in 2011, and I was in campervan heaven. But I was brought back down to earth with a bump by my then 12-year-old daughter's comment: "It's good, Dad. But it's not a VW..."



Early days! Nick (chasing the football) and family on holiday in their green camper



# Experience



Nick took his California back to the factory in Germany where it was manufactured

## California was The One

I will never forget the day I drove it home. Less than two miles down the road and a massive smile was on my face.

I'd just shelled out a significant amount of my savings to become the third owner of a four-year-old Volkswagen California SE, in perfect (as far as I could see) order, with some lovely options. Window ticket was some £42,000, but I'd been given a favourable price for the Granvia.



Nick's previous campervan, a Toyota Granvia imported from Japan, was converted by Wellhouse Leisure in 2011

I bought from VW Campersales (now Campersales) in East Sussex. Owners Rob and Zoe Williams and their team really know their stuff, especially when it comes to the Californias.

Their excellent, informative handover confirmed it all, too. I'd bought the right product from the right people.

But why a California? This is the only campervan built by Volkswagen. And the only one built to car standards. It holds its value very well, too.

Feel free to read elsewhere about the California's electric elevating-roof, the sliding rear seat and its unique action for folding into a bed, the table on its sliding rail, the outdoor table and chairs, and a great deal more.

Someone far better with words than I am has described it as the "Swiss Army knife of campervans". Exactly.

## Added extras

I always maintain that one of the big advantages of buying nearly-new (as opposed to new) is that previous

owners will usually have added some handy extras to the vehicle.

Examples here are the towbar (I've yet to use it), bike rack, awning and heavy-duty seat covers. That's on top of some serious VW upgrades, including the 180PS engine and DSG automatic gearbox.

All I've added are exterior thermal night-time covers for the cab windows (I was never impressed by VW's cloth interior fittings), and non-slip matting for the locker shelves.

## Flexibility

The California is very easy to park (I live on a street oversubscribed with parking permits). It edges just over 30mpg. I don't feel I drive it particularly hard, but there you go – others claim far better. Mid-30s seems to be the norm.

## A factory tour

In 2017, I was lucky enough to visit the Volkswagen California factory in Hanover. It has the capacity to make as many as 70 Californias per day, and that year, ➤



churned out some 12,000 models (the UK is the fifth biggest market for the California, with about 10% of the total production coming over here).

Among the many things I learnt while I was there is that the furniture unit they produce weighs about 60kg, which they reckon is around 40kg less than “traditional wood” fixtures.

For the same strength of furniture using traditional materials, Volkswagen reckons that the unit would need to be 90mm thick.

I’ve been around plenty of other motorhome and campervan production facilities. Nothing else comes close.

### Buying an awning

A drive-away awning will be a serious proposition if you’re thinking about owning a campervan.

Think of this as the easiest way to double your living and sleeping space on-site, at the very minimum, as well as providing additional protection from the vagaries of the weather.

Over the years, I have also reviewed a number of awnings. I have an Outwell Milestone Pace Air (although that’s because I don’t need a bedroom) which, despite a rail on my wind-out awning, doesn’t attach directly to the vehicle (making it much easier for driving away).

### My touring highlights

You really can go pretty much anywhere in a campervan, but here’s a quick list of my touring highlights.

All of Scotland (but I have a particular fondness for the islands off the west coast, especially the Outer Hebrides); all manner of weekends away; the Bulli Festival in Germany (Bulli is the pet name for the



VW Transporter over there – about 1000 of them gathered together for the festival experience and I turned out to be the only British-registered vehicle on site).

And then there are the wonderful music events. Which dedicated camper owners don’t take off for weekends camping at music festivals?

Not tried it? You should. I’ve done more than my share, but Wychwood – held at Cheltenham Racecourse in late May/early June – is one that I keep going back to.

A quick call-out for Pembrokeshire, too, as being particularly dog-friendly. We went there twice last year.

My dog, Bonnie, sleeps on the swivelled cab passenger seat (this is her usual travel location, too, clipped in to the seatbelt buckle). I switch between the roof bed and downstairs.

### The downsides

Yes, there are downsides. There will be times when you wish you just had a car. Not many. Only occasionally.

As far as the California is concerned, this is pretty much a one-size-fits-all product, albeit with a long list of appealing optional extras to choose from.

For fun, go to the California section at [www.volkswagen-vans.co.uk](http://www.volkswagen-vans.co.uk) and list a spec for the vehicle of your dreams.

Corrosion of the aluminium roof is a common problem – bubbling paintwork on the front leading edge can be the first sign of this issue.

VW Van Centres will do a superbly professional job servicing and repairing your California – but their theme seems to be to bring your vehicle back to peak perfection. You pay the price.

## So, you want to buy yourself a campervan?

**1 Ask yourself why** Do you really want to buy a campervan? What are you going to use it for? I still reason that a camper is a totally different proposition to a coachbuilt motorhome. The former is more suited to daily driving and occasional (but as regular as you want) camping; the latter is better suited to long-term touring and spending more time in.

**2 Do your research** The camper market is disparate, to say the least. You could supply your own vehicle to a company for conversion to your specifics, or buy

something more mainstream. There are plenty of good folk out there, but just a few wrong’uns to watch out for, too. And, well, it’s your hard-earned cash.

**3 Seek out the experts** This point really goes hand-in-hand with carrying out your detailed research.

Any sensible advice should be most welcome, but it’s up to you to weed out the ‘bloggers’ from those who actually know what they’re talking about – and this is going to include sales folk, passing acquaintances, friends and family.

**4 Check for approvals** Whether it’s NCC, Type Approval or more. Check out the background of any converter that you’re dealing with, too – does it have ISO 9001 certification for its manufacturing processes? Can it claim any specific links with the base vehicles it converts? Indeed, can it boast of any *Practical Motorhome* Owner Satisfaction accolades?

**5 Brand values** Familiarise yourself with the mainstream converters’ names and reputations, then the key points about their specific models. But also, in any



# Experience ME AND MY CAMPERVAN

2



1 Nick being interviewed during the Bulli Festival in Germany

2 A drive-away type awning is definitely an item worth having

3 Hindermann thermal screens for the Cali's cab windows were a must-have purchase

4 Outdoor chairs are stowed away in the 'van's tailgate – so neat

5 It came fitted with a towbar, although Nick has yet to use it

6 The last two letters in red on the TDI badge denote that this is the 180PS engine

3



Oh, and last but not least, I do find that a few Volkswagen California owners can be just a bit snobbish about their 'van, compared to other VW-based campers.

I merely consider myself lucky enough to a) have been in a position to afford a Volkswagen California, and b) to be able to make the most of it all.

4



5



6



## Here's my 10-point plan to help make your campervan purchase experience a happy one

conversion, look for proven products in terms of the roof, rear seat furniture and kitchen facilities. Too many brands to list here, but you'll soon get the picture.

Note, too, that there are differences from manufacturer to manufacturer in terms of how key fittings are made – I'm thinking about seating, roofing, cutting holes to add windows, and so on.

**6 Take a test drive** Despite what anyone might want to tell you, there's a world of difference between a car and a campervan when it comes to the driving experience.

Call me biased, but I do prefer the latter. I'm not in a hurry, I prefer the views out from the higher seating position, and more importantly, I actually feel safer.

**7 Consider hiring** If you've never tried a campervan before, count yourself very lucky if you have friends who are prepared to let you have a go in theirs. Alternatively, there's a good number of hire companies specialising in campervans these days.

**8 Get the best deal** Note that 'best deal' does not necessarily mean the lowest

purchase price. You also need to think about the aftersales service you're going to get. In addition, it's wise to acquire as much background information as possible on servicing records, and so on.

**9 Don't expect perfection** Life's not like that. Neither is owning a campervan (although it can come pretty close).

**10 Just go for it** Sometimes in life, your heart can rule your head. With a positive outcome. This could well be one of those times to trust your instincts.



# PILOTE PANEL VANS: packed full of possibilities

**Flexible and customisable campervans will be your perfect touring companion, no matter when and where you choose to travel**

Everyone has different wants and needs when it comes to choosing a campervan — what suits one buyer perfectly will be much further down the priority list for someone else. Some people want a large amount of storage, while others prefer a kit-packed kitchen.

That's why Pilote has focused on every possibility in its 2025 range of van conversion campers. With seven **Vega** models to choose from, there are almost 60 options available, giving you the opportunity to specify your perfect vehicle.

## Compact and comfortable

If you're looking for a compact, sub-6m model, check out the **V540G**. Despite having a body length of just 5.4m, it still packs in a spacious lounge for four, a comfortable double bed and a good-sized washroom, too.

Moving up in size, there are three models coming in at six metres in length. The **V600S** is the ideal family van, featuring double bunks at the back, while the two-berth **V600J** is perfect for couples, thanks to its rear twin single beds. Then there's the **V600G**: its transverse rear double bed is perfect for falling into at the end of a busy day exploring.

## Options for everyone

If you'd rather have a longer, 6.36m campervan, Pilote has you covered here, too. The modular twin beds of the **V630J** offer not just a great

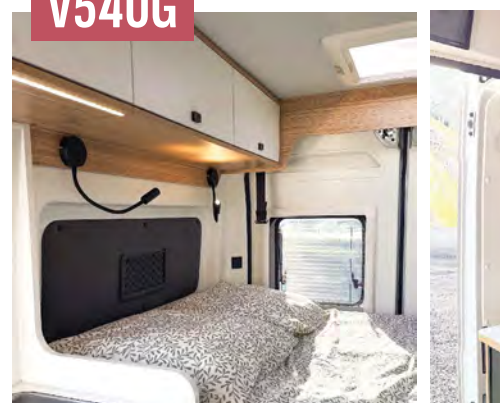
night's sleep, but also lots of space beneath to store your kit; the **V630LG**, meanwhile, has roomy, comfortable twin singles. The **V633M** — which is the tallest model in the range — features an electrically operated drop-down bed for the ultimate in sleeping comfort.

