

Three cheers



Designing motor caravan conversions on a new base vehicle doesn't happen overnight. Individually and collectively Britain's three VW-recognised converters applied all their ingenuity, expertise and experience to get the best from the all-new Transporter

In a one-day launch on 10 September, Britain's three VW-recognised converters combined to unveil their new models based on the new front-engine, front-wheel drive Transporter. Venue for the event was VW Audi's modern dealer training centre at Wymbush, not far from the importer's main UK headquarters in Milton Keynes.

The new VW supplied to the importer's recognised converters is, in fact, a Kombi with bonded-in windows aft of the cab. Each of the two leading windows slide open as standard. Additional features of the base vehicle are a heated rear window and wash/wipe, centre dashboard vents for improved cab ventilation, and door storage bins for both driver and front passenger.

Standard power unit is a two-litre petrol engine, with options of either 1.9-litre or 2.4-litre diesel units – all mated to a conventional five-speed gearbox.

Separate presentations were made by each of the converters – Richard Holdsworth, Autohomes and AutoSleepers – in which they outlined the challenges set by this exciting new base vehicle, and described the dif-



Holdsworth's high-top Vision was the only conversion at the launch with a 'walk-through' layout



Elevating roof Villa features Holdsworth's solid-sided riser roof and smart maroon graphics

ferent ways in which they had been overcome.

HOLDSWORTH VILLA & VISION

Richard Holdsworth brought three new VWs to the launch: both high-top and elevating-roof versions of their popular Villa, plus the high-top Vision which offers walk-through access from the cab and out through the VW's full-height tailgate.

A full test report on the high-top Villa is featured in this issue, starting on page 34. General interior layout follows the traditional VW pattern, with kitchen units extending down the offside, terminating in a wardrobe at the back.

Main change here is the replacement of the Electrolux 2cu.ft fridge by a top-loading 1.25cu.ft Camping Gaz unit, conveniently located just forward of the wardrobe and operating on a choice of gas/12v/240v. This releases more storage in the kitchen base unit, where a portable toilet is housed in one of the cupboards and accessible day or night.

As well as a swivel for the cab passenger seat, Holdsworth retain the transverse settee/double bed arrangement. The settee, however, has come in for considerable improvement, in line with the company's policy of maximising passenger safety. A programme of crash test simulations, which included the seat belts and anchorages, resulted in the seat base being constructed in steel and bolted through the vehicle floor.

The settee, like the cab seats fully upholstered in a floral velour, is even easier to convert to a double bed than its rock 'n' roll predecessor.

High-top Vision offers full standing height from the cab to the rear tailgate, with rear single seats and kitchen units on each side leaving a centre aisle. Choice of beds is between two singles or a double, using the fold-down cab seats. The two forward-facing rear seats have been subjected to a similar crash-testing programme as Villa's settee.

Optional on both Vision and Villa is a new fire extinguisher system, Firetrace, which operates automatically within seconds of a fire breaking out

whether the vehicle is occupied or not.

Villa ex-works prices issued on the day of the launch were £19,281.21 for the high-top and £19,196.68 for the elevating roof. Vision's price was set at £19,184.34.

AUTOHOMES KONCORD AND KOMPACT

Replacing Komet and Kameo, but retaining the famous 'K' model names, Autohomes continued their 'Campaign '91' new model programme with the introduction of Konkord and Kompact. Both feature stylish high-top roofs, designed to complement the VW's body lines, and colourful exterior graphics which reflect a Continental influence.

Roof design distinguishes the two models, Konkord's being some 4½in higher to accommodate a roof bed and provide a rear luggage rack. Kompact's lower profile has a unique 'top-box'



Nearside cooking and kitchen storage in the Holdsworth Villa



Autohomes high-tops - this is the four-berth Konkord - feature stylish roofs and colourful graphics



Two-berth Autohomes Kompact has a lower roof-line with a built-in 'top-box' and ladder at the back

NEW MODEL NEWS



Kompact's rear luggage compartment lid is moulded into the roof-line



Trident interior showing the offset-leg table and blue upholstery

built into the roof design.

