

Holdsworth Valentine

Plus points: Full coachbuilt systems in a truly compact package. Quality fabrics of elegance for the decor

Minus points: Awkward bathroom handbasin. Difficult high access through the rear door although later models are equipped with a sliding step



Our test Valentine was the very first one to be built. It was tested in foul weather for a report in the February 1993 edition.

True to form, Richard Holdsworth chose to design his Volkswagen along

quite different lines to the rest of the industry. Rather than go for the biggest the chassis would take, his concept was to go small and keep the price keen.

Our verdict at the time? Square rather than elegant Valentine is nonetheless a coachbuilt motorcaravan of charm and commonsense design.

Because the chassis was an oddball it had a 1.8-litre petrol motor; those in regular production use a two-litre unit. A short wheelbase was ideal for a body length of only 16ft 6in and in width it was a mere 6ft 6in, only 3in wider overall than a VW-based camper.

Careful attention to weight in construction resulted in an impressive payload of 705kg from a maximum gross weight of 2,765kg.

In almost gale force conditions on the M4 at night the Valentine was no trouble to hold in a straight line. And this without power steering although we'd recommend it for making life easier at low speed.

For such a tiny engine working hard over the hills of Wiltshire the fuel burn figure of 23mpg was a pleasant surprise, as was the top speed of 76mph. She also cruised happily at between 60-65mph.

The most space efficient shape is the square box – the closer you are to it, the better the available accommodation. Valentine is square but the stripe design softens the effect considerably.

Holdsworth were the first of our manufacturers to put their new VW-based coachbuilt model through a test programme approved by VW GB.

Effectively a "2 + 2" design, the Valentine can sleep two "tinies" in the bed above the cab. There is also lots of

room for four to eat at the dinette immediately behind the cab.

With passenger cab seat reversed it, and the dinette area become a surprisingly commodious lounge. There is no division between the galley on the nearside and the relaxing area.

Imported exclusively for Holdsworth vehicles, the deep blue cushion material comes from Italy and harmonises wonderfully with dark blue curtains and a grey/blue carpet.

A light ash wood finish for the galley and lockers provides just the right contrast to the blue theme. Definite pluses were the all-purpose slide-out unit to take a whole load of tinned and fresh foodstuff, and the fridge in its console opposite with additional working room on top.

There was not even minimal storage for toiletries and not even a towel rail in the washroom; nor was the handbasin totally adequate. It was however wholly adequate in measurement to be able to shower and use the loo without angst.

The Which verdict: Notwithstanding my criticisms, she was enjoyable to use, even in the monsoon season, relax inducing at rest and, in town, a dolly to manoeuvre and park.

John Page



Spec check Spec check Spec check

Make: Richard Holdsworth **Model:** Valentine
Test date: February, 1993

Performance data

Fuel consumption: 23mpg
Comfortable cruising speed: 60-65mph
Maximum speed attained: 76mph (NB figures for 1.8 litre motor)
Acceleration times: 0-60mph: 25 seconds 40-60mph: 16 seconds

Base vehicle

Make: Volkswagen
Model: Transporter
Type: Chassis cab
Power unit: Standard is two-litre petrol motor producing 84bhp @ 4,300rpm

Conversion

Type: Overcab coachbuilt
Overall length: 5.08m (16ft 6in)
Overall width: 2.02m (6ft 6in)
Overall height: 2.70m (8ft 9in)
Basic construction: Sandwich construction with glass fibre exterior, Styrofoam insulation and plywood interior walls
Gas storage capacity: Two x 7kg cylinders
Water heating: Carver Cascade with 10-litre reservoir
Space heating: Hot Box blown air system
Refrigerator: Electrolux 212 for 12V/240V/gas
Cooker: Spinflo three-burner hob and grill
Toilet: Thetford Cassette
Bed sizes: 6ft 2in x 4ft 0in; 6ft 2in x 3ft 5in
Electrical equipment: Mains connection with circuit breaker. Control panel with battery condition indicator
Lighting: Fluorescent light fittings
Windows: Double-glazed acrylic

Manufacturers: Richard Holdsworth Conversions Ltd, Headley Road East, Woodley, Reading, Berks RG5 4NE, tel: 0734 692900