No matter which Vega model you go for, you'll be able to choose from almost 60 options to make your campervan perfect for you. From awnings to bike racks, smart TVs to different bodywork colours, it's all there ready and waiting for you to create your ideal van.

## All-year adventures

Alternatively, if you'd rather leave the kit choice to the experts at Pilote, you can do that, too. Three models — the **V540G**, **V600G** and **V630J** — all come in **Évidence** specification; these feature the most popular options already fitted, so all you need to do is choose which of the three layouts you'd prefer. It's as simple as that.

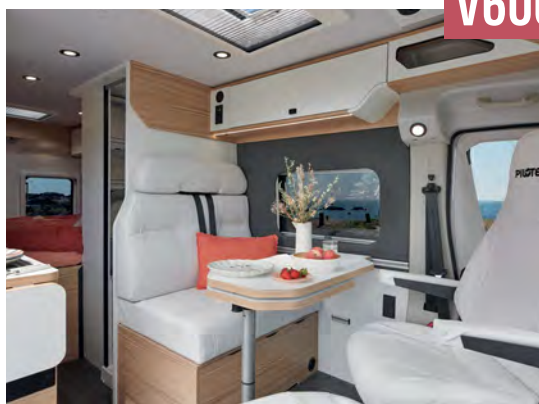
Whether you go for a standard Vega campervan or an **Évidence**, you'll still benefit from Pilote's high standards of built quality and attention to detail. The Vega range is Class 3 certified for insulation quality, and every panel van is closely inspected for any potential leak points. All of which means you can tour year-round in comfort, safe in the knowledge that your Pilote panel van conversion will be a reliable companion for many years and tours to come.



■ [www.pilote-motorhome.uk/panelvans/](http://www.pilote-motorhome.uk/panelvans/)

■ [www.facebook.com/piloteuk/](https://www.facebook.com/piloteuk/)





V600G

**PILOTE**



# Know how... CONVERTING YOUR OWN CAMPER

Converting a van is an ambition many of us would like to realise, and we met three couples who turned their dreams into reality

## European adventurers

In 2019, Keira and Richard Reid realised a long-held ambition to sell up, quit their jobs (marketing and forestry, respectively), buy themselves a motorhome and go touring in Europe. At the time, they were living in south-west Scotland with their children – Piper, aged three, and Jack, aged one – and dog Charlie.

“We knew we wanted to move out of the area,” says Keira. “And we thought, if we are going to be moving, why not do the trip now and then decide where we want to move to when we return?”

And that’s exactly what the family did. They bought a seven-berth Rimor Seal 9 and ended up spending five months working their way north to Norway and then all the way south to Gibraltar.

The 2016 Rimor had everything that they needed, including bunks at the back and an overcab bed at the front, and at 7m long, provided them with plenty of space – perfect for an extended trip to Europe.

“The bunk bed layout suited us to a tee,” says Keira. “We wanted the children to have their own space, so during the day we had their toy boxes at the end of their beds and it was a place for them to play, and then they could nap, and sleep there at night.”

Their route took them across to Calais by ferry, up to Belgium, then to Germany and Denmark, where they took a ferry to Sweden and then into Norway. They drove to Nordkapp, on Norway’s northern tip,



before travelling south through Finland, Sweden, Germany and Switzerland. They briefly visited Italy before returning to France, then headed into Spain and Gibraltar, before returning to the UK via France. And what was their favourite part of the tour?

“Norway, hands down,” says Keira. “Breathtaking scenery around every corner. Scandinavia made the trip for us – if we’d just gone south or to Germany, Italy and Spain, it wouldn’t have been the same.”

“I recommend anyone doing a similar trip not to overlook the Northern European countries. Germany’s Black Forest was also amazing, with really wonderful viewpoints and walks.”

The family returned to the UK feeling re-energised and with an enthusiasm for travel.

## Norwegian Good!

Keira’s three top spots in Norway

- Geirangerfjord fjord
- Steinsdalsfossen waterfall
- Trollstigen, part of the Norwegian Scenic Route – this drive through the mountains has around 10 hairpins, quite a challenge in a motorhome!



1 Richard and Keira bought a 2016 Citroën Relay, formerly used as a builder’s van...

2 ... and transformed it into a bespoke family-friendly campervan





"We learned to appreciate life and the time we have, and our surroundings, too. Before that trip, we weren't particularly interested in travel and experiencing new things," says Keira, "but doing the journey made us realise there's so much out there to enjoy."

On their return, the couple sold the Rimor. In 2020, they had another baby (Teddy), but their appetite for adventure was undiminished. A few months later, they took on their next project – converting a 2016 Citroën Relay into a campervan.

They stripped out the Relay, formerly a builder's van, and completely renovated it, which included adding a dining area that converts into a double bed, with bunk beds overhead that pull out at night and then fold back during the day.

The conversion now has family-friendly features, such as an integrated Monopoly board, which was made with resin and embedded into the table. There's a chalkboard on the outside,

which folds down into a children's table so they can sit outside the 'van, and a swing for Teddy just outside the door. The camper also has a kitchen with a fridge and a two-burner hob, a gas heater, water tanks and a Thetford toilet.

Keira says: "We were self-taught and Richard should take credit for most of the work. There's a wealth of knowledge available from YouTube and online – it was a very good lockdown project. But we were careful not to be too heavy on materials or overhead cupboards, so we could keep the weight safely down."

The family plans to get out in the 'van as much as possible, with plenty of weekend trips planned, rather than one long journey.

And Keira's essential advice for families who might be planning to go on similar adventures?

"Don't overthink or overcomplicate things – it's not that difficult to do and, while it's a good idea to carry out some research, you really don't need to have a comprehensive plan detailing everywhere you are going to visit and everything you aim to see. Just go with the flow."

■ Since this article was first written, Keira and Richard have changed converted vehicle again! You can find out more about the Reid family's adventures at [touringwiththekids.com](https://touringwiththekids.com); Instagram: [@touringwiththekids](https://www.instagram.com/touringwiththekids) ➔



3 Keira and Richard and children Piper, Teddy and Jack (l to r) on their travels

4 Converting the Citroën allowed the Reids to add clever design touches, such as a Monopoly board built into the table

5 The exterior décor really says it all!



## Know how... CAMPER CONVERSION

**6** The 16-seater 2008 Renault Master minibus became a bespoke campervan

**7** They adapted the original layout several times as the conversion work progressed

**8** A large garage was underneath, where the heater and gas bottles were stored

**9** Carl bought 600mm-wide kitchen units, then modified them to fit

**10** Turning the two captain's chairs provided a cosy living room area



### Building a bus

For Norfolk-based Jemma Baker and Carl Partridge, the pandemic lockdown proved the perfect time to take on a van conversion project.

The pair jumped at the chance to buy a 16-seater 2008 Renault Master minibus, which looked like an ideal candidate for conversion. Carl, a builder by trade, was keen to do the work himself.

Jemma said: "It's something that Carl had always wanted to do and he's pretty handy. We bought it in August 2021 and gave ourselves until March 2022 to get it done, but Mr 'I Can't Wait' spent every spare hour working on it and was done by Christmas!"

Other than the front seats, the vehicle was empty when they bought it, so it needed to be completely fitted out. The couple designed the layout themselves, and that original design, which was largely in Carl's head, went through a number of incarnations as they debated where to position fixtures and fittings, and whether or not to include a shower or a toilet. Ultimately they elected to have both.

Carl said: "We put in a bed, shower, sink, cooking facilities and two captain's chairs, which could rotate into the living room area. The 'van also got a diesel heater. We bought some suitable kitchen units that were 600mm wide, and I cut them down to 400mm and modified them to fit the space."

The couple's three cockapoos – Rosie and her two

pups, Bella and Bertie – got their own area, along with seatbelts to keep them safe and secure on the road. A garage was placed underneath, where the heater and gas bottles were stored. Below the unit a dog shower was fitted, and the 'van was also customised for off-grid use with solar panels and on-board storage tanks.

"We've got a 100-litre water tank, and 200W solar panels on the roof, so we can stay off-grid," said Carl. "We can also charge off the battery and we can plug in on site. We can use on-site water, too."

For anyone thinking of taking on a similar project, Carl advised: "Make sure you get enough solar panels – one won't always be enough to charge the batteries. I'd suggest something between 200 and 300W."

While the finished vehicle remained largely functional, Jemma freshened up the interior with a smart yellow and grey colour scheme, and the final list of fittings included lots of other features – a double bed, shower, sink, diesel heater, gas hob, fridge, dining area, TV, solar panels, water tank, storage, wardrobe, awning and toilet. In other words, everything you could need on the road!

And what would their advice be for any other prospective DIY campervan converters?

"Just do it," said Jemma. "Carl spent years wanting to – if you're in a position to do it, then do it! It's been amazing watching it all come together."



# Time for a change

Back in 2018, when Essex-based Oli and Emily Arnold decided to take on a van conversion project so they could tour Europe, little did they know that they had started on a journey that would result in new careers and a brand-new business for both of them.

At the time, Oli had been looking at a change from his career in the military, and a friend who was taking on a similar project recommended a van conversion.

Emily says: “When he left the Forces, Oli had some resettlement time and in that time, he built us a ‘van. We took it through France and Italy and back through Switzerland, and it was amazing. We realised there was this whole world of people travelling and living in ‘vans that we had no idea about – and it opened up a freedom we weren’t aware of before.”

Highlights included a stay at Lake Como, in Italy. “There was a piece of land that was like a spit, jutting out into the lake, where we parked for the night with water on both sides – it was amazing.”

The vehicle in question was a Citroën Relay, which they converted and named Archie. Having already taken some courses in construction and electrics on leaving the military, Oli fitted out the ‘van with a solar panel, a shower room, heating, hot water, an oven, a fixed bed and a large garage below.