Both Autohomes VWs feature traditional Transporter layouts, but again there are several improvements. Original VW cab seats are retained and upholstered to match rear seating. Both driver and passenger seats are fitted with adjustable armrests and both swivel to face the rear, integrating the cab and living quarters.

Kitchen facilities include an Electrolux 2cu.ft fridge, two-burner hob/grill and sink/drain. A 17-gallon fresh water tank is fitted as standard.

Autohomes have also designed some improvements into the VW's transverse settee. Metal track set in the floor allows the seat to be moved into a choice of three positions: rear, centre and forward. The rear position provides maximum floor space; in the fully-forward setting the settee combines with the cab seats and a free-standing table to provide a comfortable dinette.

Fitted as standard are two lap restraints which move with the settee. In the centre position, Autohomes offer the option of a three-point safety belt.

A flap at the front of the seat releases a handy storage box,



Trident's roof-line follows the raked angle of the VW's front

adjacent to which is a standard supply Porta Potti.

A simple catch underneath allows the back to fold down and, together with two rear cushions, makes up into a double bed.

Behind the settee Autohomes have introduced a clever storage unit which can be removed, packed and returned into position. If the need should arise, the whole storage unit and the settee can be removed to provide masses of carrying capacity.

Forward overcab areas in both Konkord and Kompact

are given over to storage in three cupboards, one of which contains a four-person melamine crockery set. Kompact's rear roof space provides more storage in a single locker, while the four-berth Konkord features a slide-out double bed.

Provisional pricing announced by Autohomes at the launch was around £19,350 for the Konkord and £19,200 for the Kompact.

AUTO-SLEEPER TROOPER AND TRIDENT

Like Holdsworth, Auto-Sleepers saw no reason to change

the names of their VW-based models, which they claim have enjoyed top-selling positions for the last four years.

On the new VW Kombi, elevating-roof Trooper and high-top Trident get a smart new exterior treatment to enhance the VW's graceful lines. Steel grey colour bands at waist level and above the window line give a mark of distinction to the white body, while model names appear discreetly in red to match the AS badge on the bonnet. Inside, there's a choice of velour upholstery: blue/grey or coral pink. ► p.74

NEW MODEL NEWS



Trooper interior showing the new under-seat storage drawer

Light oak-effect furniture finish and attention to detail are to the high standard expected from Auto-Sleepers.

Surrounding the roof cut-out on both models, Auto-Sleepers have introduced moulded rain gutters, finished to match the grey decals and effectively masking the join between the vehicle and roof.

Interior layouts are virtually unchanged from the traditional VW floorplan. Auto-Sleepers also retain the Electrolux three-way fridge with its freezer compartment and offer a swivelling cab passenger seat as standard to complement the dinette, which features two tables, one with an offset leg.

Overcab areas in both Trooper and Trident are fitted with storage lockers, two of which contain china and glass – standard features on Auto-Sleepers. Also standard are flyscreens to the 'caravan' windows.

Trident's upper bed design has been improved so that, when not required as a sleeping area it can double as a

storage locker, with a three-position arrangement enabling the area to be adjusted to the space needed.

Common to both models is a patented settee/bed mechanism which allows the settee to be converted to a double bed in one easy action. The settee base has been designed as a large storage drawer with access from the front, while more locker space is available at the back.

Auto-Sleepers have also given some attention to the wardrobe, which now has two doors, one giving access from inside the van and the other via the rear tailgate. Gas is housed in a compartment in the wardrobe base, with capacity for a 10lb Calor cylinder.

Kitchen facilities include kitchen drawer and cupboard storage, plus a top-loading locker with wire baskets. Cooking equipment is a stainless steel two-burner hob/grill, with a matching sink/drainage.

Ex-works prices announced at the launch are £19,274 (Trident) and £19,150 (Trooper).



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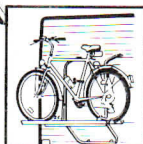
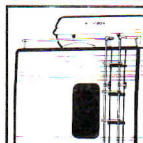
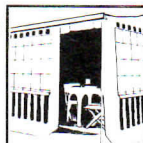
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