“Oli really enjoyed the project side of it,” says Emily. “And while we were travelling, we decided to set up an Instagram account and started posting about what we were doing and where we were going.”

Those posts ultimately led to the genesis of the couple’s new business venture, because they were approached to do van conversions for other people.

Initially, this was for a distant friend of Oli’s family, and then they received an approach directly through Instagram. Emily left her career in medicine to join Oli in the business and the couple started Vanlife Conversions in July 2019.

The company specialises in creating premium contemporary van conversions. Oli is responsible for the builds, while Emily liaises with customers and heads up the marketing, admin and business operations.

Emily says: “We specialise in large panel vans that we turn into large campervans. They are high-spec, off-grid, and all with showers, hot water boilers and solar panels.”

Each conversion takes about three months and has handmade, bespoke features. Customers can select their layout and have a choice of wood finishes and colour schemes.

And what does the future hold for the couple? “A few of our customers are planning to ship their ‘vans to America, and I’d love to do that one day,” says Emily.

“We feel lucky to be part of the #vanlife community – people want to help each other, there’s so much information out there and a lot of festivals – it’s nice to be part of a group of likeminded people.”

■ You can learn more about Vanlife Conversions by visiting [vanlifeconversions.co.uk](https://vanlifeconversions.co.uk)



11 The shower room is one of the many upmarket features in Vanlife floorplans

12 In a camper, you can get as close to the natural world as you could wish



13 A fixed bed over a large garage is a key part of the van conversion

14 Kitchens are designed to make the most of the space available

### Safety first

If you’re considering converting your own camper, you should research your options carefully, to ensure that you remain within safety guidelines and legislation. All gas and major electrical work must be carried out by a competent, qualified engineer. If you’re in any doubt, seek professional advice before proceeding.



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**Duration**  
Two nights

**When**  
May 2023

**Why** Exploring  
a scenic Peak  
District trail  
on two wheels

# PEDALLING THE TISSINGTON TRAIL

No need for Lycra or burning lungs, when there's  
a much easier way to explore this pretty part  
of Derbyshire, as Peter Rosenthal discovers



**1** The Duke of York  
campsite offers  
great views and  
the pub serves  
excellent food  
and drink

**2** Peter and Helen  
enjoyed the round  
trip to Ashbourne  
and back

**1**



**C**onfession time. I am a member of a local cycling club and have done all sorts of daft challenges. These have ranged from cycling coast to coast – on-road covering 113 miles in a day and a 250-mile off-road route over four days – as well as trips around the Scottish islands pedalling over the lumpier bits.

However, none of these events has been very relaxing and they usually also involve a back-up vehicle, loads of logistics, several helpers, trailers and secure garages. Oh, and bananas. Lots of bananas.

The thing is, on all of these events, you rarely get the time to actually enjoy the ride, because you're focused on getting to the next checkpoint without losing a lung. It's a challenge, rather than fun.

For a family weekend away, that's the last thing you want. I would much rather chill out, enjoy the scenery and sample some great food and drink.

### Take it easy on an ebike

The good news is, there's now an easy way that you can breeze along a cycle trail without having to load up your bike, mess about with pumps and chains, then worry if your stuff is going to be stolen from the rack when you stop off at services.

The simple solution is to hire a bike on your chosen cycle trail and sidestep the misery of burning legs and lungs, by opting for an electric bike rather than a conventional model. Ebikes take all of the effort out of cycling and allow you to balance cyclists' different

abilities by varying the pedal assistance. You'll generally find a cycling shop located near most of the popular UK cycling routes and the bikes are not that expensive to hire (you will need to leave a deposit on your credit card and provide proofs of your home address, such as a driving licence or passport).

The only point to note is that it's usually best not to mix a group of cyclists with electric and conventional bikes. This never works well and is a guaranteed recipe for friction – non-electric riders invariably get grumpy as you steam past them up the hills! So it's better to stick to all electric or nobody on electric.

### The Tissington Trail

Dr Beeching deserves credit for creating lots of amazing cycling routes by axing so many local railways (although of course, that wasn't his intention) and the Tissington Trail is a great example of how a repurposed former railway track can become a first-rate cycling route.

It used to be the Buxton to Ashbourne railway line, which closed in 1967, and it starts in the pretty town of Ashbourne, then gradually carves its way through the splendid Derbyshire hills, before joining the National Route 54 cycling trail at Parsley Hay. This runs to the outskirts of Buxton before stopping near Dowlow Quarry. Interestingly, the quarry still uses one section of the original railway line to shift limestone.

You can hire bikes from various shops directly along the route and there are lots of campsites fringing the ➔





# Experience **DERBYSHIRE**

trail, as well as plenty of tea shops, pubs and charming villages. The area is very much geared up for cycling and walking, making for an easy, laid-back weekend.

You don't really need to pack anything but clothing. Ashbourne has a great choice of supermarkets, too, with all budgets and tastes well catered for.

## Hiring your bicycles

There are two bike hire centres on the trail – one at Ashbourne and another halfway up the trail in Parsley Hay. Both have car parks next to them, so you can leave your motorhome there while you go off for a pedal.

We opted to use the bike hire centre at Ashbourne, because it seemed more logical to start at one end of the trail and then pedal the whole thing.

The car park there, which takes cash, not cards, cost £4.75 to park all day, and there were no height barriers to bother about.

The good news about this particular cycle hire centre is that you can't pre-book the bikes, you just turn up early and take your pick.

This was music to my ears, because it means the Organised People can't ruin it all for the

and was very soon really enjoying the brilliantly effort-free assistance that they provide.

The bikes we hired were Raleigh Motus ebikes. Helen's was a blue one with an easy step-through frame, while I chose a grey one. They retail for around £2000, so hiring makes more sense for infrequent rides. Both use the Bosch crank motor, which adds extra effort to your pedal input.

Modern motors have very little drag compared to earlier versions of the ebikes and you can easily pedal them with the motor switched off. But with around 50 miles of range, there was little danger of running out of power on the 13-mile trail.

A digital display mounted on the handlebars allows you to toggle through the bike's various power modes, ranging from Eco (low assistance), via Tour and Sport to Turbo (maximum assistance). The trick to maximising

the range is to flick up and down the power modes and only use the higher modes

for short durations, such as going up a steep hill. Given that the Tissington Trail was designed for locomotives, it doesn't really have much in the way of gradients, but if you detour off for a pub or a tourist spot, Turbo mode takes all of the effort out of any steep sections.

Both bikes rode really well, allowing us to settle into a comfortable pedalling pace without having to break into a sweat.

I found that the Eco mode was fine for me, while Helen toggled between Eco and Tour.

This is one of the brilliant things about ebikes for a group of mixed cycling abilities – you can all easily average the same speed, simply by using the power assistance at varying rates.

## Tissington village

Heading out of Ashbourne, you pass the campsite of Callow Top on your left and within 3.5 miles, you'll find yourself at a car park by a bridge in Tissington village. There's a snack bar here (open seasonally) and toilets.

Head out of the car park and up the small hill, turn left when you meet the road and you'll pedal into the delightful village of Tissington. This historic hamlet offers plenty of interesting craft shops – including the rather wonderfully named 'On a Wick & a Prayer' candle shop – but the star attraction of the whole area has to be Tissington Hall.



Disorganised People by booking up everything the year before (rather like they seem to do with campsites...).

Simply arrive at the centre when it opens and you will have just as much chance of getting what you want. They have loads of ebikes to choose from, too, so it is highly unlikely that they'll run out.

## Ebikes make things easy

After sorting out the paperwork with the helpful chap behind the counter (whose colleagues asked me to make sure to point out his close similarity to a certain bearded member of rock band ZZ Top!), we were shown to our chosen steeds for the day.

We were given a really good handover, including a full explanation of all the controls. It costs £38 to hire an ebike for the day (plus a deposit on your credit card), while non-electric bikes cost £25 for a day or £22 for four hours. It's well worth spending a whole day on the trail, though, because there is just so much to see and do along the way.

My wife, Helen, isn't a particularly keen cyclist. Despite trying to encourage her onto her bike at home by equipping it with a super-plush saddle and absorbent tyres, she is highly resistant and it's covered in a thick layer of dust, buried under gardening tools and gazebos. But the good news is, she took to the ebike immediately



**3** The helpful chap at Ashbourne bike hire centre did look rather like a member of rock band ZZ Top!

**4** Before they set off on their ebikes, Peter and Helen had a thorough handover, covering essential techy bits

**5** Helen is usually a reluctant cyclist, but she soon got to grips with riding the ebike





This early 17th-century Jacobean mansion is Grade II listed and quite delightful, with a wide avenue running alongside and an ancient cobbled well. Today it offers holiday cottages and a wedding venue.

Security guards at the entrance indicated it was out of our price range – Russell Crowe is reputed to have stayed there while filming *Robin Hood*.

But forget about the Hollywood A-listers – there is a more important stop. You want to make a beeline for the Tissington Hall café, Herbert's Fine English Tea Rooms.

This is all set up for cyclists and walkers, with lots of outdoor seating and a great menu. This ranges from spicy bean burgers, soup and jacket spuds to wonderful Derbyshire oatcakes filled with cheese and ham. Or perhaps you'd rather have something sweet? Be warned, you will be severely tempted...

We resisted the temptation and opted for coffees (we had breakfasted not long since) and then, suitably caffeinated, ambled back to the trail, stopping to admire the village duck pond, where we met a very friendly local cat.

He sidled up to me while I was busy with the camera, insisting on being fussed over before he obligingly posed for a few charming photographs.

### Heading to Hartington

As you pedal your way towards Buxton, the trail starts to elevate and the views begin to open up – the further up the trail you go, the better it gets. You'll pass the former quarry of Rivendale on your right-hand side – now an excellent campsite.

We pedalled on and paused to have a drink and admire the view at Hartington. You will know when you arrive at Hartington, because of its historic signal box, which has been beautifully restored and overlooks a truly stunning vista.

If you climb the steps to the signal box, you'll see the colourful levers that controlled various bits of the track. I counted 15 and wondered how on earth you would remember which to pull and when.

### The Parsley Hay fork

Just before you get to Parsley Hay, you'll find that the trail is joined by National Cycle Trail 54, also known as the High Peak Trail. Officially this is the end of the Tissington Trail – you'll have covered about 13 miles by this time – but it's well worth pressing on to the end at Dowlow, which adds another 3.5 miles to the trip. Not least because there's a great pub to pause at on the way!

At Parsley Hay, you'll find another bike shop, where the staff helpfully added some air to the slightly soft tyre I'd acquired – and another café.

This was packed when we visited, so we opted to carry on up the trail to our lunch stop at The Royal Oak. Just as we started away from the café, an old stone building caught our attention.

This turned out to be a Croatian Kazun, an Istrian stone shelter whose design dates back to the 18th century. So what on earth is a venerable Croatian edifice doing beside a historic English railway line? Rather disappointingly, the answer is that it was ➔



6 Helen and Peter stopped for coffee, with Tissington Hall a perfect backdrop

7 This friendly local insisted on having his photo taken!

8 Hartington has a beautifully restored signal box right by the cycle trail

9 Heading closer to Buxton, you're treated to stunning views over the Derbyshire hills





# Experience DERBYSHIRE

**10** Ashbourne was in full coronation mode during Peter and Helen's visit

**11** Cajun chicken and oak chips taste even better after you've had some exercise!

**12** The trail is well signposted, so you always know how far it is to a stop

actually built in 2013, as a gift to mark Croatia joining the EU. So despite its appearance, it's not in the least bit historic, because the stone for the construction was freshly dug from a local quarry.

Although you can carry on to Buxton – which is well worth visiting – the High Peak Trail itself peters out at Dowlow, near a limestone quarry.

Rather puzzlingly, there is no monument, or anything much else, to mark the end of the trail, other than a simple signboard displaying a map of the route.

You kind of hope for some sort of fanfare or other official recognition of your achievement!

## A celebration lunch

Heading away from Dowlow, after about 1.5 miles back down the trail, you will come across The Royal Oak. It's about another two miles away from Parsley Hay, in the tiny hamlet of Hurdlow.

It's well worth walking or cycling up to the pub: the scenery on the way is expansive and a delight. The Royal Oak also operates a small campsite – I had stayed here before and I knew the food was excellent – so we opted to have our lunch there.

This proved to be a good call, and as well as bike racks (everywhere along the trail is ideally set up for cyclists), they provide plenty of covered outdoor seating and a pleasantly welcoming beer garden.

The menu is stunning, with a great selection of real ales, although I was driving the camper later, so stuck to soft drinks. Food always tastes better after a little exercise, but even so, it was exceptional.

The toasted sourdough topped with Cajun chicken, salad leaves and a Cajun cream sauce, with oak chips, tasted even better than it sounded, and the rest of the menu is equally mouthwatering. Helen opted for an amazing steak sandwich. Well worth the trip!



## Time to head for home

The good thing about starting in Ashbourne and heading to Buxton is that you're going slightly uphill all the way, so when you head back, it's mainly downhill.

This makes for easier pedalling, which is the way you want it as you start to tire in the saddle. It also means that you'll have no range anxiety with your ebike, and you can boost the power to make the journey back pretty much effortless.

We covered the 13-mile trip back to Ashbourne at a steady average of around 16mph and did it in one stint, getting there in under an hour.

We had already stopped to see most of the sights, so it was pleasant just to travel past everything and enjoy the cooling breeze.

We did stop when we saw some historic soldiers in a field. They were clearly battle re-enactment fans and we watched them marching up and down, shouting at each other, while a few local sheep cast an eye over them with mild curiosity.

## Back to the bike shop

All too soon, we were back at the bike shop in Ashbourne. Both ebikes still had about 20 miles of range left in their batteries, so the 34-mile round trip hadn't been that intensive for them. It was great, simply to hand them back and not have to worry about chargers, oiling chains or strapping them to a bike rack. This is definitely the easiest way to cycle – all we brought with us was our helmets, gloves and clothing (and you don't even have to do that – they can provide helmets).

Helen loved the ebike, which is all the good bits of cycling – wind in your hair, superb scenery – without the misery of having to pant up the hills.

Whether you're an experienced rider or a novice, you really can't go wrong on the Tissington Trail, which is superbly geared up for cyclists, making it a great day out for riders of all abilities.

The cherry on top is that it's bookended by the towns of Buxton and Ashbourne. Buxton is a fine Victorian spa town with good shopping and the Pavilion building and gardens, while Ashbourne offers tea rooms, pubs and restaurants, together with an excellent selection of antique shops to explore. ■



## TOUR ESSENTIALS

### WAY TO GO

Head to Ashbourne on the A52 from Stoke-on-Trent in the west or from Derby in the east.

### WHEN TO GO

Ideally, you want to visit this area sometime between spring and autumn – in winter, the hills make the cycle route cold and slippery.

You'll find the bike hire shops are generally open from around the middle of February until towards the end of October.

### WHERE WE STAYED

#### ■ The Duke of York

Pomeroy, Flagg, Derbyshire SK17 9QG

Sadly, this excellent pub/campsite closed and is currently up for sale. Fingers crossed the buyer will reopen it soon!

### FIND OUT MORE

#### ■ Sustrans National Cycle Network

🌐 [sustrans.org.uk](https://sustrans.org.uk)

#### ■ Ashbourne Bike Hire, Repair and Service Centre

🌐 [peakdistrict.gov.uk/visiting/cycle/bike-hire-centres/ashbourne](https://peakdistrict.gov.uk/visiting/cycle/bike-hire-centres/ashbourne)

#### ■ Welcome to Ashbourne

🌐 [visitpeakdistrict.com/locations/ashbourne](https://visitpeakdistrict.com/locations/ashbourne)





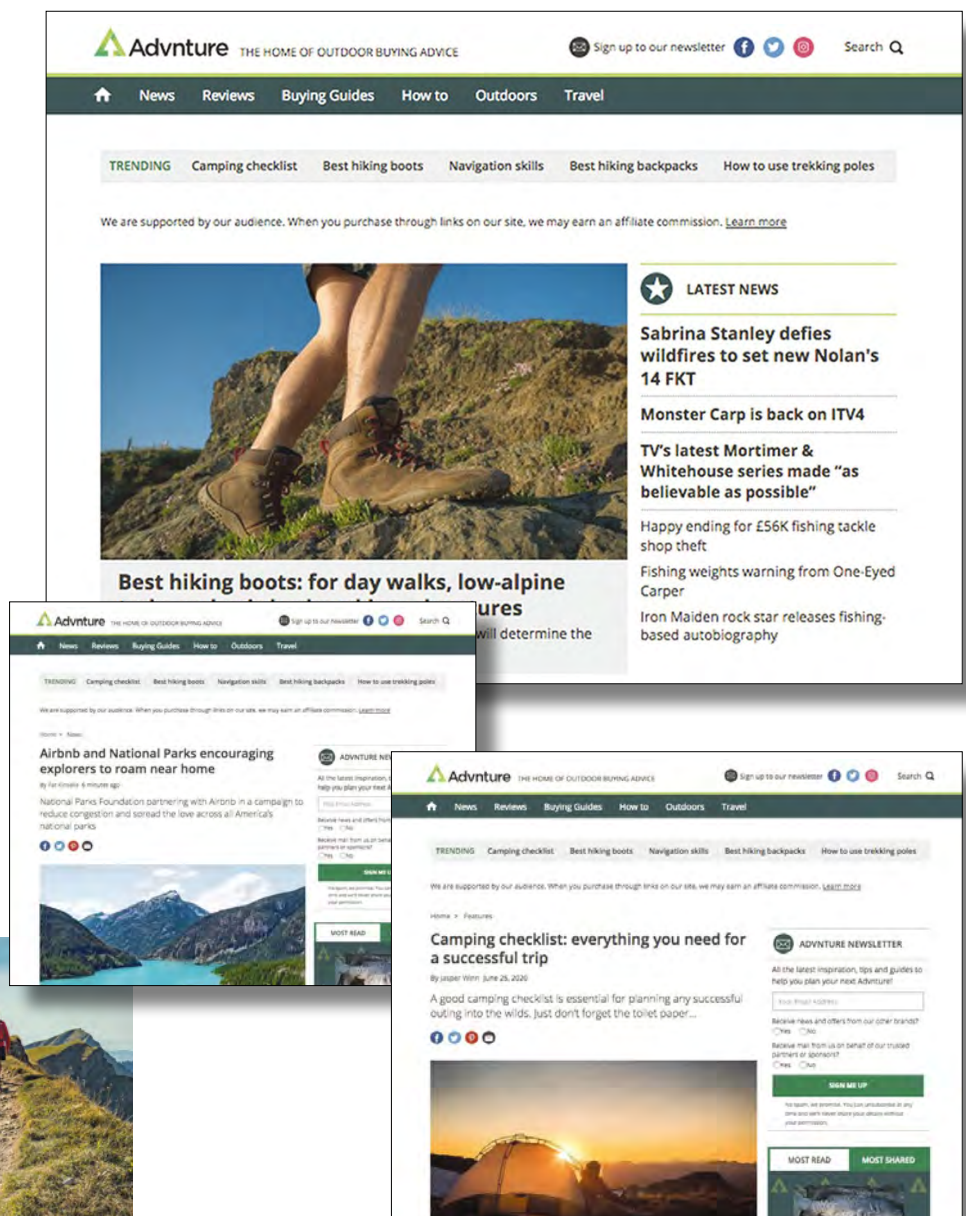
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# BUYER'S GUIDE

## How to use the guide

We've organised our listings by layout, which is generally the most crucial aspect for buyers. Simply locate the floorplan you like in the guide; then, on the left of it, you'll find details of every UK model with that layout. Simple!

These models do exactly what it says on the tin – a manufacturer takes a commercial vehicle (van), then converts the inside to living accommodation. Such vehicles are often cheaper than coachbuilt motorhomes, and they are usually shorter too, so they're easier to park and manoeuvre on the road

## HIGH TOP, FIXED ROOF

MODEL	BASE VEHICLE	MAX WEIGHT (KG)	LENGTH (M)	BERTHS	TRAVEL SEATS (INC DRIVER)	PRICE OTR (£)
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### REAR BENCH SEAT, NO WASHROOM

Auto Campers mRv Hi Line LWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.34	2	4	70,000
Auto Campers mRv Hi Line SWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	2	4	69,000
Auto Campers Day Van Hi Line LWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.34	2	4	63,000
Auto Campers Leisure Van Hi Line LWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.34	2	4	63,000
Auto Campers Day Van Hi Line SWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	2	4	62,000
Auto Campers Leisure Van Hi Line SWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	2	4	62,000
Bodans Truro	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	58,995
Jobi Kombi SE	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	2	4	49,950

### SIDE SOFA, REAR WASHROOM

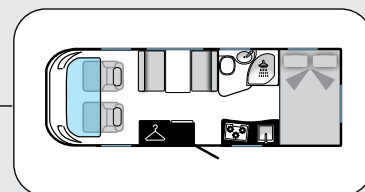
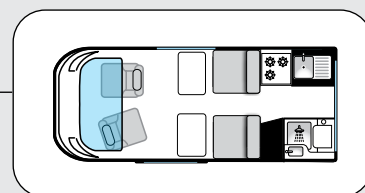
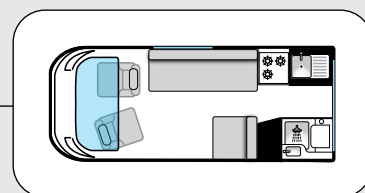
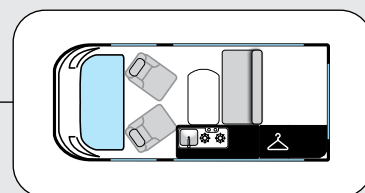
Globe Traveller Falcon 2XS	VW Crafter	3850	5.99	2	2	126,595
IH 710FL	Iveco Daily	3500	7.17	2	2	96,995
IH 680CFL	VW Crafter	3500	6.86	2	2	87,395
Murvi Morello XL	Ford Transit	3500	6.7	2	2	83,963
Vantage Vue	Ford Transit	3500	6.36	2	2	79,950
Murvi Morello	Ford Transit	3500	5.98	2	2	78,598
Murvi Pimento XL	Ford Transit	3500	5.98	2	2	78,598
Auto-Sleeper Kemerton XL	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	3	78,560
S&L Atlanta	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	78,450
Vantage Ora F-Line	Ford Transit	3500	5.93	2	2	77,950
Murvi Morocco XL	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	77,574
Murvi Morello XL	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	77,574
WildAx Constellation XL	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	3	77,500
Murvi Pimento	Ford Transit	3500	5.53	2	2	77,290
Vantage Ora	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	76,950
WildAx Constellation	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	3	76,500
Auto-Sleeper Symbol Plus	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	2	3	75,800
S&L Iris	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	75,350
Murvi Morello	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	75,068
Murvi Morocco	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	75,068
Murvi Pimento XL	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	75,068
Auto-Sleeper Symbol	Peugeot Boxer	3300	5.41	2	3	74,720
IH N-630 FL	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	74,395
Vantage Gem	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	2	73,995
Murvi Pimento	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	2	73,103
Moto-Trek Leisure Treka EB	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	2	72,495
Bailey Endeavour B63	Ford Transit	3500	5.98	2	2	70,999
IH 600FL	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	69,395
IH 630FL	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	66,395

### TWIN SEATS, REAR WASHROOM/KITCHEN

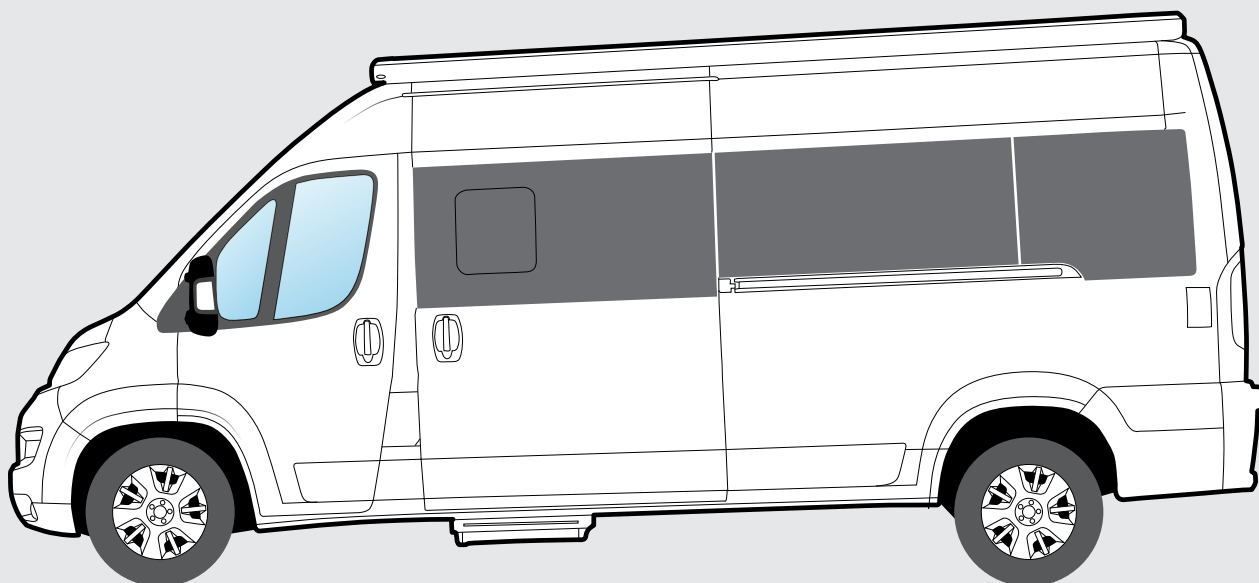
WildAx Pulsar	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	78,500
Greenline RG 500	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	2	4	53,950
Greenline RG 500	Renault Trafic	3190	5.08	2	4	51,950

### FRONT DINETTE, TRANSVERSE BED

Project Yonder Freedom 4X	Mercedes Sprinter	3880	6.97	2	4	157,895
VanWorx Expedition	VW Crafter	3500	5.97	2	4	126,000
Hymer Grand Canyon S CrossOver	Mercedes Sprinter	3880	5.93	2	4	120,860
Westfalia Sven Hedin New Edition	MAN TGE	3500	5.98	2	4	94,194
Hymer Grand Canyon S	Mercedes Sprinter	3500	5.93	2	4	89,570
Adria Twin Max 680 SGX	MAN TGE	4000	6.84	2	4	87,990
Knaus BoxDrive 600XL	MAN TGE	3500	5.98	4	4	80,768
Eura Mobil Camper Van 635HB	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	78,495
Hymer Free 600 Campus	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	77,430
Westfalia Sven Hedin Classic	MAN TGE	3500	5.98	2	4	76,967
Adria Twin Supreme 640 SGX	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	76,950
S&L Clio	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	3	76,850
Hymer Free 540 Campus	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	76,100
Knaus BoxLife 600 DQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	75,202
Adria Twin Supreme 600 SPB	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	74,950
Consort Duet FB	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	2	74,950
S&L Echo	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	3	74,850
Pilote Van Vega V600G Evidence	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	74,700
Knaus BoxLife Pro 600 Street XL	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	74,345
Eura Mobil Camper Van 595HB	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	73,995
Pilote Van Vega 5V40G Evidence	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	73,700
Hymer Grand Canyon	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	73,260







Consort Pace FB	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	2	2	72,950
Consort Reef FB	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	2	2	71,950
Hymmer Ayers Rock	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	71,840
Knaus BoxLife 600 MQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	71,785
Dreamer Campervan XL Saphir	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	5	4	71,600
Knaus BoxLife Pro 600 Solution	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	71,262
Eriba Car 600	VW Crafter	3500	5.99	2	4	71,120
Consort Nova FB	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.41	2	2	69,950
Sun Living V55SP	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	69,835
Bürstner Eliseo C540	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	69,690
Rapido V65 XL	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	69,600
Westfalia Columbus 600 D	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	68,817
Rapido V55	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	68,300
Bürstner Eliseo C602	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	68,290
Weinsberg CaraTour 600 MQH	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	67,641
Hobby On Tour Van 600FT	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	67,995
Weinsberg CaraTour 600 DQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	67,641
Weinsberg CaraBus 600 MQH	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	67,625
Weinsberg CaraBus EDITION [FIRE] 600 MQH	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	67,365
Knaus BoxLife 540 MQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	67,261
Knaus BoxLife Pro 600 Street	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	67,225
Weinsberg CaraBus EDITION [FIRE] 600 DQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	67,211
Pilote Van Vega V600G Standard	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	67,200
Pilote Van Vega V600S Standard	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	67,200
Globecar Summit 600 Prime	Fiat Ducato	3300	5.99	2	4	67,195
Bürstner Campeo C540 Skyline	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	67,190
Weinsberg CaraBus 600 DQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	66,981
Dreamer D55 Select Saphir	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	66,800
Sun Living V60SP	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	66,690
Laika Ecovip 600	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	66,600
Dethleffs Globetrail VW Performance	VW Crafter	3500	5.98	3	4	66,390
Pilote Van Vega V540G Standard	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	66,200
Bürstner Campeo C600 Skyline	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	65,990
Globecar Summit 600 Shine	Fiat Ducato	3300	5.99	2	3	65,595
Laika Ecovip 540	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	65,500
Knaus BoxLife Pro 540 Road	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	64,811
Globecar Summit 540 Prime	Fiat Ducato	3300	5.41	2	4	64,695
Globecar Summit 540 Shine	Fiat Ducato	3300	5.41	2	3	63,695
GiottiLine GiottiVan 60B Premier Edition	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	63,294
Dreamer D55 Select	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	63,200
GiottiLine GiottiVan 60T Premier Edition	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	62,994
GiottiLine GiottiVan 60T	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	62,697
Dethleffs Globetrail Citroën 600DR	Citroën Relay	3500	5.99	3	4	62,590
Dethleffs Globetrail Fiat 600DR	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	62,590
Malibu Compact 540 DB	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	62,290
Dethleffs Globetrail Citroën 600DS	Citroën Relay	3500	5.99	3	4	62,190
Dethleffs Globetrail Fiat 600DS	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	62,190
Carado CV600 Pro+	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	62,090
Sunlight Cliff 600 X	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	61,490
Dethleffs Globetrail Citroën 640HR	Citroën Relay	3500	6.36	5	4	61,290
Dethleffs Globetrail Fiat 640HR	Citroën Relay	3500	6.36	5	4	61,290
Dethleffs Globetrail Citroën 600DK	Citroën Relay	3500	5.99	3	4	61,190
Dethleffs Globetrail Fiat 600DK	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	61,190
GiottiLine GiottiVan 54T Premier Edition	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	3	4	61,165
Weinsberg CaraTour 600 MQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	60,795
Carado CV540 Pro	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	60,790
Weinsberg CaraBus EDITION [FIRE] 600 MQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	60,485
Dethleffs Globetrail Citroën 540DR	Citroën Relay	3500	5.41	2	4	60,290
Weinsberg CaraBus 600 MQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	60,285
Chausson V594 Sport Line	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	59,990
Sunlight Cliff 540 Adventure	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	59,990
Sunlight Cliff 600 XX	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	59,990
Carado CV601 Pro	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	59,890
Joa Camp Van 60G	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	59,700
Weinsberg CaraTour 540 MQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	59,291
Sunlight Cliff 601 Adventure	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	59,290
Malibu Diversity 600 DB K	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	59,280
Weinsberg CaraBus EDITION [FIRE] 540 MQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	59,161
Rimor Horus 40	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	58,995
Weinsberg CaraBus 540 MQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	58,791
Carado CV600 Pro	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	58,790
Joa Camp Van 54G	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	58,700
Malibu Comfort 600 DB	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	58,300
Sunlight Cliff 600 Adventure	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	58,190
Roller Team Livingstone 2 Sport	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	57,990
Etrusco CV 540DB	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	57,600

great for...

Being best of all worlds

**MALIBU GENIUS**

**641 LE (p86)**



**Price** £85,270 **Sleeps** 2 **Belts** 4

**Base vehicle** Mercedes Sprinter

**Engine** 150bhp **Length** 6.40m

**MTPLM** 3500kg **Payload** 554kg

**Water (fresh/waste)** 100/90 litres

**Leisure battery** 90Ah **Gas** 2 x 11kg

Malibu's first-ever conversion on a Mercedes Sprinter aims to be both a van conversion and a coachbuilt: the vehicle is 47cm longer than the base vehicle, thanks to a clever section that Malibu has added on at the end so that it could include everything that comes in Malibu's Comfort spec level.

These halfway-house vehicles don't always work, but here, the result is well worth taking a look at. You get a supremely comfortable 'van that is loaded with self-sufficiency options and has bags of storage space at the back. Malibu has now also brought out a 4x4 "Performance" version of this model, but for that, you will need an extra £48,500.



# HIGH TOP, FIXED ROOF (CONT)

MODEL	BASE VEHICLE	MAX WEIGHT (KG)	LENGTH (M)	BERTHS	TRAVEL SEATS (INC DRIVER)	PRICE OTR (€)
Etrusco CV 640PB	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	57,500
Etrusco CV 600DB+	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	57,000
Benivan 144	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	56,995
Rimor Horus 38	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	55,995
Rimor Horus 45	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	55,995
Sunlight Cliff 540	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	59,990
Etrusco CV 600BB	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	55,700
Carado CV540	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.41	2	4	55,690
Dreamer D55 Fun	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	55,000
Etrusco CV 600DB	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	54,900
Sunlight Cliff 600	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	53,790
Carado CV600	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	2	4	53,690

## FRONT DINETTE, TRANSVERSE BUNKS

Dreamer Family Van Select	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	67,200
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## FRONT DINETTE, LONGITUDINAL BUNKS

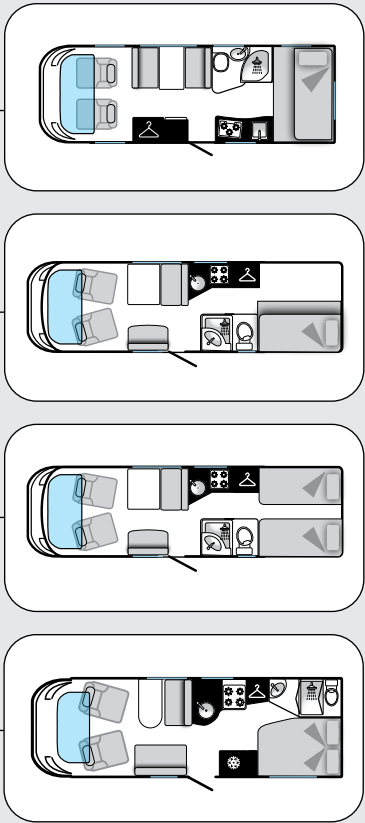
WildAx Solaris XL	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	77,500
WildAx Solaris	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	76,500

## FRONT DINETTE, FIXED SINGLE BEDS

Malibu Genius Performance 4x4 641 LE	Mercedes Sprinter	4100	6.41	2	4	133,770
Globe Traveller Falcon 2Z	VW Crafter	3850	6.84	2	2	127,595
Globe Traveller Voyager Z	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	4	4	109,995
Globe Traveller Pathfinder Z	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	4	4	101,995
WildAx Altair RS	MAN TGE	3500	6.84	2	2	99,995
Globe Traveller Explorer 2Z	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	2	97,595
IH7 10IFLG	Iveco Daily	3500	7.17	2	2	96,995
Adria Twin Max 680 SLB	MAN TGE	4000	6.84	2	4	86,990
Malibu Genius 641 LE	Mercedes Sprinter	3500	6.41	2	4	85,270
Volkswagen Grand California 680	VW Crafter	3850	6.8	4	4	84,718
Volkswagen Grand California 600	VW Crafter	3500	5.98	4	4	82,030
Knaus BoxLife 630 ME	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	3	4	80,636
Mobilvetta Admiral K6.3	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	79,995
Knaus BoxLife Pro 630 Freeway	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	3	4	78,486
Eura Mobil Camper Van 635EB	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	77,495
Adria Twin Supreme 640 SLB	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	75,950
Pilote Van Vega V630J Evidence	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	75,700
Knaus BoxLife Pro 600 Lifetime XL	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	75,465
Consort Duet FS	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	2	74,950
Hymer Yellowstone	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	74,240
Hymer Yosemite	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	73,260
Consort Pace FS	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	2	2	72,950
Knaus BoxDrive 680ME	MAN TGE	3850	6.84	3	4	72,580
Hobby Prestige Van 640ET	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	71,995
Consort Reef FS	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	2	2	71,950
Pilote Van Vega V633M Standard	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	71,800
Knaus BoxLife 600 ME	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	71,455
Pilote Van Vega V630LG Standard	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	71,400
Westfalia Columbus 640 E	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	71,011
Bürrstner Eliseo C642	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	70,690
Hobby On Tour Van 640ET	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	69,995
Weinsberg CaraTour 630 ME	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	69,615
Pilote Van Vega V630J Standard	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	69,200
Rapido V68	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	69,100
Weinsberg CaraBus 630 ME	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	69,005
Globecar Summit 640 Prime	Fiat Ducato	3300	6.36	2	3	68,995
Weinsberg CaraBus EDITION [FIRE] 600 ME	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	68,995
Weinsberg CaraBus EDITION [FIRE] 630 ME	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	68,995
Sun Living V65SL	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	68,410
Westfalia Columbus 600 E	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	68,371
Knaus BoxLife Pro 600 Lifetime	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	68,195
Pilote Van Vega V600J Standard	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	67,200
Dreamer D68 Select Saphir	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	3	4	66,700
Dreamer D68 Select	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	3	4	66,700
Globecar Summit 640 Shine	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	3	66,495
Globecar Summit 600L Shine	Fiat Ducato	3300	5.99	2	3	66,495
Dethleffs Globetrail Citroën 640ER	Citroën Relay	3500	6.36	2	4	64,490
Dethleffs Globetrail Fiat 640ER	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	3	4	64,490
Carado CV640 Pro+	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	64,090
Dethleffs Globetrail Citroën 640ES	Citroën Relay	3500	6.36	3	4	63,890
Dethleffs Globetrail Fiat 640ES	Citroën Relay	3500	6.36	3	4	63,890
Sunlight Cliff 640 X	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	64,490
Dethleffs Globetrail Citroën 640EK	Citroën Relay	3500	6.36	3	4	63,090
Dethleffs Globetrail Fiat 600ER	Citroën Relay	3500	5.99	3	4	62,590
Dethleffs Globetrail Fiat 600ER	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	62,590
Weinsberg CaraTour 600 ME	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	62,115
Joa Camp Van 63T	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	61,700
Weinsberg CaraBus 600 ME	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	61,585
Carado CV640 Pro	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	60,890
Malibu First Class – Two Rooms 640 LE RB	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	60,860
Sunlight Cliff 640 Adventure	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	60,190
Malibu Diversity 640 LE K	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	60,050
Chausson V597 Sport Line	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	59,990
Malibu Compact 600 LE	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	59,940
Carado CV602 Pro	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	59,090
Malibu Comfort 640 LE	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	59,070
Etrusco CV 640SB+	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	58,900
Sunlight Cliff 602 Adventure	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	58,690
Dreamer Camper Sport	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	3	4	58,600
Rimor Horus 66	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	57,995
Roller Team Livingstone 6 Sport	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	57,990
Benivan 161	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	57,495
Rimor Horus 95	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	56,995
Etrusco CV 640 SB	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	56,700
Sunlight Cliff 640	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	55,690
Carado CV640	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	55,590

## FRONT DINETTE, FRENCH BED

Globe Traveller Voyager XS	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	4	4	108,995
Globe Traveller Voyager X	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	4	4	106,595
Globe Traveller Pathfinder X	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	4	4	101,995
Globe Traveller Explorer 2X	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	2	97,595



## how to buy...

### Choosing a layout

People’s needs from their vehicle will differ, and your layout choice will depend very much on your touring companions and how you are planning to use your motorhome.

To understand the types of layout available, it’s a good idea to try, if you possibly can, to spend a day at one of the big shows, where manufacturers and dealers will be displaying their latest models.

A dealership is also a good place to start your research, but do bear in mind that they may be affiliated with a limited number of brands. Having an informal chat with a dealer, though, could highlight concerns or offer some ideas that you haven’t yet considered.

Think about your touring requirements: will you want to carry bikes, sports kit, barbecues or outdoor lounging furniture? Perhaps your plan is to tow a small car?

If creature comforts are higher on your list, you might want a floorplan offering a separate sleeping area, a lounge with parallel sofas and TV points, and an oven.

If you plan to tour regularly in Europe, your preference might be for a smaller motorhome fitted with less kitchen equipment, but with an external barbecue point, an exterior mains socket and an awning.

Is the washroom going to be important to you, or will campsite facilities suffice? There’s a lot to think about.

Hire a ‘van before you buy: it’s a good way to bring focus to what you need and what you don’t.



Globe Traveller Explorer 2XS	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	2	2	96,995
Auto Sleepers Kingham	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	2	78,560
Dreamer D62 Select Saphir	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	3	4	66,700
Elddis Autoquest CV60 60th Anniversary	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	60499

FRONT DINETTE, REAR LOUNGE

RP Overland Rebellion 4	Mercedes Sprinter	4100	6.97	4	4	225,000
WildAx Altair RL	MAN TGE	3500	6.84	3	4	99,995
Rolling Homes Darwin EL	VW Crafter	3850	6.84	2	2	94,995
IH N680 CRL	VW Crafter	3500	6.86	2	2	91,895
Vantage Rio	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	3	4	84,960
IH 680CRL-RD	VW Crafter	3500	6.86	2	2	82,395
Vantage Eos	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	79,950
Vantage Neo	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	79,950
East Neuk Fifer Touring L	Citroën Relay	3500	5.99	2	2	79,000
Auto-Sleeper Fairfield	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	4	4	78,560
Auto-Sleeper Fairfield Plus	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	4	4	78,560
S&L Apollo	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	78,450
Vantage Sol F-Line	Ford Transit	3500	5.93	2	2	77,950
Auto-Trail V-Line 636 Sport	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	77,692
WildAx Aurora XL/Aurora Leisure XL	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	3	77,500
Swift Carrera 184	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	76,995
Swift Carrera 194	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	3	4	76,995
Vantage Max	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	76,950
Vantage Sol	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	76,950
WildAx Aurora/Aurora Leisure	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	3	76,500
Swift Carrera 144	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	74,995
Consort Oslo RL	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	2	74,950
Vantage Med	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	2	73,995
Swift Carrera 132	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	73,995
Auto-Trail V-Line 636 SE	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	73,414
Consort Pace RL	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	2	2	72,950
S&L Orion	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	2	72,500
Consort Reef RL	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	2	2	71,950
Eriba Car 602	VW Crafter	3500	5.99	2	4	71,120
Consort Nova RL	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.41	2	2	69,950
Dreamer Living Van Select	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	69,300
Moto-Trek Leisure Treka ELD	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	4	2	68,995
Laika Ecovip 645	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	68,700
Elddis Autoquest CV40 60th Anniversary	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	61,999
S&L Atlas	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	69,850
Consort Cove	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	2	2	67,950
Dreamer Living Van Select	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	67,900
Laika Ecovip Camper Van 645	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	65,500
Elddis Autoquest CV40	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	63,689
Auto-Trail Expedition 68	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	56,212
Auto-Trail Expedition 67 Flex	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	54,454
Auto-Trail Expedition 67	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	53,950

REAR LOUNGE ONLY

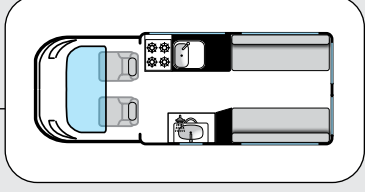
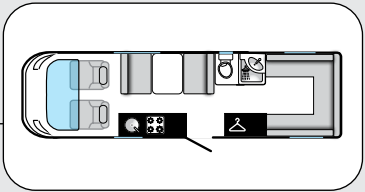
RP Overland Rebellion 2	Mercedes Sprinter	4100	6.97	2	2	225,000
RP Overland Rebel AWD	Mercedes Sprinter	4100	5.93	2	2	155,000
Globe Traveller Falcon 2YS	VW Crafter	3850	5.99	2	2	126,595
Auto-Sleeper M-Star	Mercedes Sprinter	3880	7.1	2	2	125,250
Rolling Homes Darwin ML	VW Crafter	3850	6.84	2	2	94,995
IH 600CRL-RD	VW Crafter	3500	5.98	2	2	80,395
Hillside MAN TGE Hopton	MAN TGE	3500	5.99	2	2	80,435
Auto-Sleeper Warwick XL	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	2	78,560
Auto-Trail V-Line 635 Sport	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	77,692
WildAx Europa	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	76,500
Auto-Sleeper Warwick Duo	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	2	2	75,800
Hillside Hopton	VW Crafter	3500	5.99	2	2	75,295
East Neuk Fifer Touring M	Citroën Relay	3500	5.41	2	2	75,000
IH N-630 RL	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	74,395
Vantage Cub	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	2	73,995
Auto-Trail V-Line 610 Sport	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	75,238
Auto-Trail V-Line 635 SE	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	73,414
Swift Carrera 122	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	72,995
Büstrner Eliseo C644	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	70,290
Bailey Endeavour B62	Ford Transit	3500	5.98	2	2	69,999
WildAx Meteor	Ford Transit	3500	5.98	2	2	69,995
Consort Vibe RL	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.41	2	2	69,950
Auto-Trail V-Line 610 SE	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	71,014
Auto-Trail V-Line 540 SE	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	2	68,830
Swift Trekker XL	Ford Transit	3500	5.98	2	2	67,995
Moto-Trek Leisure Treka RL	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	2	67,995
IH 630RL/RD	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	66,395
IH 600RL/RD	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	64,395
Elddis Autoquest CV20 60th Anniversary	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	60,499
Auto-Trail Expedition 66	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	52,516
Volkswagen Caddy California	VW Caddy	2300	4.5	2	5	35,683

RAISING ROOF

MODEL	BASE VEHICLE	MAX WEIGHT (KG)	LENGTH (M)	BERTHS	TRAVEL SEATS (INC DRIVER)	PRICE OTR (£)
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REAR BENCH SEAT, NO WASHROOM

Vantage Motion R	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.05	4	5	94,995
Mercedes Marco Polo Premium Plus	Mercedes V Class	3100	5.14	4	4	88,440
Swift Monza PHEV	Ford Transit Custom	3245	5.05	4	5	84,995
VanWorx Chesil	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	5	79,500
Landseer Ford Custom 2.0	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	5	77,900
Vantage Luna	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.05	4	5	76,995
Auto-Sleeper Air	Ford Transit Custom	3400	4.97	4	5	74,245
Swift Monza S	Ford Transit Custom	3115	5.05	4	5	74,495
Wellhouse Leisure Misano 5	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	4	73,000
Jobl Kampa AT	VW T6.1 4x4	3200	4.89	4	4	70,950
Auto Campers mRv Hi Line LWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.34	4	4	70,000
Autohaus Spartan	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	69,995
Vantage Fuze	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.05	4	5	69,995
Hillside Birchover All Motion	VW T6.1 4x4	3200	4.89	4	4	69,495
Auto Campers mRv Pop Top SWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	4	69,000
Jobl Kampa GT	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	68,950
CMC Reimo Trio HighStyle Comfort	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	68,750
Autohaus Ashton	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	68,000
HemBil Drift Comfort	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	67,750



great for...

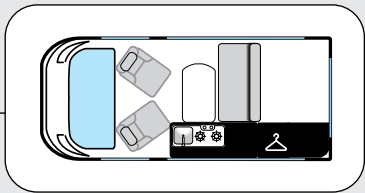
Use for home and away  
**PANAMA P12 (p88)**



Price £59,995 Sleeps 4 Belts 5 (option for 7)  
Base vehicle Ford Tourneo Custom  
Engine 2.2-litre, 140bhp Length 5.04m  
MTPLM 3175kg Payload 617kg  
Water (fresh/waste) 50/32 litres  
Leisure battery 90Ah Gas 1 x 2.8kg

Made by Trigano Group subsidiary Panama, this 'van has the classic side kitchen with rear bench seat layout that you see in many campervans. But because it is based on the Tourneo, Ford's people-carrier version of the Transit Custom, you have the option of adding an extra bench in the back, which means the vehicle can carry seven people.

So it could be ideal for you to use on the school run, for example, safe in the knowledge that when you want to take it on a trip somewhere, you just need to remove that optional bench to have all the storage space you need in a campervan with a more than usually decent spec level.

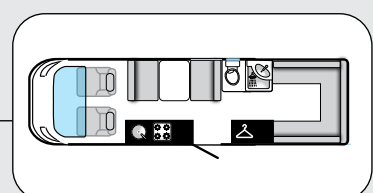
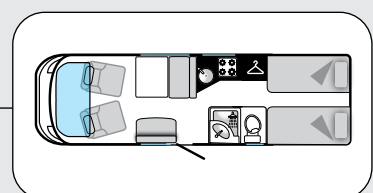
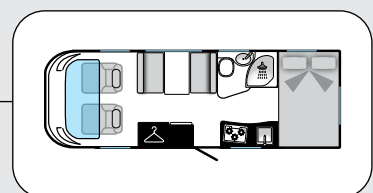
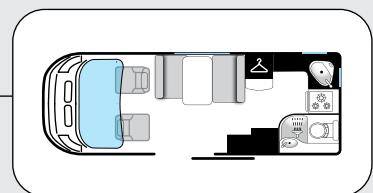
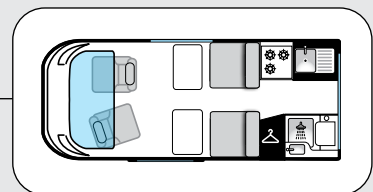
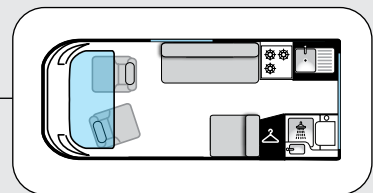




# Buyer's Guide

## RAISING ROOF (CONT)

MODEL	BASE VEHICLE	MAX WEIGHT (KG)	LENGTH (M)	BERTHS	TRAVEL SEATS (INC DRIVER)	PRICE OTR (€)
CMC Reimo City Van Comfort	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	67,000
Danbury Surf	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	4	66,750
Hembi Escape Comfort	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	66,500
Hembi Escape SL Comfort	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	66,500
Hembi Urban Comfort	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	66,250
Hembi Urban S Comfort	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	66,250
Auto Campers Leisure Van Hi Line LWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.34	4	4	66,000
Hembi Dune Comfort	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	65,500
Auto Campers Leisure Van Pop Top SWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	4	65,000
Jobi Kampa SE-L	VW T6.1	3200	5.29	4	4	64,950
Autohaus Creston	Renault Trafic	3010	4.99	4	4	63,995
Rolling Homes Kingsley S	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	2	4	63,995
City by Dreamer City Camp	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	4	63,600
Volkswagen California	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	63,376
Hillside Birchover Executive	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	63,295
Bodans Pentire Explorer	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	62,995
Rolling Homes Kingsley	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.34	2	4	62,995
Rolling Homes Columbus S	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	62,895
Rolling Homes Columbus	VW T6.1	3200	5.29	4	4	61,695
Redline Sport +	VW T6.1 Highline	3200	4.89	4	4	60,000
Panama P12	Ford Tourneo Custom	3175	5.04	4	5	59,995
Rolling Homes Hudson	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	2	4	59,995
Hillside Birchover Classic	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	59,945
CMC Reimo Trio HighStyle Smart Line	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	59,250
Jobi Kampa SE	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	59,050
Rolling Homes Shackleton	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	58,695
Hembi Drift Smart Line	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	58,250
CMC Reimo City Van Smart Line	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	57,500
Hembi Escape Smart Line	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	57,000
Hembi Escape SL Smart Line	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	57,000
Hembi Urban Smart Line	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	56,750
Hembi Urban S Smart Line	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	56,750
Citroën Holidays	Citroën SpaceTourer	3100	4.98	4	4	56,590
Hembi Dune Smart Line	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	56,000
Bodans Pentire	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	55,995
Bodans Treago	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	55,995
Wellhouse Leisure Flex	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	4	54,960
Redline Sport XS	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	54,480
Redline Sport	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	53,830
Hillside Birchover S	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	51,995
Redline Classic	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	51,030
Bodans Holywell	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	49,995
<b>SIDE SOFA, REAR WASHROOM</b>						
Bailey Endeavour B64	Ford Transit	3500	5.98	4	4	74999
Bodans Cubert	VW Caddy	2220	4.85	4	4	48995
<b>TWIN SEATS, REAR WASHROOM/KITCHEN</b>						
Westfalia Club Joker Urban Premium	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.05	4	4	85,643
Ford Nugget SWB PHEV	Ford Tourneo	3190	4.97	5	4	80,974
Ford Nugget SWB	Ford Tourneo	3190	4.97	5	4	77,338
Westfalia Club Joker Urban Classic	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.05	4	4	71,763
CMC Reimo MultiStyle Comfort	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	68,750
Jobi Kampa LE	VW T6.1	3200	5.29	4	4	67,950
Dreamer Cap Land Select	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.45	4	4	67,100
Hillside Cromford	VW T6.1	3200	5.29	4	4	64,995
Rolling Homes Livingstone	VW T6.1	3200	5.29	4	4	64,695
Panama P57	Ford Tourneo Custom	3175	5.40	4	4	63,995
CMC Reimo MultiStyle SmartLine	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	60,750
Bodans Crantock	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	58,995
Greenline RG 540	Renault Trafic	3190	5.08	4	4	51950
Greenline RG 500	Renault Trafic	3190	4.99	4	4	49950
<b>FRONT DINETTE, CORNER KITCHEN</b>						
Hembi GoCamper	Ford Tourneo	3190	4.97	4	5	49500
<b>FRONT DINETTE, TRANSVERSE BED</b>						
Westfalia James Cook Premium 600 D	Mercedes Sprinter	3500	5.93	4	4	116,314
Westfalia James Cook Classic 600 D	Mercedes Sprinter	3500	5.93	4	4	95,936
Adria Twin Sports 640 SGX	Fiat Ducato	4250	6.36	4	4	87,410
Hymmer Free S Campus	Mercedes Sprinter	3500	5.93	4	4	85,680
Swift Carrera 244	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	80495
Adria Twin Sports 600 SPB	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	79,950
Sun Living V55SP Tent Top	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	72,235
Westfalia Columbus 540 D	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	66,966
Dreamer D55 Fun Up	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	61,900
Weinsberg CaraTour 600 MQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	60,795
Weinsberg CaraBus 600 MQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	60,285
Weinsberg CaraTour 540 MQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	4	4	59,291
Dreamer D43 Fun Up	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	4	4	59,000
Weinsberg CaraBus 540 MQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	4	4	58,791
<b>FRONT DINETTE, FIXED SINGLE BEDS</b>						
Adria Twin Sports 640 SLB	Fiat Ducato	4250	6.36	4	4	86,410
Dreamer D68 Select Up Saphir	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	74,300
Weinsberg CaraTour 630 ME	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	69,615
Weinsberg CaraBus 630 ME	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	69,005
Weinsberg CaraTour 600 ME	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	62,115
Weinsberg CaraBus 600 ME	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	61,585
<b>FRONT DINETTE, REAR LOUNGE</b>						
Autohaus Camelot C600	VW Crafter	3500	5.98	4	4	91000
Auto-Trail Adventure 65	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	80320
Auto-Trail Adventure 55	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	78514
Bailey Endeavour B65	Ford Transit	3500	5.98	4	4	75999
Xplore CVX8	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	74999
Swift Trekker X	Ford Transit	3500	5.98	4	4	73995
Swift Trekker	Ford Transit	3500	5.53	4	4	72995
Elddis Autoquest CV80 60th Anniversary	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	68399





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# What to buy

## CAMPERVAN ACCESSORIES

Make the most of your tours and your camper's space with some superb kit, says Jo Davies



### Sitting comfortably

You can rest easy in Vango's Osiris chair, especially because it's made from 100% recycled plastic. With the bonus of a handy insulated cup-holder, this chair is durable, compact and really comfortable.

**Price** £46 🐛 johnlewis.com



### Staying hydrated

Finding the right water bottle can be a bit daunting, but this nifty 500ml flask from Ocean Bottle is a great choice. Vacuum insulated, it keeps your water cold and your tea hot, and the double opening means the lid can be used as a cup.

**Price** £35 🐛 oceanbottle.co



### Cleaning windows

Eager to get away in the morning but don't want to wait for your windows to demist? Hit the road quickly with this small but powerful window vacuum from Titan, which operates for 30 minutes per charge.

**Price** £29.99 🐛 screwfix.com



### Waterproofing your phone

If you're using a mobile to map your rambles, this handy waterproof pouch will keep your device safe in a shower, while still allowing you to snap a picture – or track down the nearest café to take shelter in!

**Price** £9.99 🐛 decathlon.co.uk



### Banishing muddy boots

After a challenging hike, avoid treading the mud into your 'van with the thoughtfully designed Boot Buddy. This double-ended tool provides a brush, scraper and water flow to help tackle the most stubborn dirt.

**Price** £19.99 🐛 amazon.co.uk



### Keeping your hands warm

Add luxury to your walk with Ocoopa's neat handwarmers. Just pop them in your pockets or gloves and say goodbye to frozen fingers. With three settings, they also double as a power bank for your mobile phone.

**Price** £23.99 🐛 amazon.co.uk



### Multitasking firepit and barbecue

Put your feet up by this portable, multi-use firepit. Measuring 28.6 x 27.8cm, Wolf + Grizzly's model uses wood or charcoal and functions as both grill and campfire. Perfect for a chilly night, it is purpose-built for a long-lasting burn.

**Price** £79.95 🐛 amazon.co.uk



### Chopping up fruit and veg

Nothing beats a hot meal after a long day outside! But tired cooks can speed things up by letting this neat food slicer do the hard work. It comes with three different blade designs for fruit and veg and features a non-slip base.

**Price** £20.99 🐛 amazon.co.uk



### Camping kitchen kit

Ideal for compact camper kitchens, this smart little bag contains all the tools you need – tongs, spatula, serving spoon, bottle opener, scissors, knife, peeler and even a cutting board.

**Price** £25.99 🐛 amazon.co.uk



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